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Introduction

The Chinese Revolution, involving the victory of Mao Tse-tung's Red Army over the bourgeois regime of Chiang Kai-shek in 1944-49, has been the greatest event in human history after the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Liberating a quarter of mankind from capitalism and landlordism, it has been a forerunner of many subsequent revolutions that have abolished the rule of private property in country after country of the former colonial world, from Cuba in 1959-60 to Angola and Mozambique in 1974-75.

China's economic growth since the revolution has confirmed the immense superiority of production on the basis of state ownership and planning over the hopeless stagnation of capitalism in the 'third world'. This has been the case even though the regime that developed in China has been bureaucratically deformed from the start, modelled on Stalin's regime in Russia.

In previous Supplements (no's 4 and 5) we have examined the processes that gave rise to the establishment of a workers' state in backward Russia in 1917, and later to the political counter-revolution headed by Stalin, which placed a privileged bureaucratic caste in power on the basis of the planned economy.

To workers and youth in South Africa and the world over, it is equally important to understand the course of the Chinese Revolution. Not only is this necessary for a correct orientation towards developments in China today; the lessons of the Chinese Revolution provide us with essential theoretical tools for analysing the revolutionary struggles that have swept the colonial world since 1949, and drawing from them the correct conclusions as far as our own struggle is concerned.

The Chinese Revolution—unlike the Russian Revolution where for a period workers' democracy was established—gave rise to a deformed workers' state presided over by a Stalinist bureaucracy. To understand why this happened, it is necessary to go into the history of the revolution, in particular the

critical period of the 1920s.

In fact, the revolution of 1944-49 was the third great upheaval in the struggle of the Chinese workers and peasants to rid themselves of the yoke of imperial rule and, later, of the corrupt regime of the bourgeoisie. The first Chinese revolution led to the overthrow of the Manchu empire in 1911; the second—revolution of 1925-27, in which the working class emerged as the leading force, is dealt with in this Supplement.

Lessons

The events of the 1920s laid the basis for the course taken by the third revolution (which will be examined in a following Supplement). The fundamental lessons of this period are explained in the document which we reprint here. *Summary and Perspectives of the Chinese Revolution* was written by Leon Trotsky in 1928, addressed to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in answer to the ideas put forward by the leadership of Stalin and Bukharin. Unfortunately, for reasons of space, the sections of Trotsky's document headed "Adventurism as the Product of Opportunism" and "The Advantages Secured from the Peasants' International Must be Probed", as well as the opening and concluding paragraphs relating to the circumstances of the Congress itself, have had to be omitted.

The document was written against the background of the defeated second Chinese revolution. During the magnificent struggles of the Chinese workers and peasants in 1925-27, the leadership of the Communist International forced the Chinese Communist Party to subordinate itself to the bourgeois leadership of the Kuomintang nationalist movement, headed by Chiang Kai-shek. This, they claimed, was necessary because in China the task of establishing bourgeois democracy was on the agenda.

In fact, as Trotsky explains, the Chinese revolution was 'bourgeois' only in the sense that the tasks carried through by the bourgeoisie in the advanced capitalist countries in

the period of the rise of capitalism—the creation of national unity; the establishment of parliamentary rule; the abolition of feudal relations on the land, etc.—had not yet been carried through in China.

But the point is that the Chinese bourgeoisie was incapable of carrying through these tasks. Weak, economically bankrupt and politically rotten, it was the instrument of foreign imperialist interests and had nothing to offer the working masses in their struggle for social emancipation.

The policy of the Communist International, based on the illusion that the Chinese bourgeoisie could lead the struggle against imperialism and serve as an ally of the Soviet regime, therefore completely disarmed and disoriented the Chinese workers' movement as to the tasks—and the dangers—that faced them. This led directly to the slaughter of the revolutionary workers of Shanghai in April 1927 at the hands of the officially-proclaimed 'revolutionary leader' Chiang Kai-shek (whom Stalin had made an honorary member of the Executive of the Communist International).

But the Comintern leadership, having abandoned the method of Marxism in favour of short-sighted opportunism dictated by the interests of the Russian bureaucracy, were unable to learn the lessons of this catastrophe. They modified their policy only to the extent of instructing the Chinese CP to attach themselves to the 'Left Kuomintang', i.e. the Wuhan government led by Wang Ching-Wei, which temporarily found itself in opposition to Chiang.

Inevitably this led to fiasco, with the 'Left Kuomintang' very quickly breaking with the CP in order to come to terms with Chiang.

Stalin and the Comintern leadership now reacted by jumping from their opportunist policies to an opposite but equally disastrous ultra-left position. In December 1927, with the revolution on the ebb as a result of their own blunders, the CP staged a futile putsch in Canton which was bloodily repressed. (This marked the beginning of Stalinism's

period of ultra-leftism which continued until 1935.)

This was the final nail in the coffin of the Second Chinese Revolution. Combined with the further decay of the international Communist leadership, this defeat was to have decisive consequences for the subsequent development of the revolution.

The movement of the working class was crushed for a whole period. The remnants of the CP leadership abandoned the towns for the countryside, where they succeeded in placing themselves at the head of the renewed peasant revolt that built up during the 1930s.

As will be explained more fully in a future Supplement, it was the new international balance of forces arising after World War II that enabled the Stalinist leadership commanding this peasant army to take power in 1949—and left them no option but to carry through the expropriation of the landowners and capitalists despite their programme which still called for an alliance with the capitalist class.

Alternative

During 1926 and 1927 Trotsky criticised the Comintern's policies from the posts which he still held in the leading bodies of the Russian CP and the International, and at every stage spelled out the revolutionary alternative. As far as the Stalinists were concerned, these arguments fell on deaf ears. By 1928, Trotsky had been expelled from the Party by the bureaucracy and driven into exile in Siberia (from where he wrote this document). Political debate was now being stifled throughout the Communist movement.

The document reprinted here—part of Trotsky's broader *Critique* of the Comintern's new programme—was itself suppressed. (An English translation fell into the hands of American delegates to the Sixth Congress, who were convinced by its arguments and published it in the US later that year.)

Edward Roux, one of the South African CP delegates to this Congress, recalls in his memoirs: "A typed copy of Trotsky's thesis on the situation in China was circulated among some of the delegates...It

was a damaging attack on Stalin's policy in China. Of this Clements Dutt (a British CP delegate—*Editor*) said to me in all seriousness: 'Trotsky's analysis is of course correct, but I'm sorry to say that Trotsky is no longer a communist' "(!) (*Rebel Pity*, page 63.)

The correctness of Trotsky's fundamental position—that the demands of the workers and peasants could not be satisfied without the overthrow of capitalism and landlordism—was confirmed by the revolution of 1944-49, although, for the reasons that have been outlined, this revolution was carried through in a distorted, bureaucratised form.

Under working-class leadership—as in Russia in 1917 and as called for by Trotsky in China—there can be no doubt that the effects of the revolution would have been earth-shattering, galvanising the working class into revolutionary struggles throughout the capitalist world in this period of crisis and turmoil internationally. In these perspectives, cut across by the policies of Stalinism, the full significance of Trotsky's position can be seen.

South Africa

Although the conditions of China differed in important respects from those of South Africa today, many of the issues discussed in this document are of crucial relevance to our struggle—not least because many of the uncorrected errors of Stalinism which are dealt with here have survived in the official Communist parties, and have been reasserted in the SA liberation movement.

In particular, the notion of a 'democratic stage' of the revolution **preceding** the establishment of workers' rule, which lay at the root of the Stalinist position on China, is being put forward in much the same way by the present leaders of the SA Communist Party and their supporters in the ANC. Trotsky's refutation of this idea will help comrades prepare for the crucial task of dispelling all illusions of this nature among the rank and file of our movement.

Likewise, although there is no significant peasantry in SA, Trotsky's criticism of "Workers' and

peasants' parties" deserves careful study. Clearly explaining the need for independent working-class leadership, it provides a revolutionary answer to the more general Stalinist tendency towards policies of class collaboration. Absorbing Trotsky's arguments and method in relation to these issues will assist comrades in fighting for a correct position in the SA workers' movement.

Marxism does not oppose class **alliances**, as our opponents allege; but Marxism understands that in the age of imperialism a **revolutionary** alliance of the workers, peasants and other oppressed layers can only be built around the programme of the working class for the socialist transformation of society. With capitalism incapable of providing a way forward, only the workers' revolution can end the oppression of the peasantry, the middle class, etc., by imperialism and its national agents.

Yet CP leaders continue to insist, as stubbornly as in China in the 1920s, that in order to form an alliance with other classes oppressed by capitalism, the working class must **abandon its programme for the overthrow of capitalism**, and link itself to 'all progressive forces' (including 'progressive' sections of the bourgeoisie) on a programme for 'national democracy' **within the limits of capitalism**. What else is this but a recipe for renewed disorientation and defeat of the workers' struggle?

Absorbing Trotsky's arguments and method in relation to these issues will assist comrades in fighting for a correct position in the SA workers' movement, in building the ANC and the independent trade unions on healthy foundations, and ensuring that mistakes of the past are left behind for good.

The analysis put forward in this document and in our following Supplement will show that Marxism alone has correctly understood the nature of the Chinese Revolution in all its different phases. In addition to all the specific lessons, our sense of historical understanding, perspectives, strategy and tactics, as well as our ability to correctly analyse new situations, will be enormously enriched by studying this material.

SUMMARY AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

1. On the Nature of the Colonial Bourgeoisie

The draft programme states: 'Temporary agreements [with the national bourgeoisie of colonial countries] are admissible only in so far as the bourgeoisie does not obstruct the revolutionary organization of the workers and peasants and wages a genuine struggle against imperialism'.

This formula, although it is deliberately tacked on as an incidental proposition, is one of the central postulates of the draft, for the countries of the Orient, at any rate. The main proposition deals, naturally, with the 'emancipation [of the workers and peasants] from the influence of the national bourgeoisie'. But we judge not from the standpoint of grammar but politically and, moreover, on the basis of experience, and therefore we say: the main proposition is only an incidental one here, while the incidental proposition contains what is most essential. The formula, taken as a whole, is a classic Menshevik noose for the proletariat of the Orient.

What 'temporary agreements' are meant here? In politics, as in nature, all things are 'temporary'. Perhaps we are discussing here purely practical agreements *from one occasion to the next*? It goes without saying that we cannot renounce in advance such rigidly delimited and rigidly practical agreements as serve each time a quite definite aim. For example, such cases as involve agreements with the student youth of the Kuomintang for the organization of an anti-imperialist demonstration, or of obtaining assistance from the Chinese merchants for strikers in a foreign concession, etc. Such cases are not at all excluded in the future, even in China. But in that case why are *general* political conditions adduced here, namely, '... in so far as the bourgeoisie does not obstruct the revolutionary organization of the workers and peasants and wages a genuine (!) struggle against imperialism'? The sole 'condition' for every agreement with the bourgeoisie, for each separate, practical, and expedient agreement adapted to each given case, consists in not allowing either the organizations or the banners to become mixed directly or indirectly for a single day or a single hour; it consists in distinguishing between the Red and the Blue, and in not believing for an instant in the capacity or readiness of the bourgeoisie either to lead a *genuine* struggle against imperialism or *not to obstruct* the workers and peasants. For practical and expedient agreements we have absolutely no use for such a condition as the one cited above. On the contrary, it could only cause us harm, running counter to the general line of our struggle against capitalism, which is not suspended even during the brief period of an 'agreement'. As was said long ago, purely practical agreements, such as do not bind us in the least and do not oblige us to anything politically, can be concluded with the devil himself, if that is advantageous at a given moment. But it would be absurd in such a case to demand that the devil should *generally* become converted to Christianity, and that he use his horns not against workers and peasants but exclusively for pious deeds. In presenting such conditions we act in reality as the devil's advocates, and beg him to let us become his godfathers.

By its absurd conditions, which serve to paint the bourgeoisie in bright colours in advance, the draft programme states clearly and definitely (despite the diplomatic and incidental character of its thesis) that involved here are precisely long-term political blocs and not agreements for specific occasions concluded for practical reasons and rigidly confined to practical aims. But in such a case, what is meant by demands that the bourgeoisie wage a 'genuine' struggle and that it 'not obstruct' the workers? Do we present these conditions to the bourgeoisie itself, and demand a public promise from it? It will make you any promises you want! It will even send its delegates to Moscow, enter the Peasants' International, adhere as a 'sympathizing' party to the Comintern, peek into the Red International of Labour Unions. In short, it will promise anything that will give it the opportunity (with our assistance) to dupe the workers and peasants, more efficiently, more easily, and more completely to throw sand in their

eyes — until the first opportunity, such as was offered in Shanghai.

But perhaps it is not a question here of political obligations exacted from the bourgeoisie which, we repeat, it will immediately agree to in order thus to transform us into its guarantors before the working masses? Perhaps it is a question here of an 'objective' and 'scientific' evaluation of a given national bourgeoisie, an expert *a priori* 'sociological' prognosis, as it were, of its capacity to wage a struggle and not to obstruct? Sad to say, as the most recent and freshest experience testifies, such an *a priori* prognosis makes fools out of experts as a rule. And it would not be so bad, if only they alone were involved . . .

There cannot be the slightest doubt on the matter: the text deals precisely with long-term political blocs. It would be entirely superfluous to include in a programme the question of occasional practical agreements. For this purpose, a matter-of-fact tactical resolution 'On Our Current Tasks' would suffice. Involved here is a question of justifying and setting a programmatic seal of approval upon yesterday's orientation toward the Kuomintang, which doomed the second Chinese revolution to destruction, and which is capable of destroying revolutions in the future.

According to the idea advanced by Bukharin, the real author of the draft, all stakes are placed precisely upon the general evaluation of the colonial bourgeoisie, whose capacity to struggle and not obstruct must be proved not by its own oaths but in a rigorous 'sociological' manner, that is by a thousand and one scholastic schemas adapted to opportunist purposes.

To bring this out more clearly let us refer back to the Bukharin evaluation of the colonial bourgeoisie. After citing the 'anti-imperialist content' of colonial revolutions, and quoting Lenin (without any justification whatever), Bukharin proclaims:

The liberal bourgeoisie in China played an objectively revolutionary role over a period of a number of years, and not months. Then it exhausted itself. This was not at all a political 'twenty-four hour' holiday of the type of the Russian liberal revolution of 1905.

Everything here is wrong from the beginning to end.

Lenin really taught us to differentiate rigidly between an oppressed and oppressor bourgeois nation. From this follow conclusions of exceptional importance. For instance, our attitude toward a war between an imperialist and a colonial country. For a pacifist, such a war is a war like any other. For a communist, a war of a colonial nation against an imperialist nation is a bourgeois revolutionary war. Lenin thus *raised* the national liberation movements, the colonial insurrections, and wars of the oppressed nations, to the level of the bourgeois democratic revolutions, in particular, to that of the Russian revolution of 1905. But Lenin did not at all place the wars for national liberation *above* bourgeois democratic revolutions as is now done by Bukharin, after his 180 degree turn. Lenin insisted on a distinction between an oppressed bourgeois nation and a bourgeois oppressor nation. But Lenin nowhere raised and never could raise the question as if the bourgeoisie of a colonial or a semi-colonial country in an epoch of struggle for national liberation must be more progressive and more revolutionary than the bourgeoisie of a non-colonial country in the epoch of the democratic revolution. This does not flow from anything in theory; there is no confirmation of it in history. For example, pitiful as Russian liberalism was, and hybrid as was its Left half, the petty-bourgeois democrats, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, it would nevertheless hardly be possible to say that Chinese liberalism and Chinese bourgeois democracy rose to a higher level or were more revolutionary than their Russian prototypes.

To present matters as if there must inevitably flow from the fact of colonial oppression the revolutionary character of a national bourgeoisie is to reproduce inside out the fundamental error of Menshevism, which held that the revolutionary nature of the Russian bourgeoisie must flow from the oppression of feudalism and the autocracy.

The question of the nature and the policy of the bourgeoisie is settled by the entire internal class structure of a nation waging the revolutionary struggle; by the historical epoch in which that struggle develops; by the degree of economic, political, and military dependence of the national bourgeoisie upon world imperialism as a whole

or a particular section of it; finally, and this is most important, by the degree of class activity of the native proletariat, and by the state of its connections with the international revolutionary movement.

A democratic or national liberation movement may offer the bourgeoisie an opportunity to deepen and broaden its possibilities for exploitation. Independent intervention of the proletariat on the revolutionary arena threatens to deprive the bourgeoisie of the possibility to exploit altogether.

Let us observe some facts more closely.

The present inspirers of the Comintern have untiringly repeated that Chiang Kai-shek waged a war 'against imperialism' whilst Kerenisky marched hand in hand with the imperialists. *Ergo*: whereas a ruthless struggle had to be waged against Kerenisky, it was necessary to support Chiang Kai-shek.

The ties between Kereniskyism and imperialism were indisputable. One can go even still further back and point out that the Russian bourgeoisie 'dethroned' Nicholas II with the blessings of British and French imperialism. Not only did Miliukov-Kerenisky support the war waged by Lloyd George-Poincaré, but Lloyd George and Poincaré also supported Miliukov's and Kerenisky's revolution first against the Tsar, and later against the workers and peasants. This is absolutely beyond dispute.

But how did matters stand in this respect in China? The 'February' revolution in China took place in 1911. That revolution was a great and progressive event, although it was accomplished with the direct participation of the imperialists. Sun Yat-sen, in his memoirs, relates how his organization relied in all its work on the 'support' of the imperialist states — either Japan, France, or America. If Kerenisky in 1917 continued to take part in the imperialist war, then the Chinese bourgeoisie, the one that is so 'national', so 'revolutionary', etc., supported Wilson's intervention in the war with the hope that the Entente would help to emancipate China. In 1918 Sun Yat-sen addressed to the governments of the Entente his plans for the economic development and political emancipation of China. There is no foundation whatever for the assertion that the Chinese bourgeoisie, in its struggle against the Manchu Dynasty, displayed any higher revolutionary qualities than the Russian bourgeoisie in the struggle against Tsarism; or that there is a principled difference between Chiang Kai-shek's and Kerenisky's attitude toward imperialism.

But, says the ECCI, Chiang Kai-shek nevertheless did wage war against imperialism. To present the situation in this manner is to put too crude a face upon reality. Chiang Kai-shek waged war against certain Chinese militarists, the agents of one of the imperialist powers. This is not at all the same as to wage a war against imperialism. Even Tang Ping-shan understood this. In his report to the Seventh Plenum of the ECCI (at the end of 1926) Tang Ping-shan characterized the policy of the Kuomintang centre headed by Chiang Kai-shek as follows:

In the sphere of international policy it occupies a passive position in the full meaning of that word ... It is inclined to fight only against British imperialism; so far as the Japanese imperialists are concerned, however, it is ready under certain conditions to make a compromise with them. (*Minutes of the Seventh Plenum, ECCI, Vol. I, p. 406*)

The attitude of the Kuomintang toward imperialism was from the very outset not revolutionary but entirely opportunist. It endeavoured to smash and isolate the agents of certain imperialist powers so as to make a deal with the self-same or other imperialist powers on terms more favourable for the Chinese bourgeoisie. That is all. But the gist of the matter lies in the fact that the entire formulation of the question is erroneous.

One must measure not the attitude of every given national bourgeoisie to imperialism 'in general', but its attitude to the immediate revolutionary historical tasks of its own nation. The Russian bourgeoisie was the bourgeoisie of an imperialist oppressor state; the Chinese bourgeoisie, a bourgeoisie of an oppressed colonial country. The overthrow of feudal Tsarism was a progressive task in old Russia. The overthrow of the imperialist yoke is a progressive historical task in China. However, the conduct of the Chinese bourgeoisie in relation to imperialism, the proletariat, and the peasantry, was not more revolutionary than the attitude of the Russian bourgeoisie

towards Tsarism and the revolutionary classes in Russia, but, if anything, viler and more reactionary. That is the only way to pose the question.

The Chinese bourgeoisie is sufficiently realistic and acquainted intimately enough with the nature of world imperialism to understand that a really serious struggle against the latter requires such an upheaval of the revolutionary masses as would primarily become a menace to the bourgeoisie itself. If the struggle against the Manchu Dynasty was a task of smaller historical proportions than the overthrow of Tsarism, then the struggle against world imperialism is a task on a much larger scale; and if we taught the workers of Russia from the very beginning not to believe in the readiness of liberalism and the ability of petty bourgeois democracy to overthrow Tsarism and to destroy feudalism, we should no less energetically have imbued the Chinese workers from the outset with the same spirit of distrust. The new and absolutely false theory promulgated by Stalin-Bukharin about the 'immanent' revolutionary spirit of the colonial bourgeoisie is, in substance, a translation of Menshevism into the language of Chinese politics. It serves only to convert the oppressed position of China into an internal political premium for the Chinese bourgeoisie, and it throws an additional weight on the scale of the bourgeoisie against the scale of the trebly oppressed Chinese proletariat.

But, we are told by Stalin and Bukharin, the authors of the draft programme, Chiang Kai-shek's northern expedition roused a powerful movement among the worker and peasant masses. This is incontestable. But did not the fact that Guchkov and Shulgin brought with them to Petrograd the abdication of Nicholas II play a revolutionary role? Did it not arouse the most downtrodden, exhausted, and timid strata of the populace? Did not the fact that Kerenisky, who but yesterday was a Trudovik, became the President of the Ministers' Council and the Commander-in-Chief, rouse the masses of soldiers? Did it not bring them to meetings? Did it not rouse the village to its feet against the landlord? The question could be posed even more widely. Did not the entire activities of capitalism rouse the masses, did it not rescue them, to use the expression of the *Communist Manifesto*, from the idiocy of rural life? Did it not impel the proletarian battalions to the struggle? But does our historical evaluation of the objective role of capitalism as a whole or of certain actions of the bourgeoisie in particular, become a substitute for our active class revolutionary attitude toward capitalism or toward the actions of the bourgeoisie? Opportunist policies have always been based on this kind of non-dialectical, conservative, tail-endist 'objectivism'. Marxism on the contrary invariably taught that the revolutionary consequences of one or another act of the bourgeoisie, to which it is compelled by its position, will be fuller, more decisive, less doubtful, and firmer, the more independent the proletarian vanguard will be in relation to the bourgeoisie, the less it will be inclined to place its fingers between the jaws of the bourgeoisie, to see it in bright colours, to over-estimate its revolutionary spirit or its readiness for a 'united front' and for a struggle against imperialism.

The Stalinist and Bukharinist appraisal of the colonial bourgeoisie cannot stand criticism, either theoretical, historical, or political. Yet this is precisely the appraisal, as we have seen, that the draft programme seeks to canonize.

* * *

One unexposed and uncondemned error always leads to another, or prepares the ground for it.

If yesterday the Chinese bourgeoisie was enrolled in the united revolutionary front, then today it is proclaimed to have 'definitely gone over to the counter-revolutionary camp'. It is not difficult to expose how unfounded are these transfers and enrolments which have been effected in a purely administrative manner without any serious Marxist analysis whatever.

It is absolutely self-evident that the bourgeoisie in joining the camp of the revolution does so not accidentally, not because it is light-minded, but under the pressure of its own class interests. For fear of the masses the bourgeoisie subsequently deserts the revolution or openly displays its concealed hatred of the revolution. But the

bourgeoisie can go over 'definitely to the counter-revolutionary camp', that is, free itself from the necessity of 'supporting' the revolution again, or at least of flirting with it, only in the event that its fundamental class aspirations are satisfied either by revolutionary means or in another way (for instance, the Bismarckian way). Let us recall the history of the period of 1848-1871. Let us recall that the Russian bourgeoisie was able to turn its back so bluntly upon the revolution of 1905 only because the revolution gave it the State Duma, that is, it received the means whereby it could bring direct pressure to bear on the bureaucracy and make deals with it. Nevertheless, when the war of 1914-1917 revealed the inability of the 'modernized' regime to secure the basic interests of the bourgeoisie, the latter again turned towards the revolution, and made its turn more sharply than in 1905.

Can anyone maintain that the revolution of 1925-1927 in China has at least partly satisfied the basic interests of Chinese capitalism? No. China is today just as far removed from real national unity and from tariff autonomy as it was prior to 1925. Yet, the creation of a unified domestic market and its protection from cheaper foreign goods is a life-and-death question for the Chinese bourgeoisie, a question second in importance only to that of maintaining the basis of its class domination over the proletariat and the peasant poor. But, for the Japanese and the British bourgeoisie the maintenance of the colonial status of China is likewise a question of no less importance than economic autonomy is for the Chinese bourgeoisie. That is why there will still be not a few leftward zigzags in the policy of the Chinese bourgeoisie. There will be no lack of temptations in the future for the amateurs of the 'national united front'. To tell the Chinese communists today that their alliance with the bourgeoisie from 1924 to the end of 1927 was correct but that it is worthless now because the bourgeoisie has definitely gone over to the counter-revolutionary camp, is to disarm the Chinese communists once again in face of the coming objective changes in the situation and the inevitable leftward zigzags of the Chinese bourgeoisie. The war now being conducted by Chiang Kai-shek against the North already overthrows completely the mechanical schema of the authors of the draft programme.

* * *

But the principled error of the official formulation of the question will doubtless appear more glaringly, more convincingly, and more incontrovertibly if we recall the fact which is still fresh in our minds, and which is of no little importance, namely, that Tsarist Russia was a combination of oppressor and oppressed nations, that is of Great Russians and 'foreigners', many of whom were in a completely colonial or semi-colonial status. Lenin not only demanded that the greatest attention be paid to the national problem of the peoples in Tsarist Russia but also proclaimed (against Bukharin and others) that it was the elementary duty of the proletariat of the dominant nation to support the struggle of the oppressed nations for their self-determination, up to and including secession. But did the party conclude from this that the bourgeoisie of the nationalities oppressed by Tsarism (the Poles, Ukrainians, Tartars, Jews, Armenians, and others) were more progressive, more radical, and more revolutionary than the Russian bourgeoisie? Historical experience bears out the fact that the Polish bourgeoisie — notwithstanding the fact that it suffered both from the yoke of the autocracy and from national oppression — was more reactionary than the Russian bourgeoisie and, in the State Dumas, always gravitated not towards the Cadets but towards the Octobrists. The same is true of the Tartar bourgeoisie. The fact that the Jews had absolutely no rights whatever did not prevent the Jewish bourgeoisie from being even more cowardly, more reactionary, and more vile than the Russian bourgeoisie. Or perhaps the Estonian bourgeoisie, the Lettish, the Georgian, or the Armenian bourgeoisie were more revolutionary than the Great Russian bourgeoisie? How could anyone forget such historical lessons!

Or should we perhaps recognize today, after the event, that Bolshevism was wrong when — when in contradistinction to the Bund, the Dashnaks, the P.P.S.ers, the Georgian and other Mensheviks — it called upon the workers of *all* the oppressed nationalities, of all the colonial peoples in Tsarist Russia, at the very dawn of the bourgeois democratic revolution, to dissociate themselves and form their own

autonomous class organizations, to break ruthlessly all organizational ties not only with the liberal bourgeois, but also with the revolutionary petty-bourgeois parties, to win over the working class in the struggle against these parties, and through the workers fight against these parties for influence over the peasantry? Did we not commit here a 'Trotskyist' mistake? Did we not skip over, in relation to these oppressed, and in many cases very backward nations, the phase of development corresponding to the Kuomintang?

As a matter of fact how easily one could construct a theory that the P.P.S., Dashnak-Tsutun, the Bund, etc., were 'peculiar' forms of the necessary collaboration of the various classes in the struggle against the autocracy and against national oppression! How can such historical lessons be forgotten?

For a Marxist it was clear even prior to the Chinese events of the last three years — and today it should be clear even to the blind — that foreign imperialism, as a direct factor in the internal life of China, renders the Chinese Miliukovs and Chinese Kerenskys in the final analysis even more vile than their Russian prototypes. It is not for nothing that the very first manifesto issued by our party proclaimed that the further East we go, the lower and viler becomes the bourgeoisie, the greater are the tasks that fall upon the proletariat. This historical 'law' fully applies to China as well.

Our revolution is a bourgeois revolution, the workers must support the bourgeoisie — say the worthless politicians from the camp of the liquidators. Our revolution is a bourgeois revolution, say we who are Marxists. The workers must open the eyes of the people to the fraud of the bourgeois politicians, teach them not to place trust in promises and to rely on their OWN forces, on their OWN organization, on their OWN unity, and on their OWN weapons alone. (Lenin, *Works*, Vol. XIV, part I, p. 11.)

This Leninist thesis is compulsory for the Orient as a whole. It must by all means find a place in the programme of the Comintern.

2. *The Stages of the Chinese Revolution*

The first stage of the Kuomintang was the period of domination of the national bourgeoisie under the apologetic label of a 'bloc of four classes'. The second period, after Chiang Kai-shek's *coup d'état*, was an experiment of parallel and 'independent' domination of Chinese Kerenskyism, in the shape of the Hankow government of the 'Left' Wang Ching-wei. While the Russian Narodniks, together with the Mensheviks, lent to their short-lived 'dictatorship' the form of an open dual power, the Chinese 'revolutionary democracy' did not even reach that stage. And inasmuch as history in general does not work to order, there only remains for us to understand that *there is not and will not be* any other 'democratic dictatorship' except the dictatorship exercised by the Kuomintang since 1925. This remains equally true regardless of whether the semi-unification of China accomplished by the Kuomintang is maintained in the immediate future or the country is again dismembered. But precisely at a time when the class dialectics of the revolution, having spent all its other resources, clearly and conclusively put on the order of the day the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, leading the countless millions of oppressed and disinherited in city and village, the ECCI advanced the slogan of a *democratic* (i.e., bourgeois democratic) dictatorship of the workers and peasants. The reply to this formula was the Canton insurrection which, with all its prematurity, with all the adventurism of its leadership, raised the curtain of a new stage, or, more correctly, of the coming *third* Chinese revolution. It is necessary to dwell on this point in some detail.

Seeking to insure themselves against their past sins, the leadership monstrously forced the course of events at the end of last year and brought about the Canton miscarriage. However, even a miscarriage can teach us a good deal concerning the organism of the mother and the process of gestation. The tremendous and, from the standpoint of theory, truly decisive significance of the Canton events for the fundamental problems of the Chinese revolution is conditioned precisely upon the fact that we have here a phenomenon rare in history and politics, a virtual *laboratory experiment on a colossal scale*. We have paid for it dearly, but this obliges us all the more to assimilate its lessons.

One of the fighting slogans of the Canton insurrection, according to the account in *Pravda* (No. 31), was the cry 'Down with the Kuomintang!' The Kuomintang banners and insignia were torn down and trampled underfoot. But even after the 'betrayal' of Chiang Kai-shek,

and the subsequent 'betrayal' of Wang Ching-wei (betrayals not of their own class, but of our . . . illusions), the ECCI had issued the solemn vow that: 'We will not surrender the banner of the Kuomintang!' The workers of Canton outlawed the Kuomintang party, *declaring all of its tendencies illegal*. This means that for the solution of the basic national tasks, not only the big bourgeoisie but also the petty bourgeoisie was incapable of producing a political force, a party, or a faction, in conjunction with which the party of the proletariat might be able to solve the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution. The key to the situation lies precisely in the fact that *the task of winning the movement of the poor peasants already fell entirely upon the shoulders of the proletariat*, and directly upon the communist party; and that the approach to a genuine 'solution of the bourgeois-democratic tasks of the revolution necessitated the concentration of all power in the hands of the proletariat.

Pravda carried the following report about the policies of the short-lived Canton Soviet government:

'1. the interests of the workers, the Canton Soviet issued decrees establishing . . . workers' control of industry through the factory committees . . . the nationalization of big industry, transportation, and banks'.

Further on such measures are mentioned as: 'The confiscation of all dwellings of the big bourgeoisie for the benefit of the toilers . . .'

Thus it was the Canton workers who were in power and, moreover, the government was actually in the hands of the communist party. The programme of the new state power consisted not only in the confiscation of whatever feudal estates there may be in Kwantung in general; not only in the establishment of the workers' control of production; but also in the nationalization of big industry, banks, and transportation, and even the confiscation of bourgeois dwellings and all bourgeois property for the benefit of the toilers. The question arises: if these are the methods of a bourgeois revolution then what should the proletarian revolution in China look like?

Notwithstanding the fact that the directives of the ECCI had nothing to say on the subject of the proletarian dictatorship and socialist measures; notwithstanding the fact that Canton is more petty-bourgeois in character than Shanghai, Hankow, and other industrial centres of the country, the revolutionary overturn effected *against the Kuomintang* led automatically to the dictatorship of the proletariat which, at its very first steps, found itself compelled by the entire situation to resort to more radical measures than those with which the October Revolution began. And this fact, despite its paradoxical appearance, flows quite lawfully from the social relations of China as well as from the entire development of the revolution.

Large and middle-scale landed estates (such as obtain in China) are most closely interlinked with city capital, including foreign capital. There is no caste of feudal landlords in China in opposition to the bourgeoisie. The most widespread, common, and hated exploiter in the village is the kulak-usurer, the agent of finance capital in the cities. The agrarian revolution is therefore just as much anti-feudal as it is anti-bourgeois in character. In China, there will be practically no such stage as the first stage of our October revolution in which the kulak marched with the middle and poor peasant, frequently at their head, against the landlord. The agrarian revolution in China signifies from the outset, as it will signify subsequently, an uprising not only against the few genuine feudal landlords and the bureaucracy, but also against the kulaks and usurers. If in our country the poor peasant committees appeared on the scene only during the second stage of the October revolution, in the middle of 1918, in China, on the contrary, they will, in one form or another, appear on the scene as soon as the agrarian movement revives. The drive on the rich peasant will be the first and not the second step of the Chinese October.

The agrarian revolution, however, is not the sole content of the present historical struggle in China. The most extreme agrarian revolution, the general division of land (which will naturally be supported by the communist party to the very end), will not by itself provide a way out of the economic blind alley. China requires just as urgently national unity and economic sovereignty, that is, customs autonomy, or more correctly, a monopoly of foreign trade. And this means *emancipation from world imperialism* — imperialism for which China remains the most important prospective source not only of enrichment but also of actual existence, constituting a safety valve

against the internal explosions of European capitalism today and American capitalism tomorrow. This is what predetermines the gigantic scope and monstrous sharpness of the struggle that faces the masses of China, all the more so now when the depth of the stream of the struggle has already been plumbed and felt by all of its participants.

The enormous role of foreign capital in Chinese industry and its way of relying directly in defence of its plunder on its own 'national' bayonets, render the programme of workers' control in China even less realizable than it was in our country. The direct expropriation first of the foreign capitalist and then of the Chinese capitalist enterprises will most likely be made imperative by the course of the struggle, on the day after the victorious insurrection.

Those objective socio-historical causes which pre-determined the 'October' outcome of the Russian revolution rise before us in China in a still more accentuated form. The bourgeois and proletarian poles of the Chinese nation stand opposed to each other even more irreconcilably, if this is at all possible, than they did in Russia, since, on the one hand, the Chinese bourgeoisie is directly bound up with foreign imperialism and the latter's military machine, and since, on the other hand, the Chinese proletariat has from the very beginning established a close bond with the Comintern and the Soviet Union. Numerically the Chinese peasantry constitutes an even more overwhelming mass than the Russian peasantry. But being crushed in the vice of world contradictions, upon the solution of which in one way or another its fate depends, the Chinese peasantry is even less capable of playing a *leading* role than the Russian. At present this is no longer a matter of theoretical forecast, but a fact verified completely in all its aspects.

These fundamental and, at the same time, incontrovertible social and political prerequisites of the third Chinese revolution demonstrate not only that the formula of the democratic dictatorship has *hopelessly outlived its usefulness*, but also that the third Chinese revolution, despite the great backwardness of China, or more correctly, because of this great backwardness as compared with Russia, will not have a 'democratic' period, not even such a six month period as the October Revolution had (November 1917 to July 1918); but it will be compelled from the very outset to effect the most decisive shake-up and abolition of bourgeois property in city and village.

To be sure, this perspective does not harmonize with the pedantic and schematic conceptions concerning the interrelations between economics and politics. But the responsibility for this disharmony so disturbing to the prejudices which have newly taken root and which were already dealt a not inconsiderable blow by the October Revolution must be placed not on 'Trotskyism' but on the *law of uneven development*. In this particular case this law is especially applicable.

It would be unwise pedantry to maintain that, had a Bolshevik policy been applied in the revolution of 1925-27, the Chinese Communist Party would *unfailingly* have come to power. But it is contemptible philistinism to assert that such a possibility was entirely out of the question. The mass movement of workers and peasants was on a scale entirely adequate for this, as was also the disintegration of the ruling classes. The national bourgeoisie sent its Chiang Kai-sheks and Wang Ching-weis as envoys to Moscow, and through its Hu Han-mins knocked at the door of the Comintern, precisely because it was hopelessly weak in face of the revolutionary masses; it realized its weakness and sought to insure itself. Neither the workers nor the peasants would have followed the national bourgeoisie if we ourselves had not dragged them by a rope. Had the Comintern pursued any sort of correct policy, the outcome of the struggle of the communist party for the masses would have been pre-determined — the Chinese proletariat would have supported the communists, while the peasant war would have supported the revolutionary proletariat.

If, at the beginning of the Northern expedition we had begun to organize Soviets in the 'liberated' districts (and the masses were instinctively aspiring for that with all their might and main) we would have secured the necessary basis and a revolutionary running start, we would have rallied around us the agrarian uprisings, we would have built *our own* army, we would have disintegrated the enemy armies; and despite the youthfulness of the Communist Party of China, the latter would have been able, thanks to proper guidance from the Comintern, to mature in these exceptional years and to assume power, if not in the whole of China at once, then at least

in a considerable part of China. And, above all, we would have had a party.

But something absolutely monstrous occurred precisely in the sphere of leadership—a veritable historical catastrophe. The authority of the Soviet Union, of the Bolshevik party, and of the Comintern served entirely, first, to support Chiang Kai-shek against an independent policy of the communist party, and then to support Wang Ching-wei as the leader of the agrarian revolution. Having trampled underfoot the very basis of Leninist policy and after breaking the spine of the young Communist Party of China, the ECCI predetermined the victory of Chinese Kerenism over Bolshevism, of the Chinese Miliukovs over the Kerenys, and of British and Japanese imperialism over the Chinese Miliukovs.

In this and in this alone lies the meaning of what took place in China in the course of 1925-1927.

3. *Democratic Dictatorship or a Dictatorship of the Proletariat?*

But how did the last Plenum of the ECCI evaluate the experiences of the Chinese revolution, including the experience of the Canton insurrection? What further perspectives did it outline? The resolution of the February (1928) Plenum, which is the key to the corresponding sections of the draft programme on this subject, says concerning the Chinese revolution:

It is incorrect to characterize it as a 'permanent' revolution [the position of the representative of the ECCI]. The tendency to skip [?] over the bourgeois-democratic stage of the revolution while simultaneously [?] appraising the revolution as a 'permanent' revolution is a mistake analogous to that committed by Trotsky in 1905 [?].

The ideological life of the Comintern since Lenin's departure from its leadership, that is, since 1923, consisted primarily in a struggle against so-called 'Trotskyism' and particularly against the 'permanent revolution.' How is it, then, that in the fundamental question of the Chinese revolution not only the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, but also the official delegate of the Comintern, i.e., a leader who was sent with special instruction, happen to commit the very same 'mistake' for which hundreds of men are now exiled to Siberia and put in prison? The struggle around the Chinese question has been raging for some two and a half years. When the Opposition declared that the old Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (Chen Tu-hsiu), under the influence of the false directives from the Comintern, conducted an opportunist policy, this evaluation was declared to be 'slander.' The leadership of the Communist Party of China was pronounced irreproachable. The celebrated Tang Ping-shan declared amid the general approval of the Seventh Plenum of the ECCI that:

'At the very first manifestations of Trotskyism, the Communist Party of China and the Young Communist League immediately adopted a unanimous resolution against Trotskyism'. (*Minutes*, p. 205)

But when, notwithstanding these 'achievements', events unfolded their tragic logic which led to the first and then to the second and even more frightful debacle of the revolution, the leadership of the Communist Party of China, formerly flawless, was re-baptized as Menshevik and deposed in the space of twenty-four hours. At the same time a decree was promulgated that the new leadership fully reflected the line of the Comintern. But no sooner did a new and a serious test arise than it was discovered that the new Central Committee of the Communist Party of China was guilty (as we have already seen, not in words, but in actions) of swerving to the position of the so-called 'permanent revolution'. The delegate of the Comintern took the very same path. This astonishing and truly incomprehensible fact can be explained only by the yawning 'scissors' between the instructions of the ECCI and the real dynamics of the revolution.

We shall not dwell here upon the myth of the 'permanent revolution' of 1905 which was placed in circulation in 1924 in order to sow confusion and bewilderment. We shall confine ourselves to an examination of how this myth broke down on the question of the Chinese revolution.

Paragraph of the February resolution, from which the 1 passage was taken, gives the following motives for its

negative attitude toward the so-called 'permanent revolution':

The current period of the Chinese revolution is a period of a bourgeois-democratic revolution which has not been completed either from the economic standpoint (the agrarian revolution and the abolition of feudal relations), or from the standpoint of the national struggle against imperialism (the unification of China and the establishment of national independence), or from the standpoint of the class nature of the state (the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry)...

This presentation of motives is an unbroken chain of mistakes and contradictions.

The ECCI taught that the Chinese revolution must secure for China the opportunity to develop along the road to socialism. This goal could be achieved only if the revolution did not halt merely at the solution of the bourgeois-democratic tasks but continued to unfold, passing from one stage to the next, i.e., continued to develop uninterruptedly (*or permanently*) and thus lead China toward a socialist development. This is precisely what Marx understood by the term 'permanent revolution'. How then can we, on the one hand, speak of a non-capitalist path of development for China and, on the other, deny the permanent character of the revolution in general?

But — insists the resolution of the ECCI — the revolution has not been completed, either from the standpoint of the agrarian revolution or from the standpoint of the national struggle against imperialism. Hence it draws the conclusion about the bourgeois-democratic character of the 'present period of the Chinese revolution'. As a matter of fact the 'present period' is a period of counter-revolution. The ECCI doubtlessly intends to say that the new resurgence of the Chinese revolution, or the *third Chinese revolution*, will bear a bourgeois-democratic character because the second Chinese revolution of 1925-1927 solved neither the agrarian question nor the national question. However, even thus amended, this reasoning is based upon a total failure to understand the experiences and lessons of both the Chinese and the Russian revolutions.

The February 1917 revolution in Russia left unsolved all the internal and international problems which had led to the revolution — serfdom in the villages, the old bureaucracy, the war, and economic debacle. Taking this as a starting point, not only the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks, but also a considerable section of the leadership of our own party tried to prove to Lenin that the 'present period' of the revolution is a period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. In this, its basic consideration, the resolution of the ECCI merely copies the objections which the opportunists raised against the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat waged by Lenin in 1917.

Furthermore, it appears that the bourgeois-democratic revolution remains unaccomplished not only from the economic and national standpoint, but also from the 'standpoint of the class nature of the state (the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry)'. This can mean only one thing: that the Chinese proletariat is forbidden to struggle for the conquest of power so long as no 'genuine' democratic government stands at the helm in China. Unfortunately, no instructions are forthcoming as to where we can get it.

The confusion is further increased by the fact that the slogan of Soviets was rejected for China in the course of these two years on the ground that the creation of Soviets is permissible presumably only during the transition to the proletarian revolution (Stalin's 'theory'). But when the Soviet revolution broke out in Canton and when its participants drew the conclusion that this was precisely the transition to the proletarian revolution, they were accused of 'Trotskyism'. Is the party to be educated by such methods? Is this the way to assist it in the solution of supreme tasks?

To save a hopeless position, the resolution of the ECCI (without any connection whatever with the entire trend of its thought) rushes in post-haste to its last argument — taken from imperialism. It appears that the tendency to skip over the bourgeois democratic stage, 'is all the more [!] harmful because such a formulation of the question eliminates[?] the most important national peculiarity of the Chinese revolution, which is a semi-colonial revolution'.

The only meaning that these senseless words can have is that the imperialist yoke will be overthrown by some sort of non-proletarian dictatorship. But this means that the 'most important national peculiarity' has been dragged in at the last moment in order to paint the

Chinese national bourgeoisie or the Chinese petty-bourgeois 'democracy' in bright colours. This argument can have no other meaning. But this only 'meaning' has been adequately examined by us in our chapter 'On the Nature of the Colonial Bourgeoisie'. There is no need to return to this subject.

China is still confronted with a vast, bitter, bloody, and prolonged struggle for such elementary things as the liquidation of the most 'Asiatic' forms of slavery, the national emancipation, and the unification of the country. But as the course of events has shown, it is precisely this that makes impossible in the future any petty-bourgeois leadership or even semi-leadership in the revolution. The unification and emancipation of China today is an international task, no less so than the existence of the USSR. This task can be solved only by means of a desperate struggle on the part of the downtrodden, hungry, and persecuted masses under the direct leadership of the proletarian vanguard — a struggle not only against world imperialism, but also against its economic and political agency in China, against the bourgeoisie, including the 'national' bourgeoisie and all its democratic flunkys. And this is nothing else than the road toward the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Beginning with April, 1917, Lenin explained to his opponents, who accused him of having adopted the position of the 'permanent revolution', that the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry was realized partially in the epoch of dual power. He explained later that this dictatorship met with its further extension during the first period of Soviet power from November 1917 until July 1918, when the entire peasantry, together with the workers, effected the agrarian revolution while the working class did not as yet proceed with the confiscation of the mills and factories, but experimented with workers' control. So far as the 'class nature of the state' was concerned, the democratic-S.R.-Menshevik 'dictatorship' gave all that it could give — the miscarriage of dual power. As to the agrarian overturn, the revolution gave birth to a perfectly healthy and strong baby, but it was the proletarian dictatorship that functioned as the midwife. In other words, what the theoretical formula of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry had combined, was dissociated in the course of the actual class struggle. The hollow shell of semi-power was provisionally entrusted to Kerensky-Tseretelli, while the real kernel of the agrarian-democratic revolution fell to the share of the victorious working class. This dialectical dissociation of the democratic dictatorship, the leaders of the ECCI failed to understand. They drove themselves into a political blind alley by condemning mechanically any 'skipping over the bourgeois-democratic stage' and by endeavouring to guide the historical process in accordance with circular letters. *If we are to understand by the bourgeois-democratic stage, the accomplishment of the agrarian revolution by means of a 'democratic dictatorship', then it was the October Revolution itself that audaciously 'skipped' over the bourgeois-democratic stage. Should it not be condemned for it?*

Why is it then that the historically inevitable course of events which was the highest expression of Bolshevism in Russia must prove to be 'Trotskyism' in China? No doubt owing to the very same logic which declares to be suitable for China the theory of the Martynovs, a theory fought by Bolshevism for two decades in Russia.

But is it at all permissible to draw here an analogy with Russia? Our answer is that the slogan of a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry was constructed by the leaders of the ECCI exclusively and entirely in accordance with the method of analogy, but a formal and literary analogy and not a materialist and historical analogy. An analogy between China and Russia is entirely admissible if we find the proper approach to it, and Lenin made excellent use of such an analogy. Moreover he did so not *after* but *before* the events, as if he had foreseen the future blunders of the epigones. Hundreds of times Lenin had to defend the October Revolution of the proletariat that had the audacity to conquer power *notwithstanding the fact* that the bourgeois-democratic tasks had not been solved. Precisely *because of that, and precisely in order to do that*, replied Lenin. Addressing himself to the pedants, who in their arguments against the conquest of power referred to the economic immaturity of Russia for socialism, which was 'incontestable' for him (*Works*, Vol. XVIII, part 2, p. 119), Lenin wrote on January 16, 1923:

It does not even occur to them, for instance, that Russia, standing on the

border between civilized countries and countries which were for the first time definitely drawn by this war into the vortex of civilization, all Eastern countries and non-European countries — that Russia therefore could and should have manifested certain peculiarities which fall, of course, along the general lines of world development but which make its revolution different from all preceding revolutions of the Western European countries and which introduce certain partial innovations in approaching the countries of the Orient. (*Ibid.*, p. 118).

The 'peculiarity' which brings Russia *closer* to the countries of the Orient was seen by Lenin precisely in the fact that the young proletariat, at an early stage, had to grasp the broom and sweep feudal barbarism and all sorts of rubbish from its path toward socialism.

If, consequently, we are to take as our starting point the Leninist analogy between China and Russia, then we must say: from the standpoint of the 'political nature of the State,' all that could have been obtained through the democratic dictatorship in China has been put to the test, first in Sun Yat-sen's Canton, then on the road from Canton to Shanghai, which culminated in the Shanghai *coup d'état*, and then in Wuhan where the Left Kuomintang appeared in its chemically pure form, i.e., according to the directives of the ECCI, as the organizer of the agrarian revolution, but in reality as its hangman. But the social *content* of the bourgeois-democratic revolution will fill the initial period of the coming dictatorship of the Chinese proletariat and the peasant poor. To advance now the slogan of a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry after the role not only of the Chinese bourgeoisie, but also of Chinese 'democracy' has been put to a thorough test, after it has become absolutely incontestable that 'democracy' will play even a greater hangman's role in the coming battles than in the past — to advance this slogan now is simply to create the means of covering up the new varieties of Kuomintangism and to prepare a noose for the proletariat.

Let us recall for the sake of completeness what Lenin tersely said about those Bolsheviks who insisted upon counterposing to the S.R.-Menshevik experience the slogan of a 'genuine' democratic dictatorship:

Whoever now talks only about the 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' has lost touch with life, has, in virtue of this circumstance, *gone over*, in practice, to the petty bourgeoisie against the proletarian class struggle; and he ought to be relegated to the museum of 'Bolshevik' pre-revolutionary antiquities (or, as one might call it, the museum of 'old Bolsheviks'). (*Works*, Vol. XIV, part 1, p. 29).

These words ring as if they were actually spoken today.

Of course it is not at all a question of calling the Communist Party of China to an immediate insurrection for the seizure of power. The pace depends entirely upon the circumstances. The consequences of defeat cannot be removed merely by revising the tactic. The revolution is now subsiding. The half-concealing resolution of the ECCI, the bombast about imminent revolutionary onslaughts, while countless people are being executed and a terrific commercial and industrial crisis rages in China, are criminal light-mindedness and nothing else. After three major defeats an economic crisis does not rouse but, on the contrary, depresses the proletariat which, as it is, has already been bled white, while the executions only destroy the politically weakened party. We are entering in China into a period of reflux, and consequently into a period in which the party deepens its theoretical roots, educates itself critically, creates and strengthens firm organizational links in all spheres of the working class movement, organizes rural cells, leads and unites partial, at first defensive and later offensive, battles of the workers and the peasant poor.

What will turn the tide in the mass movement? What circumstances will give the necessary revolutionary impulsion to the proletarian vanguard at the head of the many-millioned masses? This cannot be predicted. The future will show whether internal processes alone will be sufficient or an added impulsion will have to come from without.

There are sufficient grounds for assuming that the smashing of the Chinese revolution, directly due to the false leadership, will permit the Chinese and foreign bourgeoisie to overcome to a lesser or greater degree the frightful economic crisis now raging in the country. Naturally, this will be done on the backs and bones of the workers and peasants. This phase of 'stabilization' will once again group and fuse together the workers, restore their class self-confidence in order subsequently to bring them into still sharper conflict with the enemy,

but on a higher historical stage. It will be possible to speak seriously about the perspective of an agrarian revolution only on the condition that there will be a new mounting wave of the proletarian movement on the offensive.

It is not excluded that the first stage of the coming third revolution may reproduce in a very abridged and modified form the stages which have already been passed, presenting, for instance, some new parody of the 'national united front'. But this first stage will be sufficient only to give the communist party a chance to put forward and announce its 'April' thesis, that is, its programme and tactics of the seizure of power, before the popular masses.

But what does the draft programme say on this?

'The transition to the proletarian dictatorship is possible here [in China] only after a series of preparatory stages [?] only as a result of a whole period of the growing over [??] of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the socialist revolution'.

In other words, all the 'stages' that have already been gone through are not to be taken into account. The draft programme still sees ahead what has already been left behind. This is precisely what is meant by a tail-endist formulation. It opens wide the gates for new experiments in the spirit of the Kuomintang course. Thus the concealment of the old mistakes inevitably prepares the road for new errors.

If we enter the new upsurge, which will develop at an incomparably more rapid tempo than the last one, with a blueprint of 'democratic dictatorship' that has already outlived its usefulness, there can be no doubt that the third Chinese revolution, like the second, will be led to its doom.

5. Soviets and Revolution

In the February resolution of the ECCI the representatives of the Comintern, 'Comrade N. and others', are made responsible for the 'absence of an *elected* Soviet in Canton as an organ of insurrection'. (Emphasis in the original). Behind this charge in reality lies an astounding admission.

In the report of *Pravda* (No. 31), written on the basis of first-hand documents, it was stated that a Soviet government had been established in Canton. But not a word was mentioned to indicate that the Canton Soviet was *not an elected organ*, i.e., that it was *not a Soviet* — for how can there be a Soviet which was not elected? We learn this from the resolution. Let us reflect for a moment on the significance of this fact. The ECCI tells us now that a Soviet is necessary to effect an armed insurrection, but by no means prior to that time. But lo and behold! When the date for the insurrection is set, there is no Soviet. To create an elected Soviet is not an easy matter. It is necessary that the masses know from experience what a Soviet is, that they understand its form, that they have learned something in the past to accustom them to an elected Soviet organization. There was not even a sign of this in China, for the slogan of Soviets was declared to be a Trotskyist slogan precisely in the period when it should have become the nerve centre of the entire movement. When, however, helter-skelter, a date was set for an insurrection so as to skip over their own defeats, they simultaneously had to *appoint* a Soviet as well. If this error is not laid bare to the core, the slogan of Soviets can be transformed into a strangling noose of the revolution.

Lenin in his time explained to the Mensheviks that the fundamental historical task of the Soviets is to organize, or help organize, the conquest of power so that on the day after the victory they become the organ of that power. The epigones — and not the disciples — draw from this the conclusion that Soviets can be organized only when the twelfth hour of the insurrection has struck. Lenin's broad generalization they transform *post factum* into a little recipe which does not serve the interests of the revolution but imperils it.

Before the Bolshevik Soviets in October 1917 captured power, the S.R. and Menshevik Soviets had existed for nine months. Twelve years before, the first revolutionary Soviets existed in Petersburg, Moscow, and scores of other cities. Before the Soviet of 1905 was extended to embrace the mills and factories of the capital, there was created in Moscow, during the strike, a Soviet of printers' deputies. Several months before this, in May 1905, a mass strike in Ivanovo-Voznesensk set up a leading organ which already contained all the essential features of a Soviet of workers' deputies. Between the first

experiment of setting up a Soviet of workers' deputies and the gigantic experiment of setting up a Soviet government, more than twelve years rolled by. Of course, such a period is not at all required for all other countries, including China. But to think that the Chinese workers are capable of building Soviets on the basis of the little recipe that has been substituted for Lenin's broad generalization is to substitute impotent and importunate pedantry for the dialectic of revolutionary action. Soviets must be set up not on the eve of the insurrection, not under the slogan of immediate seizure of power — for if the matter has reached the point of the seizure of power, if the masses are prepared for an armed insurrection *without a Soviet*, it means that there have been other organizational forms and methods which made possible the performance of the preparatory work to ensure success of the

uprising. Then the question of Soviets becomes of secondary importance and is reduced to a question of organizational technique or merely to a question of denomination. The task of the Soviets is not merely to issue the call for the insurrection or to carry it out, but *to lead the masses toward the insurrection through the necessary stages*. At first the Soviet rallies the masses not to the slogan of armed insurrection, but to partial slogans, so that only later, step by step, the masses are brought towards the slogan of insurrection without scattering them on the road and without allowing the vanguard to become isolated from the class. The Soviet appears most often and primarily in connection with strike struggles which have the perspectives of revolutionary development, but are in the given moment limited merely to economic demands. The masses must sense and understand while in action that the Soviet is *their* organization, that it marshals the forces for a struggle, for resistance, for self-defence, and for an offensive. They can sense and understand this not from an action of a single day nor in general from any single act, but from the experience of several weeks, months, and perhaps years, with or without interruptions. That is why only an epigonic and bureaucratic leadership can restrain the awakening and rising masses from creating Soviets in conditions when the country is passing through an epoch of revolutionary upheavals and when the working class and the poor peasants have before them the prospect of capturing power, even though this is a perspective of one of the subsequent stages and even if this perspective can be envisaged in the given phase only by a small minority. Such was always our conception of the Soviets. We evaluated the Soviets as that broad and flexible organizational form which is accessible to the masses who have just awakened at the very first stages of their revolutionary upsurge; and which is capable of uniting the working class in its entirety, independent of the size of that section which, in the given phase, has already matured to the point of understanding the task of the seizure of power.

Is any documentary evidence really necessary? Here, for instance, is what Lenin wrote about the Soviets in the epoch of the first revolution:

The Social Democratic Labour Party of Russia [the name of the party at that time] has never refused to utilize at *moments of greater or smaller revolutionary upsurge* certain non-party organizations of the type of Soviets of Workers' Deputies in order to strengthen the influence of the social democrats on the working class and to consolidate the social democratic labour movement. (*Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 215).

One could cite voluminous literary and historic evidence of this type. But one would imagine that the question is sufficiently clear without them.

In contradistinction to this the epigones have converted the Soviets into an organizational parade uniform with which the party simply dresses up the proletariat on the eve of the capture of power. But this is precisely the time when we find that the Soviets cannot be improvised in 24 hours, by order, for the direct purpose of an armed insurrection. Such experiments must inevitably assume a fictitious character and the absence of the most necessary conditions for the capture of power is masked by the external ritual of a Soviet system. That is what happened in Canton where the Soviet was simply appointed to observe the ritual. That is where the epigone formulation of the question leads.

During the polemics on the Chinese events the Opposition was accused of the following alleged flagrant contradiction: whereas from 1926 on the Opposition advanced the slogan of Soviets for China, its

representatives spoke against the slogan of Soviets for Germany in the Autumn of 1923. On no other point perhaps has scholastic political thought expressed itself so glaringly as in this accusation. Yes, we demanded for China a *timely* start for the creation of Soviets as *independent* organizations of workers and peasants, *when the wave of revolutionary upsurge was mounting*.

The chief significance of the Soviets was to be that of *opposing the workers and peasants to the Kuomintang bourgeoisie* and its Left Kuomintang agency. The slogan of Soviets in China meant above all the break with the suicidal and infamous 'bloc of four classes' and the withdrawal of the communist party from the Kuomintang. The centre of gravity consequently lay not in bare organizational forms, but in the class line.

In the autumn of 1923 in Germany it was a question of organizational form only. As a result of the extreme passivity, backwardness, and tardiness of the leadership of the Comintern and the Communist Party of Germany, the moment for a timely call for the organization of Soviets was missed. The factory committees, due to pressure from below and of their own accord, had occupied in the labour movement of Germany by the Autumn of 1923 the place which would no doubt have been much more successfully occupied by Soviets had there been a correct and daring policy on the part of the communist party. The acuteness of the situation had in the meantime reached its sharpest point. To lose any more time would have meant definitely to miss the revolutionary situation. The insurrection was finally placed on the order of the day, with very little time left. To advance the slogan of Soviets under such conditions would have been the greatest pedantic stupidity conceivable. The Soviet is not a talisman with omnipotent powers of salvation. In a situation such as had then developed, the hurried creation of Soviets would only have duplicated the factory committees. It would have become necessary to deprive the latter of their revolutionary functions and to transfer them to the newly-created and still utterly unauthoritative Soviets. And when was this to be done? Under conditions in which each day counted. This would have meant to substitute for revolutionary action a most pernicious game in organizational gew-gaws.

It is incontestable that the organizational form of a Soviet can be of enormous importance; but only at a time when it furnishes a timely reflection of the correct political line. And conversely, it can acquire a no less negative meaning if it is converted into a fiction, a fetish, a bagatelle. The German Soviets created at the very last moment in the autumn of 1923 would have added nothing politically; they would only have caused organizational confusion. What happened in Canton was even worse yet. The Soviet which was created in a hurry to observe the ritual was only a masquerade for the adventurist putsch. That is why we discovered, after it was all over, that the Canton Soviet resembled an ancient Chinese dragon simply drawn on paper. The policy of pulling rotten strings and paper dragons is not our policy. We were against improvising Soviets by telegraph in Germany in September 1923. We were for the creation of Soviets in China in 1926. We were against the masquerade Soviet in Canton in 1927. There are no contradictions here. We have here instead the profound unity of the conception of the dynamics of the revolutionary movement and its organizational forms.

The question of the role and significance of the Soviets, which had been distorted and confused and obscured by the theory and practice of recent years, has not been illuminated in the least in the draft programme.

6. *The Question of the Character of the Coming Chinese Revolution*

The slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which leads behind it the peasant poor, is inseparably bound up with the question of the socialist character of the coming third revolution in China. And inasmuch as not only history repeats itself but also the mistakes which people counterpose to its requirements, we can already hear the objection that China has not yet matured for a socialist revolution. But this is an abstract and lifeless formulation of the question. For has Russia, taken by itself, matured for socialism? According to Lenin — NO! It has matured for the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only method for solving unpostponable national tasks. But the destiny of

the dictatorship as a whole is determined in the last analysis by the trend of *world* development, which, of course, does not exclude but rather presupposes a correct policy on the part of the proletarian dictatorship, the consolidation and development of the workers' and peasants' alliance, an all-sided adaptation to national conditions on the one hand, and to the trend of world development on the other. This fully holds true for China as well.

In the same article entitled 'On Our Revolution' (January 16, 1923), in which Lenin establishes that the peculiarity of Russia proceeds along the lines of the peculiar development of the Eastern countries, he brands as 'infinitely hackneyed' the argument of European social democracy to the effect 'that we have not matured for socialism, that we lack, as some of these 'erudite' gentlemen say, the objective economic prerequisites for Socialism'. But Lenin ridicules the 'erudite' gentlemen not because he himself recognized the *existence* of the economic prerequisites for Socialism in Russia but because he holds that the rejection of the seizure of power does not at all follow, as pedants and philistines think, from the absence of these prerequisites necessary for an *independent* construction of socialism. In this article of his, Lenin for the hundred and first time, or, rather, for the thousand and first time replies to the sophisms of the heroes of the Second International: 'This *incontrovertible consideration* [the immaturity of Russia for Socialism] . . . is not decisive for the evaluation of our revolution'. (Works, Vol. XVIII, Part 21, pp. 118f). That is what the authors of the draft programme refuse and are unable to understand. In itself the thesis of the economic and cultural immaturity of China as well as Russia — China, of course, more so than Russia — is incontrovertible. But hence it does not at all follow that the proletariat has to renounce the conquest of power, when this conquest is dictated by the entire historical context and the revolutionary situation in the country.

The concrete, historical, political, and actual question is reducible not to whether China has economically matured for 'its own' socialism, but whether China has ripened politically for the proletarian dictatorship. These two questions are not at all identical. They might be regarded as identical were it not for the law of uneven development. This is where this law is in place and fully applies to the interrelationship between economics and politics. Then China has matured for the dictatorship of the proletariat? Only the experience of the struggle can provide a categorical answer to this question. By the same token, only the struggle can settle the question as to when and under what conditions the real unification, emancipation, and regeneration of China will take place. Anyone who says that China has not matured for the dictatorship of the proletariat declares thereby that the third Chinese revolution is postponed for many years to come.

Of course, matters would be quite hopeless if feudal survivals did really *dominate* in Chinese economic life, as the resolutions of the ECCI asserted. But fortunately, *survivals* in general cannot dominate. The draft programme on this point, too, does not rectify the errors committed, but reaffirms them in a roundabout and nebulous fashion. The draft speaks of the 'predominance of mediaeval feudal relations both in the economics of the country and in the political superstructure . . .'. This is false to the core. What does *predominance* mean? Is it a question of the number of people involved? Or the dominant and leading role in the economics of the country? The extraordinarily rapid growth of home industry on the basis of the all-embracing role of mercantile and bank capital; the complete dependence of the most important agrarian districts on the market; the enormous and ever-growing role of foreign trade; the all-sided subordination of the Chinese village to the city — all these bespeak the unconditional predominance, the direct domination of capitalist relations in China. The social relations of serfdom and semi-serfdom are undeniably very strong. They stem in part from the days of feudalism; and in part they constitute a new formation, that is, the regeneration of the past on the basis of the retarded development of the productive forces, the surplus agrarian population, the activities of merchants' and usurers' capital, etc. However, it is capitalist relations that *dominate* and not 'feudal' (more correctly, serf and, generally, pre-capitalist) relations. Only thanks to this dominant role of capitalist relations can we speak seriously of the prospects of proletarian hegemony in the national revolution. Otherwise, there is no making the ends meet.

The strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is infinitely greater

than the proportion of the proletariat in the total population. This is due to the fact that the proletariat is in economic command of the central points and nerve centres of the entire capitalist system of economy, and also because the proletariat expresses economically and politically the *real* interests of the vast majority of the toilers under capitalism.

For this reason the proletariat, even if it constitutes the minority of the population (or in cases where the conscious and truly revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat comprises the minority of the population), is capable both of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and of attracting subsequently to its side many allies from among the masses of semi-proletarians and petty bourgeois, who will never come out beforehand for the domination of the proletariat, who will not understand the conditions and tasks of this domination, but who will convince themselves solely from their subsequent experiences of the inevitability, justice, and legitimacy of the proletarian dictatorship. (Lenin, *Works, The Year 1919*, Vol. XVI, p. 458).

The role of the Chinese proletariat in production is already very great. In the next few years it will only increase still further. Its political role, as events have shown, could have been gigantic. But the whole line of the leadership was directed entirely against permitting the proletariat to conquer the leading role.

The draft programme says that successful socialist construction is possible in China 'only on the condition that it is directly supported by countries under the proletarian dictatorship'. Thus, here, in relation to China, the same principle is recognized which the party has always recognized in regard to Russia. But if China lacks sufficient inner forces for an *independent* construction of socialist society, then according to the theory of Stalin-Bukharin, the Chinese proletariat should not seize power at any stage of the revolution. Or it may be that the existence of the USSR settles the question in just the opposite sense. Then it follows that our technology is sufficient to build a socialist society not only in the USSR but also in China, i.e., in the two economically most backward countries with a combined population of six hundred million. Or perhaps the *inevitable* dictatorship of the proletariat in China is 'inadmissible' because that dictatorship will be included in the chain of the world-wide socialist revolution, thus becoming not only its link, but its driving force? But this is precisely Lenin's basic formulation of the October Revolution, the 'peculiarity' of which follows precisely along the lines of development of the Eastern countries. We see thus how the revisionist theory of socialism in one country, evolved in 1925 in order to wage a struggle against Trotskyism, distorts and confuses matters each time a new major revolutionary problem is approached.

The draft programme goes still further along this same road. It counterposes China and India to 'Russia before 1917' and Poland ('etc.??') as countries with 'a certain *minimum* of industry sufficient for the triumphant construction of socialism', or (as is more definitely and therefore more erroneously stated elsewhere) as countries possessing the 'necessary and sufficient material prerequisites . . . for the complete construction of socialism'. This, as we already know, is a mere play upon Lenin's expression 'necessary and sufficient' prerequisites; a fraudulent and an impermissible jugglery because Lenin definitely enumerates the *political and organizational prerequisites*, including the *technical*, cultural, and international prerequisites. But the chief point that remains is: how can one determine *a priori* the 'minimum of industry' sufficient for the complete building of socialism once it is a question of an uninterrupted world struggle between two economic systems, two social orders, and a struggle, moreover, in which our *economic* base is infinitely the weaker?

If we take into consideration only the economic lever, it is clear that we in the USSR, and all the more so in China and India, have a far shorter arm of the lever than world capitalism. But the entire question is resolved by the *revolutionary struggle* of the two systems on a world scale. In the political struggle, the long arm of the lever is *on our side*, or, to put it more correctly, it can and must prove so in our hands, if our policy is correct.

Again, in the same article 'On Our Revolution', after stating that 'a certain cultural level is necessary for the creation of 'socialism', Lenin adds: 'although no one can tell what this certain cultural level is'. Why can no one tell? Because the question is settled by the struggle, by the rivalry between the two social systems and the two cultures, *on an international scale*. Breaking completely with this idea of Lenin's, which flows from the very essence of the question, the draft programme asserts that in 1917 Russia had precisely the 'minimum technology' and consequently also the culture necessary for the building of

socialism in one country. The authors of the draft attempt to tell in the programme that which 'no one can tell' *a priori*.

It is impermissible, impossible, and absurd to seek a criterion for the 'sufficient minimum' within national states ('Russia prior to 1917') when the whole question is settled by international dynamics. In this false, arbitrary, isolated national criterion rests the theoretical basis of national narrowness in politics, the precondition for inevitable national-reformist and social patriotic blunders in the future.

7. On the Reactionary Idea of 'Two-Class Workers' and Peasants' Parties' for the Orient

The lessons of the second Chinese revolution are lessons for the entire Comintern, but primarily for all the countries of the Orient.

All the arguments presented in defence of the Menshevik line in the Chinese revolution must, if we take them seriously, hold trebly good for India. The imperialist yoke assumes in India, the classic colony, infinitely more direct and palpable forms than in China. The survivals of feudal and serf relations in India are immeasurably deeper and greater. Nevertheless, or rather precisely for this reason, the methods which, applied in China, undermined the revolution, must result in India in even more fatal consequences. The overthrow of Indian feudalism and of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy and British militarism can be accomplished only by a gigantic and an indomitable movement of the popular masses which precisely because of its powerful sweep and irresistibility, its international aims and ties, cannot tolerate any half-way and compromising opportunist measures on the part of the leadership.

The Comintern leadership has already committed not a few mistakes in India. The conditions have not yet allowed these errors to reveal themselves on such a scale as in China. One can, therefore, hope that the lessons of the Chinese events will permit of a more timely rectification of the line of the leading policy in India and in other countries of the Orient.

The cardinal question for us here, as everywhere and always, is the question of the communist party, its complete independence, its irreconcilable class character. The greatest danger on this path is the organization of so-called 'workers' and peasants' parties' in the countries of the Orient.

Beginning with 1924, a year which will go down as the year of open revision of a number of fundamental theses of Marx and Lenin, Stalin advanced the formula of the 'two-class workers' and peasants' parties for the Eastern countries'. It was based on the self-same national oppression which served in the Orient to camouflage opportunism, as did "stabilization" in the Occident. Cables from India, as well as from Japan, where there is no national oppression, have of late frequently mentioned the activities of provincial 'workers' and peasants' parties,' referring to them as organizations which are close and friendly to the Comintern, as if they were almost our 'own' organizations, without, however, giving any sort of concrete definition of their political physiognomy; in a word, writing and speaking about them in the same way as was done only a short while ago about the Kuomintang.

Back in 1924, *Pravda* reported that: 'There are indications that the movement of national liberation in Korea is gradually taking shape in the form of the creation of a workers' and peasants' party'. (*Pravda*, March 2, 1924).

And in the meantime Stalin lectured to the communists of the Orient that:

The communists must pass from the policy of a united national front . . . to the policy of a revolutionary bloc between the workers and petty-bourgeoisie. In such countries this bloc can assume the form of a single party, a workers' and peasants' party, akin to the Kuomintang . . . (Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, p. 264).

The ensuing tiny 'reservations' on the subject of the independence of the communist parties (obviously, 'independence' like that of the prophet Jonah inside the whale's belly) served only for the purpose of camouflage. We are profoundly convinced that the Sixth Congress must state that the slightest equivocation in this sphere is fatal and will be rejected.

It is a question here of an absolutely new, entirely false, and thoroughly anti-Marxist formulation of the fundamental question of the party and of its relation to its own class and other classes.

The necessity for the Communist Party of China to enter the Kuomintang was defended on the ground that in its social composition the Kuomintang is a party of workers and peasants, that nine-tenths of the Kuomintang — this proportion was repeated hundreds of times — belonged to the revolutionary tendency and were ready to march hand in hand with the communist party. However, during and since the *coups d'état* in Shanghai and Wuhan, these revolutionary nine-tenths of the Kuomintang disappeared as if by magic. No one has found a trace of them. And the theoreticians of class collaboration in China, Stalin, Bukharin, and others, did not even take the trouble to explain what has become of the nine-tenths of the members of the Kuomintang — the nine-tenths workers and peasants, revolutionists, sympathizers, and entirely our 'own'. Yet, an answer to this question is of decisive importance if we are to understand the destiny of all these 'two-class' parties preached by Stalin; and if we are to be clarified upon the very conception itself, which throws us far behind not only of the programme of the RCP of 1919, but also of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1847.

The question of where the celebrated nine-tenths vanished can become clear to us only if we understand, first, the impossibility of a bi-composite, that is a two-class party, expressing simultaneously two mutually exclusive historical lines — the proletarian and petty bourgeois lines; secondly, the impossibility of realizing in capitalist society an independent peasant party, that is, a party expressing the interests of the peasantry, which is at the same time independent of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Marxism has always taught, and Bolshevism, too, accepted, and taught, that the peasantry and proletariat are two different classes, that it is false to identify their interests in capitalist society in any way, and that a peasant can join the communist party only if, from the property viewpoint, he adopts the views of the proletariat. The alliance of the workers and peasants under the dictatorship of the proletariat does not invalidate this thesis, but confirms it, in a different way, under different circumstances. If there were no *different* classes with *different* interests, there would be no talk even of an *alliance*. Such an alliance is compatible with the socialist revolution only to the extent that it enters into the iron framework of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In our country the dictatorship is incompatible with the existence of a so-called Peasants' League precisely because every 'independent' peasant organization aspiring to solve all national political problems would inevitably turn out to be an instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

Those organizations which in capitalist countries label themselves peasant parties are in reality one of the varieties of bourgeois parties. Every peasant who has not adopted the proletarian position, abandoning his proprietor psychology, will inevitably follow the bourgeoisie when it comes to fundamental political issues. Of course, every bourgeois party that relies or seeks to rely on the peasantry and, if possible, on the workers, is compelled to camouflage itself, that is, to assume two or three appropriate colourations. The celebrated idea of 'workers' and peasants' parties' seems to have been specially created to camouflage bourgeois parties which are compelled to seek support from the peasantry but who are also ready to absorb workers into their ranks. The Kuomintang has entered the annals of history for all time as a classic type of such a party.

Bourgeois society, as is known, is so constructed that the propertyless, discontented, and deceived masses are at the bottom and the contented fakers remain on top. Every bourgeois party, if it is a real party, that is, if it embraces considerable masses, is built on the self-same principle. The exploiters, fakers, and despots compose the minority in class society. Every capitalist party is therefore compelled in its internal relations, in one way or another, to reproduce and reflect the relations in bourgeois society as a whole. In every mass bourgeois party the lower ranks are therefore more democratic and further to the 'Left' than the tops. This holds true of the German Centre, the French Radicals, and particularly the social democracy. That is why the constant complaints voiced by Stalin, Bukharin, and others that the tops do not reflect the sentiments of the 'Left' Kuomintang rank and file, the 'overwhelming majority,' the 'nine-tenths,' etc., are so naive, so unpardonable. That which they represented in their bizarre complaints to be a temporary, disagreeable misunderstanding which was to be eliminated by means of organiza-

tional measures, instructions, and circular letters, is in reality a cardinal and basic feature of a bourgeois party, particularly in a revolutionary epoch.

It is from this angle that the basic arguments of the authors of the draft programme in defence of all kinds of opportunist blocs in general — both in Britain and China — must be judged. According to them, fraternization with the tops is done exclusively in the interests of the rank and file. The Opposition, as is known, insisted on the withdrawal of the party from the Kuomintang:

'The question arises', says Bukharin, 'why? Is it because the leaders of the Kuomintang are vacillating? And what about the Kuomintang masses, are they mere 'cattle'? Since when is the attitude to a mass organization determined by what takes place at the 'high' summit!' (*The Present Situation in the Chinese Revolution*).

The very possibility of such an argument seems impossible in a revolutionary party. Bukharin asks, 'And what about the Kuomintang masses, are they mere cattle?' Of course they are cattle. The masses of any bourgeois party are always cattle, although in different degrees. But for us, the masses are not cattle, are they? No, that is precisely why we are forbidden to drive them into the arms of the bourgeoisie, *camouflaging the latter under the label of a workers' and peasants' party*. That is precisely why we are forbidden to subordinate the proletarian party to a bourgeois party, but on the contrary, must at every step, oppose the former to the latter. The 'high' summit of the Kuomintang of whom Bukharin speaks so ironically, as of something secondary, accidental, and temporary is in reality the soul of the Kuomintang, its social essence. Of course, the bourgeoisie constitutes only the 'summit' in the party as well as in society. But this summit is powerful in its capital, knowledge, and connections: it can always fall back on the imperialists for support, and what is most important, it can always resort to the actual political and military power which is intimately fused with the leadership in the Kuomintang itself. It is precisely this summit that wrote laws against strikes, throttled the uprisings of the peasants, shoved the communists into a dark corner, and, at best, allowed them to be only one-third of the party, exacted an oath from them that petty-bourgeois Sun Yat-senism takes precedence over Marxism. The rank and file were picked and harnessed by this summit, serving it, like Moscow, as a 'Left' support, just as the generals, compradores, and imperialists served it as a Right support. To consider the Kuomintang not as a *bourgeois party, but as a neutral arena of struggle for the masses*, to play with words about nine-tenths of the Left rank and file in order to mask the question as to who is the real master, meant to add to the strength and power of the summit, to assist the latter to convert ever broader masses into 'cattle', and, under conditions most favourable to it to prepare the Shanghai *coup d'état*. Basing themselves on the reactionary idea of the two-class party, Stalin and Bukharin imagined that the communists, together with the 'Lefts', would secure a majority in the Kuomintang and thereby power in the country, for, in China, power is in the hands of the Kuomintang. In other words, they imagined that *by means of ordinary elections at Kuomintang Congresses power would pass from the hands of the bourgeoisie to the proletariat*. Can one conceive of a more touching and idealistic idolization of 'party democracy' . . . in a bourgeois party? For indeed, the army, the bureaucracy, the press, the capital are all in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Precisely because of this and this alone it stands at the helm of the ruling party. The bourgeois 'summit' tolerates or tolerated 'nine-tenths' of the Lefts (and Lefts of *this sort*), only in so far as they did not venture against the army, the bureaucracy, the press, and against capital. By these powerful means the bourgeois summit kept in subjection not only the so-called nine-tenths of the 'Left' party members, but also the masses as a whole. In this the theory of the bloc of classes, the theory that the Kuomintang is a workers' and peasants' party, provides the best possible assistance for the bourgeoisie. When the bourgeoisie later comes into hostile conflict with the masses and shoots them down, in this clash between the two real forces, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, not even the bleating of the celebrated nine-tenths is heard. The pitiful democratic fiction evaporates without a trace in face of the bloody reality of the class struggle.

Such is the genuine and only possible political mechanism of the 'two-class workers' and peasants' parties for the Orient'. There is no other and there will be none.

Although the idea of the two-class parties is motivated on national oppression, which allegedly abrogates Marx's class doctrine, we have already heard about 'workers' and peasants' mongrels in Japan, where there is no national oppression at all. But that isn't all, the matter is not limited merely to the Orient. The 'two-class' idea seeks to attain universality. In this domain, the most grotesque features were assumed by the above-mentioned Communist Party of America in its effort to support the presidential candidacy of the bourgeois, 'anti-trust' Senator LaFollette, so as to yoke the American farmers by this means to the chariot of the social revolution. Pepper, the theoretician of this manoeuvre, one of those who ruined the Hungarian revolution because he overlooked the Hungarian peasantry, made a great effort (by way of compensation, no doubt) to ruin the Communist Party of America by dissolving it among the farmers. Pepper's theory was that the super-profit of American capitalism converts the American proletariat into a world labour aristocracy, while the agrarian crisis ruins the farmers and drives them onto the path of social revolution. According to Pepper's conception, a party of a few thousand members, consisting chiefly of immigrants, had to fuse with the farmers through the medium of a bourgeois party and by thus founding a 'two-class' party, insure the socialist revolution in the face of the passivity or neutrality of the proletariat corrupted by super-profits.

This insane idea found supporters and half-supporters among the upper leadership of the Comintern. For several weeks the issue swayed in the balance until finally a concession was made to the ABC of Marxism (the comment behind the scenes was: Trotskyist prejudices). It was necessary to lasso the American Communist Party in order to tear it away from the LaFollette party which died even before its founder.

Everything invented by modern revisionism for the Orient is carried over later to the West. If Pepper on one side of the Atlantic Ocean tried to spur history by means of a two-class party then the latest dispatches in the press inform us that the Kuomintang experience finds its imitators in Italy where, apparently, an attempt is being made to foist on our party the monstrous slogan of a 'republican assembly on the basis [?!] of workers' and peasants' committees'. In this slogan the spirit of Chiang Kai-shek embraces the spirit of Hilferding. Will we really come to that?⁷³

* * *

In conclusion there remains for us only to recall that the idea of a workers' and peasants' party sweeps from the history of Bolshevism the entire struggle against the Populists (Narodniks), without which there would have been no Bolshevik party. What was the significance of this historical struggle? In 1909 Lenin wrote the following about the Socialist-Revolutionaries:

The fundamental idea of their programme was not at all that 'an alliance of the forces' of the proletariat and the peasantry is necessary, but that there is no class abyss between the former and the latter and that there is no need to draw line of class demarcation between them, and that the social democratic idea of the petty bourgeois nature of the peasantry that distinguishes it from the proletariat is fundamentally false. (*Works*, Vol. XI, Part I, p. 198).

In other words, the two-class workers' and peasants' party is the central idea of the Russian Narodniks. Only in the struggle against this idea could the party of the proletarian vanguard in peasant Russia develop.

Lenin persistently and untiringly repeated in the epoch of the 1905 revolution that:

Our attitude towards the peasantry must be distrustful, we must *organize separately from it*, be ready for a struggle against it, to the extent that the peasantry comes forward as a reactionary or anti-proletarian force. (*Works*, Vol. VI, p. 113. Our emphasis).

In 1906 Lenin wrote:

Our last advice: proletarians and semi-proletarians of city and country, *organize yourselves separately!* Place no trust in any small proprietors, even the petty ones, even those who 'toil' . . . We support the peasant movement to the end, but we must remember that it is a movement of another class, *not the one* that can or will accomplish the socialist revolu-

tion. (*Works*, Vol. IX, p. 410).

This idea reappears in hundreds of Lenin's major and minor works. In 1908, he explained:

The alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry must in no case be interpreted to mean a *fusion of the different classes or parties* of the proletariat and the peasantry. Not only fusion, but even *any sort of lasting concord* would be fatal for the socialist party of the working class and *weaken the revolutionary democratic struggle*. (*Works*, Vol. XI, Part I, p. 79. Our emphasis).

Could one condemn the very idea of a workers' and peasants' party more harshly, more ruthlessly, and more devastatingly?

Stalin, on the other hand, teaches that:

The revolutionary anti-imperialist bloc . . . must, though not always [!] necessarily [!], assume the form of a single workers' and peasants' party, bound formally [?] by a single platform. (*Problems of Leninism*, p. 265).

Lenin taught us that an alliance between workers and peasants must in no case and never lead to merger of the parties. But Stalin makes only one concession to Lenin: although, according to Stalin, the bloc of classes must assume 'the form of a single party', a workers' and peasants' party like the Kuomintang — *is not always obligatory*. We should thank him for at least this concession.

Lenin put this question in the same irreconcilable spirit during the epoch of the October Revolution. In generalizing the experience of the three Russian revolutions, Lenin, beginning with 1918, did not miss a single opportunity to repeat that there are two decisive forces in a society where capitalist relations predominate — the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

'If the peasant does not follow the workers, he marches behind the bourgeoisie. There is and there can be no middle course'. (*Works*, Vol. XVI, 'The Year 1919', p. 219).

Yet a 'workers' and peasants' party' is precisely an attempt to create a middle course.

Had the vanguard of the Russian proletariat failed to oppose itself to the peasantry, had it failed to wage a ruthless struggle against the all-devouring petty bourgeois amorphousness of the latter, it would inevitably have dissolved itself among the petty-bourgeois elements through the medium of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party or some other 'two-class party' which, in turn, would inevitably have subjected the vanguard to bourgeois leadership. In order to arrive at a revolutionary alliance with the peasantry — this does not come gratuitously — it is first of all necessary to separate the proletarian vanguard, and thereby the working class as a whole, from the petty bourgeois masses. This can be achieved only by training the proletarian party in the spirit of unshakable class irreconcilability.

The younger the proletariat, the fresher and more direct its 'blood-ties' with the peasantry, the greater the proportion of the peasantry to the population as a whole, the greater becomes the importance of the struggle against any form of 'two-class' political alchemy. In the West the idea of a workers' and peasants' party is simply ridiculous. In the East it is fatal. In China, India, and Japan this idea is mortally hostile not only to the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolution but also to the most elementary independence of the proletarian vanguard. The workers' and peasants' party can only serve as a base, a screen, and a springboard for the bourgeoisie.

It is fatal that in this question, fundamental for the entire East, modern revisionism only repeats the errors of old social democratic opportunism of pre-revolutionary days. Most of the leaders of European social democracy considered the struggle of our party against S.R.s to be mistaken and insistently advocated the fusion of the two parties, holding that for the Russian 'East' a two-class workers' and peasants' party was exactly in order. Had we heeded their counsel, we should never have achieved either the alliance of the workers and the peasants or the dictatorship of the proletariat. The 'two-class' workers' and peasants' party of the S.R.s became, and could not help becoming in our country, the agency of the imperialist bourgeoisie, i.e., it tried unsuccessfully to fulfil the same historic role which was successfully played in China by the Kuomintang in a different and 'peculiar' Chinese way, thanks to the revisionists of Bolshevism. Without a relentless condemnation of the very idea of workers' and peasants' parties for the East, there is not and there cannot be a programme of the Comintern.

Explanatory Notes

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Menshevik ('minority')—the reformist wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, formed into a separate party in 1912. In 1917, with their mistaken 'two-stage' theory of the Revolution, Menshevik ministers helped prop up the capitalist Provisional Government, supported its imperialist policy and fought against the proletarian revolution.

Kuomintang—Chinese bourgeois-nationalist movement which looked for support to the peasantry, urban middle class and workers, but with its leadership completely in the hands of the bankrupt bourgeoisie.

Peasants' International—formed in Moscow in 1923 in a period of peasant struggles in many parts of the world, the Peasants' International was described by Trotsky as "an experiment ... to test the new relations between the proletariat and the peasantry and between the peasantry and the bourgeoisie". However, no revolutionary peasant parties developed to adhere to its banner and the organisation collapsed.

Comintern—Communist (Third) International, formed in 1919 under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky as a new centre for the revolutionary working-class struggle internationally in place of the discredited Second International which had collapsed in 1914. Following the Stalinist counter-revolution in the USSR, the Comintern itself degenerated, becoming a tool of the Russian bureaucracy, until it was officially dissolved in 1943.

Red International of Labour Unions—formed in Moscow in 1921 as a revolutionary alternative to the reformist International Federation of Trade Unions (the "Yellow International"), but like the Comintern, undermined and discredited by the policies imposed on it by the Russian bureaucracy from the mid-1920s onwards.

Shanghai—the reference is to the massacre of Communist workers by Chiang Kai-shek in Shanghai in April 1927 (see also **Introduction**). In February 1927, reacting to the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants, Chiang had begun banning strikes and suppressing trade unions and peasant leagues. On 21-22 March the Shanghai workers took control of the city through an insurrection, but were instructed by the Comintern leadership to

receive Chiang as a revolutionary leader. As a result the workers were completely unprepared when Chiang moved against them, with only a handful—in defiance of Party orders—resisting.

Bukharin (1888-1938)—leading member of the Bolshevik Party and of the Soviet regime after the October Revolution. Moving from the extreme left of the Party, Bukharin became a leader of its right wing by the mid-1920s and entered a bloc with Stalin against the Left Opposition. After 1928, Stalin attacked the right wing in order to gain complete control over the Party apparatus. Bukharin was murdered by the Stalinist regime in 1938 following the fourth of the notorious 'Moscow Trials'.

1905 revolution—the forerunner and 'dress rehearsal' for the Revolution of 1917, the 1905 Revolution exposed the reactionary role of the liberal bourgeoisie and clearly established the working class as the leading force in the struggle, giving rise to the first soviets (councils of workers' delegates) before it was eventually crushed.

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Chiang Kai-shek (1882-1975)—leader of the Kuomintang from 1926, defeated by Mao Tse-tung's Red Army in 1949 and expelled to the island of Taiwan with the remnants of his Nationalist regime.

Kerensky (1881-1970)—radical petty-bourgeois politician in Russia and Trudovik (see note below) member of the Tsarist Duma (parliament), who headed the bourgeois Provisional Government from July to October 1917.

Nicholas II—last Tsar (emperor) of Russia, ruling from 1894 until his overthrow by the February 1917 revolution.

Miliukov (1859-1943)—leader of the Cadet Party (see note below) in Tsarist Russia and foreign minister of the Provisional Government after the February 1917 revolution.

Lloyd George (1863-1945)—British Liberal prime minister, 1916-1922.

Poincaré (1860-1934)—bourgeois President of France, 1913-1920, and prime minister, 1922-24 and 1926-29.

Sun Yat-sen (1867-1925)—Chinese bourgeois-nationalist leader, founder of the Kuomintang in 1894, and President of the Chinese Republic following the revolution of 1911.

Entente (cordiale)—alliance between British and French imperialism formed in 1904.

Manchu Dynasty—imperial house that ruled China from 1644 to 1911.

ECCI—Executive Committee of the Communist International.

Northern expedition—military campaign led by Chiang Kai-shek from July 1926, with Russian support, to conquer central and northern China from the feudal warlords, but also to curb the mass revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants. The campaign culminated in the Shanghai massacre (see note above).

Guchkov, leader of the 'Octobrists' (see note below), and **Shulgin**, pro-monarchist Duma member, negotiated Nicholas II's abdication in February 1917 in the hope of placing a more popular member of his family on the throne, and thus saving the monarchy.

Trudovik—petty-bourgeois grouping in the Tsarist Duma (parliament) in Russia.

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Bismarckian way—a reference to the peculiar course of the bourgeois revolution in Germany under the authoritarian leadership of the Prussian Prince Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898). Capitalism had developed later in Germany than in the western part of Europe. Thus, as Marx explained, the German bourgeoisie "saw itself threateningly confronted by the proletariat ... at the very moment of its own threatening confrontation with absolutism". To avert a revolution from below the bourgeoisie sought compromise with the landowners and the monarchy. The landowning - *Junkers*, their interests intertwined with capitalism, from their side sought a deal with the bourgeoisie. The result was the Prussian constitutional model, in essence the denial of democratic rights to the masses.

Cadets—The Constitutional-Democratic Party of the liberal pro-monarchist bourgeoisie in Tsarist Russia, supported by liberal landowners and sections of the intelligentsia.

Octobrists—the "Union of October 19", a party of capitalists and landowners to the right of the Cadets.

Bund, Dashnaks, P.P.S.—the Bund was an organisation of Jewish workers in

Tsarist Russia which took up a nationalist position. The Dashnak-Tsutun and the Polish Socialist Party played a similar role within the Armenian and Polish population groups of the Russian empire.

Hankow government—also referred to as the "Wuhan government" of the 'Left Kuomintang' (see **Introduction**). Hankow is one of three cities that amalgamated to form the city of Wuhan.

Narodniks—a liberal-democratic movement that arose among radical Russian intellectuals in the mid-19th century. Regarding the peasantry as the revolutionary class in Russia, they believed that Russia could advance to a form of socialism, based on peasant collectives, without undergoing a capitalist development. After 1900 various Narodnik groups combined to form the Socialist-Revolutionary Party which, after the February 1917 revolution, helped to prop up the capitalist Provisional Government. By the time of the October Revolution, the right wing sided openly with the counter-revolution while the left wing formed a short-lived coalition with the Bolshevik government.

Dual power—after the February 1917 revolution in Russia, the Provisional Government formally held power; but real power lay with the Soviets (Councils) of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. "Dual power" thus existed because the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, having control of the Soviets at first, failed to take state power into the hands of the Soviets and instead supported the bourgeois Provisional Government. After August this situation was reversed: the Bolsheviks gained a majority in the key Soviets and, raising anew the slogan "All Power to the Soviets", led the October insurrection to victory.

Canton uprising—launched in December 1927, the uprising was a disastrous adventure engineered by the Comintern leadership recoiling from their own opportunist policy of the previous period. 3 000 poorly-armed workers and 1 200 military cadets, isolated from the masses of Canton itself, were thrown against 50 000 Kuomintang troops amongst whom no political propaganda had been conducted by the CP. The uprising was crushed within 50 hours at a cost of 5 700 workers' lives, among them the best remaining cadres of the revolution.

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Kulak—'fist', Russian nickname for rich peasant.

'National' bayonets—to protect their massive interests in China, the imperialist powers maintained their own military garrisons in key Chinese ports and patrolled the coasts and rivers with their navies. Furthermore large foreign police forces were present in the "foreign concessions" (areas administered by the imperialist powers).

Six month period—Trotsky is referring to the period when the Russian Revolution advanced from the initial struggles to smash Tsarism and landlordism to the expropriation of the capitalists and the propertied classes in general. Lenin emphasises that this was a **continuous** movement: "To attempt to put artificially a Chinese wall between the two stages, and to separate them by any other factor than the degree of preparedness of the proletariat and of its unity with the village poor, means completely to pervert and vulgarise Marxism and to replace it by liberalism." (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, 1918.)

Law of uneven development—In his *History of the Russian Revolution* Trotsky explains: "A backward country assimilates the material and intellectual conquests of the advanced countries. But this does not mean that it follows them slavishly, reproduces all the stages of the past ... Savages throw away their bows and arrows for rifles all at once, without travelling the road which lay between these two weapons in the past ... From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of *combined development*—by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms."

Hu Han-min (1879-1936)—right-wing Kuomintang leader who attended the Sixth Plenum of the ECCI in February 1926, and was elected to the Presidium of the Peasants' International.

Bolshevik Party—revolutionary wing of the RSDLP, formed into an independent party in 1912, which under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky headed the working class in taking power in Oc-

tober 1917.

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Comrade N.—Heinz Neumann, a German CP member who, together with the Russian Lominadze was given responsibility for planning and directing the Canton insurrection.

Germany in the autumn of 1923—With the invasion of the Ruhr area of Germany by French troops in early 1923, Germany was thrown into deep economic and political crisis. The taking of power by the working class, led by the mass-based German CP, was on the agenda. However, the inexperienced Party leadership, following the vacillating position of Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev at the head of the Comintern, failed to prepare the working class for this. Although an insurrection was formally planned for October, it was called off at the last moment. Only in Hamburg the workers went into action, and were crushed by government troops. This debacle of the German revolution marked a setback for the workers' struggle internationally, with a period of ebb setting in, and the demoralisation of the Communist workers enabling the bureaucracy to strengthen its grip in Russia.

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Hungarian revolution—In March 1919, following the revolutionary overthrow of the Austro-Hungarian imperial regime, a Soviet Republic was proclaimed in Hungary placing the newly-formed CP in power. The inexperienced CP leadership committed many errors. Alienating the peasantry and missing all opportunities of consolidating workers' rule, they paved the way for a victorious invasion by a Rumanian army of counter-revolution. Finally they handed back power to the ruling class without firing a shot. A reign of terror by the ruling class followed.

Hilferding (1877-1941)—reformist theoretician of the German Social-Democratic Party, who during the German revolution of 1918-1919 put forward the constitutional plan for 'legalising' the workers' revolutionary councils and making them subordinate to the bourgeois parliament. This helped to resolve the period of dual power in favour of the ruling class.

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