

Position and Tasks of the Chinese C.P. after the Canton Rising

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THE February Plenum of the E.C.C.I. must pay very special attention to the pressing problems of the Chinese Revolution.

The "national" bourgeoisie was driven into the counter-revolutionary camp through the independent revolutionary action of the working class, the peasant risings, which were continuously on the increase, and which adopted radical slogans, and by the growing pressure of the imperialists. This fact constitutes one of the most fundamental factors in reviewing the entire situation connected with the Chinese revolution. The ex-national bourgeoisie formed a bloc with the imperialists and with the militarists against the workers and peasants. A certain consolidation of the forces of reaction has taken place in China. But this consolidation does not by any means denote the end of the immediate revolutionary situation in China. Neither politically nor economically has any of the tasks of the revolution been decided. The workers and peasants have not been defeated. As Marx already pointed out, the clash of the revolution consolidates the forces of counter-revolution, but only to provide the forces of revolution with the possibility of overthrowing the entire counter-revolution.

Bourgeois Revolution Unfinished

The peculiarity of the present situation in China lies in the fact that the period of bourgeois democratic revolution has by no means ended, but the bourgeois-democratic revolution is already beginning to develop into the proletarian-socialist revolution, and certain traits of the proletarian revolution are already appearing. The tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution have not yet been solved: China is not united. China has not freed herself from the yoke of the imperialists. The destruction of the remnants of feudalism, the solution of the agrarian revolution constitute the basic tasks of the mass struggle. The period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution has by no means ended, the leaders of the revolution are the proletariat, which relies on the peasantry as its ally. The proletariat is fighting to-day for the establishment of the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants in the form of Soviets.

Recently signs have been on the increase which point to a certain change in the policy of the imperialists in China, a new "peaceful" imperialist intervention is being prepared. The previous intervention of the imperialists was carried out at a time when the nationalist armies in their role of revolutionaries occupied Shanghai and Nanking. At that time the intervention was directed against the national bourgeoisie with the workers and peasants as allies. Now a radical change has taken place in the position. And this is one of the most important new features of the Chinese situation. The ex-national bourgeoisie has complied with the two main demands of the imperialists: the overthrow of the

workers and peasants and the breach with the Soviet Union. The Nanking Government of the Kuomintang Party is now nothing but a political compradore of the imperialist Powers. The new "imperialist" intervention is not to take place against the ex-national Chinese bourgeoisie, but in agreement with the Chinese bourgeoisie. This intervention is apparently to be of a "peaceful" nature, the foreign troops are to form the reserve force, the main forces will be the so-called "national" armies of the Nanking Government. The Nanking Government is to receive some sort of recognition so that there should be a government in existence which will recognise the imperialists' pretensions and privileges and their right to exploit.

These regroupings of the class forces and changes in political conditions, which are being enacted on the basis of economic decline, the growing chaos, the interminable militarist wars, and of the increasing impoverishment of the masses of the workers and peasants, constitute the factors which determine the position of the workers and also the relations of the Communist Party to the proletariat.

The young Communist Party, which is to-day the target of the entire forces of reaction, which must carry on its struggle under conditions of the most brutal oppression by the white terror, has undergone a decisive and fundamental change during this period. The August Conference of the Communist Party of China marked a ruthless break with the opportunist errors of the former period, freed the Party from the old opportunist leadership and adopted the definite Bolshevik policy of the armed rising. In the earlier stages of the struggle the Communist Party of China also led a number of heroic struggles, but the Party leadership committed catastrophic opportunist errors. It attempted to subordinate the class struggle of the proletariat to the

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to dam the development of the movement towards partial strikes under the pretext of weakness of the trade union organisation, the danger of repression by the government and so on.

8. In order to lead the masses during the strike it is necessary that there should be energetic work before the strike. The Communists must be always with the masses, and must prove that he is better than the reformists by his unbroken everyday work, and by his intelligent and energetic defence of the interests of the workers. The workers judge the Communists not by their words, but by their deeds; that is why the problem of the everyday, detailed political and organisational work in the enterprises is the preliminary condition, without which the claim to the leadership of the strikes will remain merely a paper one.

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national struggle. It saw only the various combinations of generals and politicians above and not the development of the masses struggle below. It neglected the basic task of arming the workers. It recoiled from the great historic task of the development of the people's agrarian revolution. It created a position which ran the risk of transforming the Communist Party into a hanger-on of the Kuomintang. The fact that the Communist Party of China has been able to overcome these opportunist dangers and direct its policy again on to the main path of revolution gives proof of its indomitable vitality.

The Canton Rising

Without this decisive break with opportunism the Nanchang rising and the southern expedition to Swatow would have been impossible. It was the August conference which created the conditions for the December rising in Canton. The rising in Canton does not only give proof of the heroism of the Chinese workers, the splendid militant courage of the Communist Party of China, but constitutes one of the most important events in the Chinese revolution. The setting up of the Soviet Republic in Canton is of historic significance, it is the most glorious deed of the Chinese workers and marks the greatest attainment of the Chinese revolution thus far. The Canton rising was crushed and the bourgeoisie of the whole world maliciously declares that Canton has become the city of the dead. But the bourgeoisie only records the defeats sustained, and cannot understand what an advance from the point of view of principle the establishment of the Soviet Power in one of the most important centres in the Far East signifies. There is a symbolic significance in the fact that Canton, the cradle of the bourgeois revolution, has now also become the cradle of the proletarian revolution in China. The Canton of Sun Yat Sen has now also become the Canton of Lenin. Canton suffered defeat, but the defeat is the source and the guarantee of future victories.

The great gains which the Communist Party of China has to show for the period just elapsed are the August conference, which put an end to opportunism, the southern expedition to Swatow and the Canton revolution.

But it is also necessary to consider those factors which constitute the losses when analysing the position of the workers and the attitude of the advance guard of the proletariat to the working class.

The defeats suffered during the revolution (Shanghai, Wuhan, Swatow, Canton) have resulted in a temporary decline in the workers' activities recently. The economic depression and the increasing ravages of the white terror have weakened the great mass organisations of the workers which had already been formed during an earlier period.

For the most part the trade unions are not in a position to organise the workers in their ranks, they are only organisations in name, and very often nothing more than directing committees. Many of the economic strikes involve but a few workers and are inadequately linked up. The strike movement which the Shanghai workers have been carrying on for the past five months

could not be victorious. The peasant risings, which are on the increase in many districts, for the most part failed to find active support in the Labour movement. The Canton rising did not cause any mass movements amongst the workers in the rest of China. The General Strike slogan of the Communist Party received no support.

The Workers must Not be Split

Everywhere the counter-revolutionary Kuomintang is trying to split the ranks of the workers. It is forming yellow trade unions throughout the country, which are not real workers' organisations, but merely adjuncts of the State machine which constitute a section of the military power. The yellow union of the engineering workers was active as a counter-revolutionary force, both during and after the Canton rising, and even before, and competed with the generals in the slaughter of the workers.

The danger exists that this position of the workers and the Labour movement may cause a division between the active revolutionary minority : the Communist Party and the broad masses of the workers who are at the mercy of the white terror and impeded in their activities.

This danger is heightened by the social composition of the Communist Party. Its leading cadres still consist to a larger extent than is desirable of students and intellectuals with far too few workers and peasants.

During the period of the political strikes, mass meetings and mass demonstrations it was possible for the intellectual elements in the Party to play a very great role. But now, however, when the workers are not in the street, but in the factories or have returned as unemployed to the villages, at a time when the leadership of economic struggles plays a very great role, certain sections of this intellectual circle are not able to fit into this new method of struggle, and under-estimate the efficiency of mass agitation and mass propaganda as a means of struggle.

This incorrect standpoint is by no means shared by the entire Party, and must not be exaggerated under any circumstances, but yet it has caused several mistakes to be made in the various organisations of the Communist Party. The most important of these errors are :

1. Neglect of work in the trade unions and the neglect of the struggle for the daily demands of the workers.
2. A too close connection between the trade unions and the Communist Party. The correct policy which provides for the political guidance of the trade unions through the Communist Party has been over-reached in practice until the connection between the Party and the trade unions has become too close, the trade union committee has become identical with the Party committee and the trade unions are frequently simply sections of the Party instead of embracing a much wider section of the working masses.
3. Strikes are often declared regardless of the economic position in the industries involved and without considering the existing strength of the workers, and even when there is no possibility whatever of success.
4. Strikes are declared without consulting the wor-

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kers concerned, and often against the wishes of these workers.

5. Strikes are begun under Communist leadership without any attempt being made to negotiate with the capitalists, thereby giving the yellow unions the opportunity of seizing the leadership and carrying on negotiations with the employers on behalf of the workers.

Terror is often used against the yellow unions, but there is no propaganda carried on to expose these leaders. No attempt is made by means of propaganda and agitation to enlighten the workers as to the treacherous activity of these leaders.

Neglect of Propaganda

The tendencies which are described here are noticeable on various occasions in the different Party organisations, and must be attributed to the neglect of mass agitation and mass propaganda in the task of leading the workers. They must be carefully exposed and overcome, for they serve to undermine the confidence of the masses in the revolutionary trade unions and the Communist Party, and allow the yellow unions to get the control of all industrial struggles and thus isolate the revolutionary advance guard from the masses of the workers.

Besides this under-estimation of mass agitation and mass propaganda in the leadership of the workers there is also in certain Party circles an inadequate understanding for the conditions of the armed rising as a means of class struggle in certain circumstances. This point of view is demonstrated first of all in the opinion that armed risings can and must be engineered all the time and everywhere irrespective of the actual conditions. There is an idea that the armed rising must be "hurried up" otherwise the workers' and peasants' revolution might come too late as a result of the economic decline of the country, the increase in the number of factories being closed down and the decimation of the ranks of the workers. The November theses of the Plenum of the Communist Party of China also dealt with this tendency.

The important problems of the correct selection of the moment for the rising, the certainty of the most extensive mass participation and of the most careful general political, organisational and military preparation for the rising must also be raised and discussed in connection with Canton. One of the most important duties of the February Plenum of the E.C.C.I. will be to examine those mistakes which were made on these lines in connection with Canton rising. The lessons of the Canton rising for the Chinese workers should not only consist in recording its great historic significance, but also in determining those lessons which will ensure that the next time there will be a greater participation of the masses and that the moment chosen for the rising may be more favourable.

These incorrect tendencies which prevail amongst a large section of the Chinese Party must be analysed and overcome. The recognition of these tendencies does not imply that at the present moment no opportunist dangers exist in the Chinese Party. The basis of opportunism

was the failure of the Party to adapt itself to the new conditions of struggle which were created through the agrarian revolution. The basis of the aforementioned tendencies consists in the failure of certain Party circles to adapt themselves to the new conditions of struggle, which have arisen out of the present new grouping of classes. The opportunist danger has not yet been completely overcome, it can come to life again in the form of a liquidatory tendency after the defeat. There are still many opportunist mistakes made in the everyday work of the Party local organisations. This opportunism must be fought mercilessly whenever it manifests itself. The Communist Party of China will only become the leader of victorious risings of workers and peasants if it overcomes these dangers.

Future Tasks

The present position of the Chinese revolution and the actual attitude of the Communist Party of China to the workers also determine the tasks of our Party. These tasks for the immediate future consist in :

(1) Determined policy for revolution. The political slogan to be Soviets.

(2) No playing with revolution. Concrete analysis of every situation in order to be able to determine the conditions which really ensure victorious risings. Careful political, organisational and military preparation for risings. Careful choice of the moment for the rising. The absolute certainty of the largest possible mass participation in the rising.

(3) The slogan must be, Nearer to the masses. Only with the help of the masses can successful revolutions be made. There must be a general application of the methods of mass persuasion, mass agitation and mass propaganda.

(4) The path of victory in China will lead to a number of armed risings in separate provinces, which, however, does not mean that in the accomplishment of a rising in any one province the joint assistance of the workers and peasants in other parts should be left out of account.

(5) Organisation of the trade unions, which should be organisationally separate from the Party organisations and based on the masses. Intensive work to win over the workers organised in the yellow trade unions.

(6) Much more intensive contact and co-ordination between the workers' and the peasant risings. Organisation of peasant societies. Determined policy for the people's agrarian revolution.

(7) Work in the army. The Communist policy of the disintegration of the bourgeois armies must become a part of the daily work of the Party.

(8) Development of the Party; closer contact between the Party and the masses, greater contact between the officials and the Party membership, more democracy within the Party, a change in the social composition of the Party by increasing the proletarian elements.

Nearer to the masses, the daily work of preparing the masses for a victorious revolution, such are the tasks of the hour for the Communist Party of China.