

PLENUM OF THE E. C. C. I.

The Results of the Plenary Session of the E. C. C. I.

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(Conclusion.)

The Chinese Revolution.

1. The Regrouping of Class Forces.

It was at the VII. Enlarged Plenum of the E. C. C. I. that a resolution was detailed, and contained an analysis of the economic situation in China and the rôle played by imperialism, an analysis and estimate of the different class forces in China, an estimate of the relations existing at that time between the various class forces, and a prognosis forecasting the inevitable fresh regroupings arising out of the progress of the Chinese revolution. The VII. Plenum determined the main line of tactics for the Communist Party of China. I begin with the VII. Plenum, in order to emphasise from the beginning that estimate of the Chinese class forces and of the necessary regroupings, which was made by the Communist International long before Chang Kai-shek's renegacy confirmed this estimate.

The VII. Plenum took as point of departure for its resolution the consideration that the growing class antagonism, the development of the agrarian movement and of the labour movement, were inevitably bound to lead the liberal bourgeoisie away from the united national revolutionary front, into the camp of the counter-revolutionists, so that at this point the whole Chinese revolution would enter a new phase of development. During this stage the class forces of the national revolutionary front will have to seek support from the bloc composed of the working class, the peasantry, and the city petty bourgeoisie (artisans, small shopkeepers, small intellectuals, etc.).

Chang Kai-shek's change of front was nothing more nor less than a crude expression of that transition of the liberal bourgeoisie into the camp of the counter-revolutionists, long prophesied by the VII. Plenum. Chang Kai-shek's renegacy should not by any means be regarded as the treachery of one isolated general. His traitorous action was merely the military expression of a far-reaching regrouping of the class forces of the country, inevitably resulting from the development of the agrarian movement in the rural districts, and of the labour movement in the towns.

The present Plenum has had to solve the task of observing the lessons to be learnt from the present events, and of determining the tactics to be pursued by the C. P. of China and the Comintern in the new situation. In the first place, Chang Kai-shek's renegacy has had to be accorded its proper place in the estimate of events. The symbol of the desertion of an extremely large social stratum, a group which played a leading rôle in that stage of the Chinese revolution from which we are just emerging, and which actually took the part of leader, during the first stage of the development of the Chinese revolution, in the struggle against Imperialism. The liberal bourgeoisie has gone over into the camp of counter-revolution, and the national emancipation movement has consequently been plunged into an inevitable crisis. This crisis has been accompanied by a partial defeat of the Chinese revolution.

At the present time we are up against another combination of social forces, and any line of tactics or strategic measure based on the former distribution of forces would be of necessity counter-revolutionary, and would be condemned to inevitable defeat. Chang Kai-shek's desertion of the revolution was determined by a number of factors; mainly by the development of the labour movement, the rise of the peasant movement, and the policy of the imperialists. These factors have exercised a mighty pressure on the liberal bourgeois front, and have accelerated the process of desertion of this bourgeoisie from the united national revolutionary front.

2. The Agrarian Revolution and the Peasant Movement.

The E. C. C. I is of the opinion that the central question of the Chinese revolution at the present juncture — in so far as its inner driving forces are concerned — is the agrarian revolution. It is becoming more and more evident that the peasant movement, the problem of the redistribution of land, of the confiscation of the land in the hands of the small, middle, and large (but few in number) landowners, and all the tasks and problems entailed by these demands, are at the moment the burning questions of the day. It is scarcely necessary to point out here that the peasantry form an exceedingly important section of the Chinese population; nor is it necessary to characterise in detail the social economics of Chinese rural life. I should merely like to emphasise that the course taken by events in China, and the development of the agrarian movement, completely refute the standpoint (as held for instance by Comrade Radek) that there are no remains of feudalism in China, a standpoint which leaves the extraordinary intensity of the peasant agrarian movement in China entirely unexplained.

The agrarian revolution is the pivot upon which events turn. The peasantry of China appear in their overwhelming numbers on the stage of history. The peasantry, under the leadership of the working class, will develop into the leading mass force behind the development of the Chinese revolution. The Executive has discussed the solutions to be found for the Chinese agrarian question, and the resolution passed by the Plenum expressly emphasises that, from the standpoint of the development of the Chinese revolution, the most essential step next to be taken is the actual confiscation of the land, the actual overthrow of the old apparatus ruling, the peasantry, the actual redistribution of the land from below, by the peasants themselves, the peasant organisations and peasant committees now springing up in ever increasing numbers.

The importance of these steps cannot be too greatly emphasised, for the illusion still exists, even among the Chinese Communists, and to a much greater degree among the Left Kuomintang, that this agrarian revolution can only be accomplished in the form of an agrarian revolution from above, or must be postponed until China is united. This illusion acts a brake on the development of the Chinese agrarian peasant movement. We only need refer to the last speech made by Comrade Tang Ping Shan, the Minister of Agriculture in the Wuhan Government; this speech did not contain one word on the necessity of the actual confiscation of the land. In the circles around the Wuhan government, and even among certain circles of the Chinese communists themselves, tendencies still exist towards going beyond certain limits of present conditions by means of peaceful enactments, and towards attempting to solve the agrarian problem by means of decrees and similar procedures; and this although civil war has already begun in the country. This is something which has never been accomplished in the history of any revolution, and never will be.

We may further refer to a speech held by another leader of the C. P. of China, Comrade Chen Du Siu, who advanced an even more singular opinion at the Party Conference recently. He stated that we must wait with the agrarian revolution until the Chinese revolutionary troops march into Peking and drive Chang Tso Lin out of the capital.

And yet it is perfectly obvious that the fundamental premise for the victorious solution of the problems dictated by the Chinese revolution today is the development of the agrarian revolution. From every standpoint the agrarian revolution is the prerequisite — from the standpoint of the fight against Imperialism, of the fight against liberal-bourgeois counter-revolution, that is against Chang Kai-shek, from the standpoint of the better self-defence, and further development of the Wuhan Government, from the standpoint of the mobilisation of the most powerful of forces possible in the struggle against counter-revolution.

Not one problem can be solved today unless an agrarian revolution, carried forward by the masses of the peasantry, is an accomplished fact. Even such an elementary problem as the organisation of armed forces leads us inevitably to the necessity of promoting the agrarian revolution, for the simple reason that the Wuhan Government will otherwise not be in a position to win the confidence of the peasants, will not be in a position to gather troops of really reliable soldiers around it, and will not be in a position to give its further successes military security. The central problem, the central task, the

central slogan, the slogan of **awakening the agrarian revolution**. And to accomplish the agrarian revolution the land must be confiscated by the peasants themselves, the ground rents must be abolished, the peasants must rule their own affairs by means of their peasant committees and peasant associations, the masses of the peasantry must be armed, the land taken from the large landowners must be secured by armed defence, etc. etc.

3. The Mass Organisations, the Kuomintang, and the Communist Party.

All this leads us naturally to the problem of organisation. Having seen the necessity of promoting the agrarian revolution to be more important than all else, that is, having recognised the importance of a mass movement, it is obvious that we turn our attention at once to the tempestuously energetic growth of every possible description of **mass organisation** — the peasants unions, the peasants committees, the workers trade unions, the unions of the artisans and small shopkeepers, etc. It need not be said that here the basis must be the mass organisations of the working class and the peasantry.

In connection with this orientation it is natural and comprehensible that the Executive found it necessary to raise the question of the **reorganisation of the Kuomintang**. The Kuomintang, at the time when it came into being, had an extremely original social and class structure, and at the same time an exceedingly original organisatory structure. It contained not only purely bourgeois elements, forming the social class basis of the so-called right wing, but workers, peasants, petty bourgeois, and intellectuals. The Kuomintang, which was organised in Sun Yat Sen's time on the basis of the most multifarious military combinations, was an organisation about which almost anything might have been said, except that it was built up on a foundation of inner party democracy. A large number of leaders not only held all power in their hands, but were actually perfectly independent of the local organisations of the Kuomintang. No proper meetings were held nor proper elections organised. This state of affairs will have to be fundamentally changed, the more that the Kuomintang, without a radical alteration in these respect, will never be able to play its part in history, but must inevitably fall into decay.

The split in the national-revolutionary front, the desertion of the bourgeoisie into the camp of counter-revolution, was accompanied by a split in the Kuomintang. This split in the Kuomintang has led to the formation, by Chang Kai-shek, of liberal bourgeois right Kuomintang. The Left Kuomintang now consists of the petty bourgeoisie, the workers, the peasants, and some groups of the bourgeois radical intelligentsia with a few residual elements from the radical strata of the large bourgeoisie; these last play a comparatively secondary role.

What is first to be done, if we are to steer our course towards the agrarian revolution? Our most imperative task is to render proletarian and peasant influence decisive in the Left Kuomintang; not only must this party be a proletarian and peasant party as regards its membership, but this influence must be felt in all its **leading organs in town and country**.

Yesterday a comrade came to us, a member of the delegation sent to China by the Communist International. He maintained that the relations existing in the leadership of the Kuomintang of the Left Kuomintang do not by any means correspond with the inner structure of the Kuomintang from the standpoint of the real class relations among the masses of its members. He reported that the Communists exercise a strong influence among the most important mass organisations affiliated to the Kuomintang or formally under its influence.

This means that Communist influence is growing in that mass force which is playing an increasingly important rôle in the development of the Chinese revolution. And it need not be said that the Chinese Communists are not hundred per cent Bolshevik; this we must not forget. It would be an illusion to expect even the Communists to be hundred per cent Bolshevik. Our Party, when it came into being, was a group of intellectuals and workers which had absorbed the whole Marxist experience of the West European Social Democratic movement. The founders of Russian Social Democracy were thoroughly educated Marxists. In our Party the Marxian principles were ours from the very beginning. Our Communist Party in China has been founded on an entirely different foundation. It arose out of Sun Yat Sen's "Narodnikism" without any knowledge

of the principles of Marxism. It is only of late that contact with the Soviet Union and the Communist International has afforded the opportunity for the formation of a Marxist cadre. We must not lose sight of this peculiarity in the history of the C. P. of China.

The necessity of developing the agrarian revolution, the necessity of developing the labour movement and ensuring the growth of the mass organisations, the necessity of utilising the positive traditions of the Kuomintang as an organisation in which the working class comes into immediate contact with the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie and is able to assume the leadership of these forces, all this has brought the Plenum to the decision that it is most decidedly necessary to reorganise the Kuomintang on the basis of the collective membership of all these forms of mass organisations, that is, the trade unions, the peasants' union and committees, the soldiers' organisations, the organisations of the small handicrafts, etc.

In this connection the Executive drew attention to the special tasks falling to the Communist Party, and to the special forms of its relations to the Left Kuomintang. The Executive pointed out that the Communist Party has frequently showed itself afraid of a development of a mass movement, especially of an agrarian movement. This superfluous caution, and the vacillations in the leadership of the Communist Party itself, are closely related to the superfluous "caution" exercised in criticising the vacillations and half-hearted methods of the Left Kuomintang. The resolution of the E. C. C. I. states clearly that the Communist Party, in so far as it forms the vanguard of the proletariat, must assert its claim to independence as the Party of the working class, that it must not hesitate to criticise the vacillations and half-heartedness of the petty bourgeois Kuomintang, that it is indeed its plain duty to criticise the vacillating attitude of the Kuomintang leaders, and that this is the only possible way to push forward the Left radical petty-bourgeois revolutionists in the direction of a consistent mass struggle of the combined peasantry, artisans, and workers.

4. Armed Forces and Revolution.

The problem of the army, and the whole problem of armed forces, is a highly complicated one. It must be admitted that even the Left Kuomintang does not yet represent a bloc of the workers and peasants. It has still a number of bourgeois radical leaders. The same applies to the Wuhan government. The Wuhan government is still far from being a dictatorship of the workers and peasantry. It can however develop in this direction. It still contains bourgeois radical leaders who may possibly go over to the enemy, and very probably will do so. And if we have to reckon with this possibility in the case of some of the leaders of the Left Kuomintang, and of some of the members of the present Wuhan Government, then we must admit that the possibility is even greater in the case of the army apparatus.

With regard to the Kuomintang, I am not of the opinion that it is liable to any split of appreciable dimensions, likely to cause the falling off of a great many of its members. This is impossible, because the great mass of the Kuomintang (I differentiate between the masses and the heads of Kuomintang) actually represent a bloc of the workers, peasantry, and petty bourgeoisie. But it is characteristic of the present situation that the army, the generals and officers' staff, do not by any means represent an absolutely reliable force.

The peculiarities of the position must be fully realised. We are of course fully aware that it is possible to make use of the old generals, but only provided certain conditions are fulfilled, that is, provided that the revolutionary power accomplishes a firm establishment of its position, provided that the economic basis of the old regime (feudalism) is undermined, and provided that these generals are deprived of all possibility of an independent political existence.

But all this cannot yet be asserted of the territory under the Wuhan Government. Can it be maintained that the position of even the bourgeois revolution is firmly established here? No, for the landlords and the semi-landlords, with their gendarmerie and police, have not yet been driven away. Generally speaking, even the Wuhan Government is not yet strong enough. And where its military strength is being improved, the footing is by no means secure, since the number of faithful leaders within the army itself is still insufficient. This is very important. In this sense the structure of the Wuhan army has little simi-

larity with the structure of our Red Army. The army in its totality still stands with the Wuhan Government. But no guarantee exists that this will continue to be the case, without more or less considerable conflicts and treachery. Treachery is indeed more than probable, and in a certain sense inevitable.

The Chinese Revolution and the Opposition.

The gist of comrade Trotsky's utterances is as follows: Chang Kai-shek has caused the Chinese revolution to suffer a defeat, and this has happened because the C. C. of the C. P. S. U. and the leaders of the Comintern have pursued a "criminal", "treasonable, and "shameful" line of tactics. In Trotsky's opinion the tactics of the C. C. and of the Comintern deserve these designations, for the C. C. and the leaders of the Comintern have insisted on a Menshevist and not a Bolshevik standpoint with respect to the liberal bourgeoisie. Trotsky reminds us of the attitude taken by Lenin and the Bolsheviks with regard to the liberal bourgeoisie in the bourgeois democratic revolution of 1905, and quotes from Lenin approximately as follows:

The revolution is a bourgeois one, and therefore we must support the bourgeoisie — thus speak the Mensheviks; the revolution is a bourgeois one, and therefore it is necessary to fight against the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie — thus speak the Bolsheviks.

This passage from Lenin is absolutely correct. The differences of opinion between us and the Mensheviks in the revolution of 1905 were along the line of our relations to the peasantry and to the liberal bourgeoisie. We confronted Tsarism and bourgeoisie, including the liberal bourgeoisie then become counter-revolutionary, by a plebian bloc of workers and peasants; the Mensheviks, on the other hand, supported the liberal bourgeoisie, and failed to grasp the importance of the peasantry. This was the main line of schism between us.

If Lenin had written nothing more than this, if China were a part of the Russian Empire of 1905, and if the Chinese bourgeoisie from 1911 to 1926 had been similar to our bourgeoisie, then indeed we would deserve the title of "Mensheviks". But the truth is that Trotsky and our whole Opposition understand neither Lenin's standpoint in this question nor the facts, and bring confusion into the whole question.

We must differentiate between a revolution such as the Russian of 1905, and a revolution of an anti-imperialist character in the semi-colonial and "independent" countries. Lenin's writings point this out with the utmost clearness. Lenin has told us that we may make not only agreements with the bourgeoisie, but may form actual alliances with them (this Lenin wrote and said at the II. World Congress of the Comintern), though of course under the indispensable condition that the independence of our Party, the independence of the workers' organisations, etc., is secured: Not merely agreements, but even "alliances". Why? For the simple reason that in such countries the part played by the liberal bourgeoisie is not the same as its rôle in Russia in 1905. In 1904 the bourgeoisie still opposed Tsarism, but after the October Strike of 1905 the liberal bourgeoisie had already become an openly counter-revolutionary force. The fact that the liberal bourgeoisie had never once lifted a finger against Tsarism, that it was entirely unable to do so, and that it was bound to go over into the counter-revolutionary camp with the utmost rapidity, was the basis upon which we laid down our line of tactics towards the liberal bourgeoisie.

And now, since Chang Kai-shek has betrayed the revolution, has the Chinese bourgeoisie become counter-revolutionary? Yes, it has become counter-revolutionary. But did it play a counter-revolutionary rôle between 1911 and 1926? Who is in a position to assert this? Now, indeed, it has gone over to the counter-revolutionary camp, but for many years the part it played made it our duty to support it. We were obliged to utilise it, we were obliged to form a bloc with it. The Communist Party had just been born, the labour movement was making its first steps forward, and the liberal bourgeoisie was fighting against the feudal lords and the imperialists, fighting even with arms. A comparatively short time before Chang Kai-shek's desertion, his troops undertook the "Northern campaign". The question is: Was it our duty to support the Northern campaign or was it not? Was it our duty to support the Northern campaign, that Northern campaign which Radek has described as a brilliant revolutionary action?

In China the liberal bourgeoisie has played an **objectively revolutionary rôle for many years**, and has exhausted itself. It has however been by no means a political mayfly, living one day only, of the type of the Russian liberal bourgeoisie in the revolution of 1905. The fact that the bourgeoisie has played this **particular rôle** is due to the special combinations of social forces ruling in China, to the anti-imperialist national emancipation character of the Chinese revolution; it has been due to a **number of causes which had no parallel** in the Russian revolution of 1905. It is true that Lenin stated the difference between us and the Mensheviks to consist of the fact that the Mensheviks supported the liberal bourgeoisie, whilst we were opposed to any sort of an agreement with them. But when Lenin said this, he was speaking of the **Russian revolution of 1905**. He spoke very differently of the **revolutions in the East**.

The Opposition, in advancing the thesis of the unallowability of an agreement with the liberal bourgeoisie in China, is therefore guilty of a distortion of Lenin's teachings. A method is fundamentally wrong which makes no difference between Russia and China, between 1905 and 1927, between the Russian liberals and the Chinese national revolutionary bourgeoisie, etc., and which states categorically that all cats are grey. Here we find no analysis, no comprehension for the peculiarities of Chinese development.

We see therefore that the thesis is **wrong** which insists that we cannot enter into any agreement whatever with the Chinese bourgeoisie.

There is however **another** question to which we may fairly be called upon to reply. It may be said: Good, up to a certain period we could co-operate with the national bourgeoisie, but you yourselves admit that in the end it was **bound** to desert into the camp of counter-revolution. The VII. Enlarged Executive itself admitted this. And what have you done to defend the proletariat and the peasantry? What have you done to prevent their defeat? Are you not being carried along in the wake of events? Were you not taken by surprise at Chang Kai-shek, change of front? Was this not a consequence of your having permitted yourselves to be drawn into a "bloc" with Chang Kai-shek? This is a fair question, and one which must be put.

Let us inquire into the matter. The cheapest argument against us has been: The workers have suffered a defeat in Shanghai; **this shows** that your tactics were not worth a penny.

But this is a conclusion which must be decidedly rejected. In our revolution of 1917 we pursued a **correct** policy. Could we judge, before the events of July, whither developments were moving? Yes, we were able to judge of this. And yet we were **beaten** in July. Is this a fact or is it not? It is a fact. And why were we beaten? For the simple reason that, despite the correctness of our policy, we were not able to collect our forces sufficiently to defend ourselves adequately against the enemy's fire. We were **not ripe** for the situation, **not sufficiently prepared**. The comparative proportions of class forces at that time were such that we were not strong enough, in spite of the fact that our policy was entirely right, to beat the enemy.

In China our comrades have committed **many** mistakes, some of them very serious faults, which can and must be discussed whilst we are dealing with this question. There is no doubt that much has been left undone which should have been done towards the development of the mass movement in town and country. There is no doubt that the leaders of the C. P. of China, in face of the instructions received from the Comintern, have actually hindered the development of the agrarian revolution at times.

But **one** thing I must assert quite categorically, and that is: **Even if everything** possible had been done, at our present stage we could not have been victorious in a direct battle with Chang Kai-shek. The VII. Enlarged Executive issued its directions: development of the mass movement, expulsion of the Right elements from the Kuomintang, conquest of strategic positions in the army, arming of the working class and the peasantry, formation of mass organisations among the workers and peasants. **This line of policy, the sole one** offering a political guarantee, was laid down by the Comintern. But even if everything had been accomplished which it would have been possible to accomplish, there still remains an actual state of affairs which we must recognise. Shanghai is the central point of events.

The following forces were assembled in Shanghai: 1. The forces of the imperialists, armed to the teeth, 2. Chang Kai-shek's forces — the whole army (with the exception of some few divisions more or less in sympathy with the workers and peasants). And here Chang Kai-shek possessed an immense authority, gained during the previous stage of the revolution. Besides this, there was the front of the North troops, etc.

In spite of these facts, Comrade Zinoviev suggested in his theses the following "excellent" guarantee: The Shanghai proletariat should have set up an **insurrection** against Chang Kai-shek. In our opinion this policy would have been **highly absurd**. What would have happened, if the proletariat of Shanghai had attempted to rise against Chang Kai-shek? The insurrection would have been crushed as soon as begun. It is perfectly obvious that in the case of such a rising there would have been an immediate amalgamation, against the rising, of every anti-working class force, of every force opposed to the further development of the Chinese revolution. **The forces of Chang Kai-shek, of Chang Tso Lin, of the foreign imperialists, and of every anti-revolutionary tendency**, would have combined to exterminate the vanguard of the Shanghai proletariat, root and branch.

We are told that our tactics are not Leninist. But Lenin never supported tactics demanding that an insurrection should be risked on **every possible occasion**. Anyone who asserts this is talking nonsense. I cannot think that the comrades of the Opposition believe their own assertions to this effect. And when Zinoviev tries to console himself with the idea that the European and American working class would have "saved" the Shanghai proletariat in the case of an insurrection, then that is again **utter nonsense**. In America there is only a very small Communist Party. All the reformist cadres of labour leaders are mere paid hirelings, traitors to the cause of the working class. And you expect this riffraff to "save" the Chinese working class? You expect that they will defend the Chinese revolution, these "leaders" of the American proletariat, who have been the first to recommend that the Soviet institutions, cultural institutions, should be searched? You must be aware that **the masses** of the American proletariat are unfortunately still backing up these worthless leaders.

It must be recollected that even the European proletariat is not so quickly stirred. It is simply a **perversion** of truth to present such an absurd proposition as an argument. We know very well the way in which help really comes. It does not come in one day, nor in two, but in **months and years**. But in an armed conflict the imperialists could have completely crushed the workers of Shanghai in one day. To spread abroad such illusions of rapid aid, to erect a political platform on this assumption and to support this platform in place of the tactics proposed by us, to accuse us of treason because we have rejected such adventurous tactics, all this signifies a sinking into the deepest bog of demagoguery, and the loss of the last remnant of Marxist conscience and sense of proletarian responsibility.

The next question upon which the opposition attacks us is that of the **Soviet** slogan. This slogan sounds extremely radical, and our heroes therefore cling to it with special energy. They have issued a slogan demanding that Workers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Councils be convoked immediately, and since we do not think that our purposes would be well served by proclaiming this slogan at the **given** moment, they again accuse us of treason.

A remark: In 1923, on the eve of the great events in Germany, on the eve of a **proletarian** revolution (not such a revolution as that in China, nor in such a country as China, but in **Germany**) in a country where the **working class is in the majority**, in a country with mighty industrial centres and enormously developed industries, in a country which had already passed through the revolution of 1918 and had once even had Soviets, here Comrade Trotzky was decidedly **against** the Soviet slogan. At that time he opposed this slogan with arguments which subsequent experience has proved to be wrong. But there was nothing "treasonable" about this. At that time he expressed himself as follows: The movement has spread to broad masses of the people, it is being expressed in the organisation of the works councils, the mass movement is being shown in the elementary growth of these works councils; therefore the works councils are that **form** of organisation definitely given by the course of events. We should work for the utilisation of our

forces, etc. on the basis of the peculiar mass organisation of the works councils, and then we should see whether the Soviets grew out of the movement, or whether they would prove unnecessary.

Thus Trotsky. Lenin was of the opinion that the revolution, even a proletarian revolution, was not inevitably bound to pass through the Soviet form. And on the other hand the Soviet form was not bound to signify the dictatorship of the proletariat. With respect to England in particular Lenin believed that the dictatorship of the proletariat might take the form of trade union power, or some other special form. Lenin was extremely cautious.

It is another question whether it was right to form this judgement on the situation as given in Germany in 1923. I set this question aside for the present. My present object is to emphasise the fact that Comrade Trotsky was opposed to the Soviets on the eve of a proletarian revolution. And yet nobody accused Trotsky of all the deadly sins.

Now, however, Comrade Trotsky permits himself to accuse the Comintern of treason and so forth, because it does not deem the moment suitable to issue the slogan of the Soviets in China. To speak very mildly, does this not show almost too much self-confidence on Comrade Trotsky's part?

Why do we think it wrong to issue, now and immediately, the slogan of the Soviets? We are of the opinion that at the present juncture, during this phase of the revolution, in view of the fact that the Wuhan Government does not yet represent the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, but is only taking the first steps towards this, we must look to that specific historical form of organisation which exists already, and which represents the whole course of development: the Kuomintang. The form of this organisation is extremely elastic, it possesses great revolutionary traditions, it unites workers, peasants, and petty bourgeoisie, and still possesses great powers of expansion in every direction. Are we to throw all this aside and search for something else? This is a question which must be answered.

Here the tactical differences begin. Some such tactics as the following might be proposed: The Communist Party leaves the Kuomintang and organises Soviets apart from the Kuomintang, against it, or even in actual conflict with it. It is obvious where these tactics would lead. It is obvious that the setting aside of the Kuomintang brings with it the setting aside of the Wuhan Government, the abandonment of it to the mercies of the Right. The actual consequence would be the obligation to enter into a conflict with the Wuhan Government, and to strive for its overthrow. This is one line of policy. Comrades Zinoviev and Trotsky write, in the first of the theses which they have submitted to us, that it is necessary for us to proclaim the slogan of the Soviets; but at the same time, and in the same document, they impress upon the necessity of supporting the Wuhan Government at any price and with all available means, to the end that it may become an organisatory centre of revolution, "from which the blow may be dealt against the Cavaignacs", that is, against Chang Kai-shek.

Meanwhile it has become clear that the two standpoints are incompatible. Comrade Trotsky now makes the direct proposition, in his "own" theses submitted to the Executive, or rather in his article (exposing all his cards, as the saying goes), that at the present time it is necessary to create a double power by means of the formation of a Soviet power against Wuhan. Wuhan is "nothing", the Left Kuomintang a mere "bagatelle"; we must create the centre for another power, and for this purpose we require the Soviets.

Here we have a perfect entanglement of obvious contradictions. In the first theses (Trotsky plus Zinoviev) we find the following proposals all made in one breath: Wuhan is to receive every possible support, and Soviets against Wuhan are to be formed; Wuhan is to be regarded as the organisatory centre of the revolution, and measures are to be taken for its destruction. Comrade Trotsky's article smoothes out this contradiction by the simplest of magic: The existent Wuhan, and the existent Left Kuomintang, are simply declared to be non-existent. Truly it then becomes incomprehensible when we still speak of a double power. But in any case Comrade Trotsky uncovered his cards two or three days after his proposal for the support of Wuhan, and demanded the steering of a open course for the overthrow of this organisatory "centre" by means the organisation of a double power. With this he reveals the actual import of the Soviet slogan as understood by him.

But we cannot judge of the matter in this way. It is true that we can form varying estimates of the various currents in the Left Kuomintang, but we cannot deny the fact that the Kuomintang is a huge mass organisation. When Comrade Zinoviev was working in the Comintern, he wrote that the Kuomintang had a membership of 400,000. And the Kuomintang has increased enormously since that time. When the Right split off, the Kuomintang lost leaders only, the representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie; the masses of the people have remained in the Kuomintang. The Wuhan Government is now leading the struggle. It is true that its general may betray it, but its existence is recognised even by the whole international bourgeoisie. It is impossible not to take it into account. We believe that Trotsky is committing a grave error here, just as he was in error in 1905 in wanting to spring over the bourgeois democratic revolution and the peasantry. His theory of "permanent revolution" is generally known, and so is his formula in 1905: "Down with the Tsar, up with the labour government!"

In the same way he now wants to spring over the Kuomintang and the Wuhan Government, which he designated two days earlier as the centre dealing the "blow against the Cavaignacs". In our opinion one of our most important tasks at the present time should be the broadest democratising of the Kuomintang on the basis of the development of the agrarian revolution, the organisation of peasants committees and peasant union in the provinces, the arming of the masses, etc. No doubt there can and will be splits. And it cannot be denied that the Wuhan Government may possibly be disorganised or defeated by the enemy. It is not impossible that the resistance made by one part of the Left Kuomintang leaders against the agrarian revolution, from above, may exclude the possibility of support from this side for this Government in its first form.

All this is theoretically not impossible. But that is no reason to conclude that we are to thrust on one side the Kuomintang, a specifically Chinese mass organisation. In 1923 Trotsky did not quite "understand" the peculiarities of German development, when he wanted to replace the Soviets by works councils. And now he again fails to observe the actually existent specific peculiarities of the development of the Chinese revolution, he does not notice its special characteristics.

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In conclusion a few words on the latest events in China. The national revolutionary army of the Wuhan Government can record some great victories. The position of the Wuhan Government is nevertheless somewhat difficult. The military danger is still great. The troops are in the hands of their leaders, and these are frequently not quite trustworthy. The officers and generals are awakening into action against the approaching agrarian revolution. The rising in Changsha has created a seat of counter-revolution which may be followed by others. Besides this, the financial and economic position is extremely difficult. The maintenance of the army alone costs much money. It is politically impossible to take from the peasants what is required for the army, without paying for it. In the district of Wuhan, the centre of the revolutionary movement, there are great textile factories and mines. The big bourgeoisie has closed most of the factories, flown to Shanghai, and drawn its deposits from the banks. A part of the middle bourgeoisie, and even some strata of the petty bourgeoisie, have imitated this flight. Economic life has greatly suffered.

Our resolution states that in such cases the factories and undertakings should be taken over by the state. This is easily said, but its realisation demands such factors as working capital, in order that raw materials may be bought, workers engaged, etc. This situation involves a great number of difficulties, and the Wuhan Government is obliged to manoeuvre against the petty bourgeoisie, and in part against the middle bourgeoisie.

It is decidedly necessary for the Chinese Communists to clear away all vacillations in their own ranks. The course must be directed determinedly towards the development of the peasant mass movement, to the confiscation of the land. Any other tactics would be criminal at the present moment. This is the basis upon which the organisation of the reliable armed troops, and the reorganisation of the Kuomintang must be carried on. This is the sole foundation able to hold its own against all schisms, betrayals, desertions, etc. The Chinese Communists,

whilst maintaining the bloc with the petty bourgeoisie — by guaranteeing to this the security of their property, and of the land belonging to the soldiers of the national army — must at the same time seek to arouse the masses by every available means, to draw them into the struggle, to convert the army into a real people's army, to suppress to the utmost extent of their power all attempts at counter-revolution, and to rely above all on the revolutionary hate felt by the masses towards the landowners, the gentry, and the counter revolutionists.

Our comrades of the Opposition have adopted such a violent tone that — as I must repeat — even the most correct of our comrades, those most opposed to any "quarrelling", have been finally roused to indignation. The great majority has been in favour of much severer measures against the Opposition. After the E. C. C. I. had passed a resolution against the Opposition, Trotsky read a declaration stating that "they" would continue the struggle to the end. Thus the matter stands at present.

Since such serious issues are involved, and our Opposition even goes so far as to state that the question of unity should not be put "as such", but on a "Leninist basis", this Leninist basis being of course theirs, then it is pretty easy to see where we are travelling, and at what station we are likely to arrive. We consider it not only our right, but our duty, to come to a decision on the attitude of the Opposition. This decision has been formulated in the resolution passed by the Executive against one single vote, the vote of Comrade Vuyovitch.

It must be admitted that the Opposition has been given every opportunity to state its case. Its speakers have been given three quarters of an hour or an hour for their speeches, and have been able to speak several times. The whole of the documents of which I have spoken, many hundreds of pages, have been distributed. All the delegates have read them, and have heard the arguments. We decided to take up the fight against the Opposition, for all this music, however comprehensible to us, may easily be beyond the comprehension of many foreign comrades. We have carried the fight through, and at its conclusion it became evident that the whole of the delegates were confirmed in their opinion that this kind of agitation is to be tolerated no longer, and that at least a minimum of the measures decided upon in the resolution of the Executive should be put into actual practice.

We are of the opinion that even that appearance of "dignity", which some comrades believe to have seen about Trotsky, that "knightly" form and pose, the courageous defence of his own opinions, etc. — that even this has been dispersed. Today nobody believes the Opposition. On 16. October the opposition gave a "solemn" promise to have nothing to do with the Urbahns-Maslow group, but today it maintains the most intimate connections with this group, and the central organ of this group has become the central organ of the Opposition. Today the Opposition accuses the C.C. of our Party and the leaders of the Comintern of a betrayal of our cause, they accuse the C.C. and the Comintern of co-operating with the bourgeoisie during a certain stage of the Chinese revolution. But during this period they themselves were members of the leading organ of the C.P.S.U. and of the Communist International, and took part in all the work.

At this latest Plenum of the Executive they fired their last shot. The "knightly" attitude was shown in its true colors, the Opposition was deprived of the mask beneath which it has fought against the leaders of the Comintern and the C.C. of our Party. Therefore the Executive of the Comintern resolved upon a closer contact between the cadres of our Communist Parties. The Comintern will emerge from this stage of inner conflict more united than ever before.

Truly, we must one and all be shaken by the characteristic fact before us: We are confronted at the moment by immense difficulties; British Imperialism, aided by its many vassals, takes up arms against us; we face the forces of Chang Tso Lin; relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Union have been broken off, etc.; events are developing with dizzy rapidity — but Comrade Trotsky's theses contain the formulation that: "The most dangerous of all dangers is... the inner Party regime in the C.P.S.U. and in the Comintern!". And if this is the standpoint held, if this is held to be the "chief danger", if the inner Party regime in the C.P.S.U. and in the Comintern are the chief enemy, then on to the attack against this chief enemy! Chamberlain and the other enemies fall into the background, and can wait there for the present.

But although the Opposition has been such a drag on us, and although it has so greatly hindered the work of the Plenum, still the Plenum has been successful in dealing carefully with all the most important questions, and in solving them as best serves our cause, solutions worthy of the Communist International. Hence we permit ourselves the hope that the growth of our Communist Parties, and the increased consolidation of our forces, will exclude more and more the possibility of a second 1914. There will not be a second 1914. In 1927 and 1928 the Comintern will throw the weight of its Bolshevik influence into the decisive battles! (Prolonged and enthusiastic applause.)

IN THE INTERNATIONAL

The Party Conference of the C. P. of Sweden.

By S. Molan.

The Party Conference of the C.P. of Sweden, which was held from the 3. to the 6. June in Stockholm, may be regarded in many respects as an important landmark in the history of the Swedish working people. In the first place, it formed the conclusion of the campaign commenced in April, and bringing considerable successes to the Party. Secondly, the Conference coincided with the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the existence of the organisation as a revolutionary organisation; this anniversary was celebrated in the form of hundreds of public meetings. Thirdly, the Party Conference itself, the work accomplished by the delegates, and the presence of an audience numbering many hundreds during the whole course of the conference, are eloquent witnesses of the rise of the Communist movement in the hitherto so "idyllic" Sweden.

The C.P. of Sweden has developed out of the "Left Socialist Party" formed in the spring of 1917 from the larger and smaller groups splitting off from the old S.P. This Party was a combination of various elements dissatisfied with the old pro-Entente party led by Branting. The utmost lack of clearness reigned in all questions of principles; every "leader" represented his own platform. Many of the leaders had become so under the influence of enthusiasm, and of the deep impression made by the Russian revolution. This was the case with the majority of the intellectuals, the editors, and members of parliament. Though full of enthusiasm for the Russian revolution, they felt the greatest misgivings as to the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship in their own country, where "conditions were essentially different". They found — precisely like the German Independents — severe enough expressions of condemnation when it was a question of pronouncing judgment on the Noske socialists, and even a few weeks before the Right wing left the Party on account of the 21 Conditions laid down by the II. World Congress of the Comintern, one of its best known leaders, Wennerström, declared with the greatest pathos that he "would ten thousand times rather be a member of the Comintern than of the blood stained International of the betrayers of the working people, the Noske socialists".

But even the actual Left were extremely unclear on principles, and built much less on winning over the great masses of the people than on the effort to obtain the support of well known "names"; hence their constant compromises with pacifists, humanists, philosophers, Buddhists, and theosophists. In order to retain in their ranks such persons as these, valuable in their eyes, they made all manner of concessions. For instance, they guaranteed a well-known petty-bourgeois literary critic a high annual salary, solely to ensure his imparting prestige and lustre to the Party by his name!

The nucleus of the new party was formed by the Social Democratic (later Communist) Youth League, which counted among its members, years before the war, many of the older comrades of the opposition, and which carried on consistent opposition, headed for years by its leader Zeth Höglund, against the increasing opportunism of the party leadership under Branting.

Despite the thousand declarations of love for the Russian revolution made by the leaders, the first split took place as early as the winter of 1920, after the acceptance of the 21 conditions by the majority of the party. But now even Höglund and his