

Confront the Left Opposition!

“In the sea of people we are but a drop in the ocean and we can administer only if we express correctly what the people are conscious of. Unless this happens, the Communist Party will not lead the proletariat. The proletariat will not lead the masses and the whole machine will collapse.”

V.1. Lenin Address to the 11th Congress RCP(B)

Think! Think deeply! The whole future of socialism is at stake! It is no longer feasible to make the reflex defence against the Trotskyists by pointing to the “reality of the Soviet people building socialism now”. Today this reality is being exposed with a vengeance around the world and in the “socialist” countries themselves. There is mass rebellion in the post-capitalist states. The ideologies of these rebellions vary. Some want to reform the existing system. Some want a more democratic form of socialism with participation of the market. Sometimes there is no clear ideology. However, in Romania, Hungary, East Germany, Poland, Lithuania and elsewhere there is conscious support for capitalism and even feudalism.

It is not good enough to hide behind cliches. Of course we must stand for the leading role of the party but how do we get to a position where the masses themselves understand this role in their consciousness? Lenin never supported the imposition of the party by bureaucratic fiat. Today in East Germany the Socialist Unity Party admits for the past forty years, elections were rigged!

Peter Simon goes to China and is informed that the students massacred in Tiananman Square were “counter-revolutionaries”. He takes his information as good authority and fully justifies their repression. But if they were counter-revolutionaries as claimed this only

begs the question — How can we re-establish the authority of socialism so as to undermine these tendencies? Unless this is done there will regular brutal repression as sector after sector raises their often legitimate grievances only to be met with guns and tanks.

The masses hate the name of Lenin and Marx because they stand throughout Eastern Europe synonymous with inefficiency, shortages, bureaucracy, a terror machine, deprivation of individual rights, and even chauvinism and racism. Some partly excuse this by saying that mistakes were made under difficult circumstances. These major distortions go beyond that. It is absolutely impermissible to allow those such as Honeker and Ceausescu to accumulate millions in Swiss bank accounts. It is absolutely impermissible for Bulgarians of Turkish descent to be forced to change their names! These are crimes not errors. Socialism should not mean a police state. Socialism should not mean queues and shortages. Socialism should not mean abuse and bureaucratic privilege. Socialism should not mean racism and national chauvinism. The British paper New Worker hails the Red Army for clamping down on religious bigotry in Azerbaijan. Why is it that after 70 years of what we have been led to believe is socialism, religious chauvinism is still a dominant ideology?

Lenin stood for proletarian power: “Workers must enter the government establishment so as to supervise the whole government apparatus” [Collected Works Volume 30, page 350] Lenin stood for proletarian democracy: “The people were told the soviet was a plenipotentiary organ! They believed it and acted on that belief. The process of democratisation must be carried and right of recall introduced” [Report on the Right of Recall Collected Works volume 26 page 334-338]. Lenin stood for fighting bureaucracy: “I hope very much that we shall expel 100 thousand who have attached

themselves to the Party and are not only incapable of fighting the red tape but are a hindrance in this fight.” [Second Congress, Political Education Department Collected Works Volume 33]. It is clear that despite umpteen proclamations of “Marxism-Leninism” this revolutionary proletarian democratic tradition has been dragged through the mud. There is no resemblance of this in any of the post- capitalist states or regimes hailed by either the SPA or the ACU.

Joseph Stalin has a lot to answer for. He is hated by virtually everyone except the Maoists. However hating him as a person is not enough. In the ‘20s it was the Left Opposition, led by Leon Trotsky which fought the rise of Stalin. It included leading Bolsheviks. Stalin’s rise was seen, not in terms of personality, but of class forces. Of course capitalism was overthrown in the October revolution. However, despite the overthrow of the bourgeoisie alien class forces remained as Lenin observed “We have not torn up the roots of capitalism and we have not undermined the foundation, the basis, of the internal enemy.” [Collected Works volume 31, page 516]. A serious danger existed in the form of the Kulak, Nepman and the bureaucrat. When Lenin talked of a workers’ state with bureaucratic distortions he was talking about bureaucrat hang-overs from the Tsarist regime. Yet under Stalin the bureaucracy grew. When the Left Oppositions warned of the growth of non-proletarian forces they were accused by Stalin of “panic and pessimism”. Stalin and his ally Bukharin argued that the “Kulak co-operative nuclei can be integrated into our system”. Instead of a systematic policy to strengthen proletarian power, they pandered to these non-proletarian sections. The fruits of their efforts are now clear for all to see. Bureaucratic repression through a bureaucratically imposed party or steps towards capitalism through the market

— these are the two alternatives raised in the current debate over the future of Eastern Europe. They are both counterposed to Lenin!

As in the ‘20s, the solution lies with the organisation and strengthening of working class power. The parasites, the bureaucrats must be removed. Non-proletarians must be won over on a principled basis. It is in this context that the Party can re-assert its leading role and planning be re-introduced. It is a matter of urgency that you study the documents of the Left Opposition, including the writings of Trotsky. The answer lies in the Marxist method that Trotsky applied. The Communist Tendency is committed to apply this method so we can fight the bosses in Australia. Think deeply! If communists cannot win over the working class and become their real leaders then the whole machine will collapse. And the loss of Eastern Europe to the imperialists will be a very great tragedy indeed.

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