Trotskyism and Revisionism

Teachers By Negative Example
Introduction

The Communist Party of Australia (M-L) believes that the article entitled "maoism in australia" (the absence of capital letters is not our choice) by B. Taft (published in Australian Left Review No. 35) is an excellent teacher by negative example. We therefore publish the whole of Mr. Taft's article and our comments on it. We are more especially concerned to republish the article today because Trotskyism is being given a tremendous boost by all reactionary circles. Trotskyism under the banner of those names, advocates views that are a betrayal of socialist revolution and Marxism.

The campaign for the spread of Trotskyite ideas in the revolutionary movement attempts to present Trotsky as the unwavering revolutionary leader in the battle for socialism in Russia.

An examination of the facts shows nothing can be further from the truth. Trotsky was a traitor to the revolution.

At every twist and turn of the revolutionary path he was an opponent of Lenin's Marxist line.

Time and again Lenin bitterly attacked his anti-revolutionary, anti-party activity.

To mention just some such occasions--in 1908 Lenin wrote: "Trotsky behaves like a most despicable careerist and factionalist... He pays lip service to the Party, but behaves worse than any other factionalist..."

In 1918 as Chairman of the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk, he refused to carry out the instructions of the Bolshevik Party and concluded a Peace Treaty with Germany. Lenin declared at the time that Trotsky "actually helped the German imperialists and hindered the growth and development of the revolution in Germany" (Lenin, Selected Works Eng. ed. Moscow 1947 Vol. II p. 287).

Methods of socialist construction, and the new socialist relations of production dealt with by Lenin in "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" were likewise opposed by Trotsky on the grounds that socialist construction and the victory of socialism in Russia alone were impossible.

The history of inner-party struggles in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was the history of struggle against the ideas of Trotsky and others of his ilk whose left phrases covered up their anti-revolutionary position.

Without their defeat Socialism would never have been won in the Soviet Union.

In our opinion, it is not sufficient merely to brand someone a Trotskyist: his views require analysis. But it is an important fact that Mr. Taft has a long history of association with Trotsky in the "Aronov revisionist group" of which Mr. Taft is a prominent member.公开proclaims Trotskyism, Mr. Taft himself is able to carry out openly what he believes has been his long-term advocacy of Trotskyist views. In our opinion, these views are thoroughly betraying of and treacherous to the working class movement.

Nor do we propose to say much about E. F. Hill, who features so largely in Taft's article. Hill's record in the Australian revolutionary/socialist movement is reasonably well known. It is for the workers and working people of Australia to judge him and the Party of which he is a member as well as for those same workers and working people to judge Mr. Taft and the Party of which he is a member. It does not depend for the matter of Taft to be praised or abused and it does not dispose of the matter for Mr. Taft to be praised or abused.

We of course have our own opinion of Mr. Taft. We believe that we are correct and we believe that Mr. Taft is a traitor to the revolutionary cause. Merely because we believe it, does not make it correct but we think an analysis of the facts about Mr. Taft and his writings shows that it is correct. It is in this sense that we republish his article in full and without alteration and then publish our own comments separately.
Meanwhile the new revolutionary upsurge began in the mid-sixties. The growing questioning and rejection of the values of capitalist society by some of the young, coupled with the USSR and the feeling that it had become a conservative force, as they believed, had the Communist Party of Australia. In this situation the party attempted a more radical approach, as is evident from the model of a socialist society grew among the radicalized youth. China seemed to challenge the established authority of the USSR, rather than on Marx and Lenin, who regarded critical thought and free debate as essential to the fulfillment of Maoist revolution and movement for the future socialist society.

With this goes an attitude of utter intolerance to other groups and viewpoints inside the Stalinist movement. The group revived the Stalinist precept that the enemy is the one closest to you and that the main blow is to be directed at him (since he is most likely to deceive the masses). Jill Jolliffe, who herself grew up politically in this group, notes that "the struggle against revisionism" loomed larger than "the struggle against capitalism." (Socialist Review, Feb. 1972)

They have absorbed some of the worst Stalinist traits in the Maoist debate and taken them further. Believing themselves to be the only true revolutionaries, they regard any means as justified to defeat their political opponents. Truth matters little, arguments are distorted and misrepresented. Their style of work is highly manipulative and anything goes as long as it achieves their purpose.

Their dogmatism, their blind copying of foreign slogans and forms of struggle and attempting to apply them to current situations in Australia — such as the call for the Australian workers to arm themselves and for a People's Army, hence in our conditions, which is often some grotesque results.

Feature of their dogmatism is the extraordinarily primitive approach. By refusing to discuss, or being unable to discuss, political issues seriously and by reducing student politics to 24-hour slogan shouting, they have created an adverse reaction to politics generally among many students. The reaction to this is often "If this is politics I want nothing of it!"

Because of their primitive attitudes they tend to personalise their politics. They can only focus on individual individuals, without any idea of the social forces and movements. Hence the individual becomes the main object of attack rather than the institutionalised role of a political force.

As well as a preoccupation with the individual policymakers they have the primitive view that fights with the police will radicalize the victim. This is certainly not always the case, especially if police reaction and over-reaction is artificially induced as with the WSA affair. This could be counterproductive. The trouble with such a slogan is that it appeals only to those already convinced.

In preparation for the April 21 demonstration, SACP discussed in March 21. They were relieved to learn that WSA is producing a large number of stickers with various slogans including Smashed Inflation on April 21." Since WSA's own political diet is rather meagre, they readily absorb the diet dished out by Vanguard, which revived Stalin's theory of "social fascism." The leading heading: "Labor Reformists and Revisionists are part of Fascism." Vanguard, October 8, 1970, stated:

"The struggle against fascism is primarily the struggle against reformism and revisionism and the bourgeois current, they both support, repudiate and reproduce the trade unionism."

Long ago Stalin said that social democracy "is really the core of the problem of today's socialists, they have a certain role in the movement for socialism, they are at the heart of the movement for socialism.

In concentrating their fire exclusively on the exposure of the Number One Enemy, US imperialism, they leave the Australian capitalists out of the line of fire. The blind copying of a foreign slogan is often a political disaster. They have been trying to find a way out of the political isolation of the workers and to redress the balance of power. They have done this with the Chou En-Lai's statement to this effect.

In the belief that simplistic answers are the whole and sole truth, such people defend the Stalinist terror and physical destruction of tens of thousands of devoted communists and socialists. They sing at socialist humanism and advocate the suppression of free debate even for fellow socialists in a socialist society. Their model of socialism is as destructive as their tactics to achieve it. If their kind of socialism ever comes to power many socialists will not be alive to see it.

Those who have a primitive view of social change and who substitute pseudo-political phrases for revolutionary activities which reach out to the masses of the people, generally have a certain role in the kind of socialist society they want. It is usually an elitist attitude which ignores or rejects the mass movements. It involves many distortions, substitution of slogans, empty clichés and abuse or worse for serious discussion of socialist society.

Underlying such attitudes and approaches are certain assumptions which are the perspective for social change. They can briefly be summed up as follows:

They believe that the capitalist system in Australia is only maintained by force and superstitions,
They do not recognize that it is ideological domination the hegemony of bourgeois ideas and attitudes that are the real cause for the continued existence and acceptance of the capitalist system. Certainly capitalism will attempt to use force to maintain itself, if it is seriously challenged. But the majority of people have never been spread, the majority of people only a small group accept the capitalist system at present.

They believe that making revolution is a simple matter of announcing the “truth” and of preparing to carry out the people by creating confrontation situations (almost irrespective of the issue involved) you can force the system to use. This is a delusion. They believe, is the way open people's eyes and bring about a revolution in Australia.

An organization brought up in that intellectual prisoners, with the ideological dogma of Marxism has found it especially difficult to adjust to the recent changes in Chinese policies.

The first big thing that really burst on them were the events in Ceylon in April 1971. When the news of the armed uprising reached this country Vanguard on May 13, 1971, on the front page under the heading “Armed Struggle in Ceylon” for the following:

The people of Ceylon have taken to arms against the great tea plantation owners, against exploitation. There are people who say they cannot say it, their politics were wrong or some other reason. But they did not say it in public, they did not support. This is the first time. Nobody will doubt the correctness of political positions they take on Ceylon. Earlier they have been silent. The efforts to date have revealed the essential character of the Left “Mrs. Bandaranaiske and the Moscow puppet.” In the past, their refusal to resign has revealed the collapse of all revolutionary forces to put down the rebellion by peaceful means.

Unhappily for Vanguard a few days later Chou Enlai joined what Vanguard called “the coalescing of all revolutionary forces to put down the rebellion by peaceful means” public support for Mrs. Bandaranaiske. In a message to her he stated:

"In the interests of friendship between China and Sri Lanka and in consideration of the agreement between the two Governments, the Chinese Government agrees to provide a long-term interior offensive in Ceylon against the Resistance Movement. We will prepare a portion of the forces, to be used by the resistance movement in the interior of Ceylon."

If indeed Vanguard had made a mistake should it not openly say so, should it not heed Lenin’s advice in Left-Wing Communism that “To admit a mistake openly, to disclose its reasons, to analyse the conditions which gave rise to it, to study attentively the mistakes committed — these are the signs of a serious party?”

But not a word appeared in Vanguard Ceylon simply ceased to exist. Then the events in Pakistan burst upon the local Maoists. Naturally, the sympathy of most of the local Maoists lies with the people of East Pakistan rather than with the buffer Yahya Khan. Ted Hill had the misfortune to deliver a personal letter to Mr. Ghani on April 30, 1971. In answer to questions about the struggle in Pakistan, he first claimed that it was an internal matter. Someone asked: “Is this a racial conflict, or an internal matter?” Then Hill charged his position and claimed that he did not know the facts. At this point the majority responded with approaching prolonged applause. Pandemonium broke loose as a vote supporting East Bengali workers, peasants, and students was overwhelmingly carried by the audience. Whatever Indian motives and designs, the local Maoists found it hard to convince their followers that Yahya Khan ought to be supported by the majority of the people of East Pakistan (East Pakistan) could “secede” from the minority (West Pakistan).

The Nixon visit to China and its timing in the midst of the war in Vietnam was the next blow.

The local Maoists were understandably affected by this. They had for years maintained that the Russians were at fault for the war and that the U.S.A. was not at fault. They still maintain this. Their analysis of the situation is very simple: they believe that Mr. Nixon does not want to seize the initiative in the war but wants to achieve a truce. They believe that the U.S. has to accept the situation in Vietnam as it is. They believe that the situation in Vietnam is not severe for the U.S. They believe that the situation in Vietnam is not severe for the U.S.

Mr. Taft’s article says that the Maoist movement in Australia is going through difficulties. We must insist that anyone who denounces the difficulties in building a revolutionary party and in working in the revolutionary movement would be foolish indeed. If Mr. Taft is referring to difficulties in the building of the Communist Party of Australia (M.L.), then he is quite correct. (We will confine our comments to this regard to the Communist Party of Australia (M.L.).) The other organisations to which Mr. Taft refers have no doubt spoken for themselves. Not only have we had difficulties but we have made mistakes. But does Mr. Taft’s observation conclude the question? Scarcely. The greatest revolutionary parties in history have been the Communist Party of the Soviet Union before the revisionist seizure of its leadership, the Communist Party of China and the Albanian Party of Labour. Each of these Parties went through great difficulties. Lenin wrote very much on this matter in relation to the Russian Communist Party. His early writings were very largely concerned with the problems and difficulties of building a revolutionary party. The Communist Party of China, founded in 1921, went through great difficulties in Party building right from its beginning. And after that, through the period of the difficulties changed, difficulties remained. The Albanian Party of Labour went through great difficulties, not the least of which were caused by interference in the Albanian Party of Labour by Mr. Taft’s friend, the Trotskyist Tito. But the difficulties experienced by these Parties assumed secondary importance beside their great positive achievements. It was precisely through difficulties that these Parties grew stronger and led great revolutionary movements. One must certainly recognize difficulties. They are facts of life. The Communist Party of Australia (M.L.) has faced difficulties and is going through difficulties. But in our opinion precisely these difficulties, facing them and dealing with them, the Party has grown greatly. It has grown in the ideological sense, political sense and organisational sense.

Mr. Taft continues that the Communist Party of Australia (M.L.) has been “embarrassed” by “changes in Chinese policies” and that this policy is simply based upon quite wrong assumptions. Certainly we are admirers of People’s China. Certainly we regard Chairman Mao as having developed the science of Marxism-Leninism to an entirely new and higher stage. We regard contemporary Marxism-Leninism as including Mao Tse-Tung Thought. We certainly believe that People’s China is building socialism, that its Great Cultural Revolution was a historically unprecedented and immeasurable contribution to the building of socialism. Certainly we are proud to subscribe, along with the Chinese Party and other Parties, to Marxism-Leninism.

But we believe that the revolutionary problem in Australia must be solved by the Australian revolutionary movement by correctly integrating Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-Tung Thought into Australian conditions. As long ago as 1947, Marx and Engels in speaking of the internationalism of the working class said: “The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.” (The Communist Manifesto 1848). All Marxists have always pointed out that revolution cannot be exported nor imported. Revolutionary theory, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-Tung Thought, is indeed international but its correct use depends upon the conditions of a given country; and whether or not the people of a given country make revolution is a matter for those people. Moreover the relations between states are an entirely different thing from relations within a given state and in particular the class struggle within a given state. At the time of the alliance between the then socialist Soviet Union and the C.S.A. and Great Britain, Chairman Mao himself said:

"WE MADE MISTAKE"

"Such compromise between the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union can be the outcome of the effective struggles of the democratic forces of the world against the reactionary forces of the United States, Britain and France. Such compromise by no means solves these difficulties, facing them and dealing with them, the Party has grown greatly. It has grown in the ideological sense, political sense and organisational sense."

"Let us turn now to Mr. Taft’s assertion of our embarrassment over the events in Ceylon in April 1971. We made a mistake. We had no choice but to do nothing with People’s China. Our mistake arose from proceeding..."
on inadequate information from Ceylon and a certain wishful thinking which gave rise to a "leftist" interpretation of the events. Since then we have had no evidence material from the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ceylon. Any embarrassment which we suffered arose from our own mistake and we do not regard it as embarrassing but rather as an occasion for self-criticism. We think it is only honest. Revolutionaries must above all be honest with the workers and working people. To make a mistake is not good; to deny having made a mistake is very bad indeed; to fail to analyse the reason for that mistake too is bad. Lenin said that only he who does nothing makes no mistakes. He also said: "The attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest criteria of the seriousness of the party and how it fulfills in practice its obligations toward its class and towards the toiling masses. To admit a mistake openly, to disclose its reasons, to analyse the conditions which gave rise to it, to study attentively the means of correcting it—these are the signs of a serious party; this means the performance of its duties, this means educating and civilizing the workers. It is a left-wing Communist, an Infantile Disorder—Lenin's emphasis. As to Pakistan, we consider we made no mistake but that events have proved that the Indian reactionary ruling class, backed by the imperialists, has launched an aggression against Pakistan and dismembered her. The so-called Bangla Desh, far from giving the peoples freedom, subjects them to the brutal dictates of the Indian reactionaries (backed by the Soviet imperialists) and subjects these peoples to lives of misery, starvation, oppression. The peoples of all these countries, (Pakistan including Bangla Desh and India) have their own task of winning their liberation. As to Nixon's visit to People's China our view is that People's China was correct in agreeing to Nixon's request to visit it. People's China was and is duty bound to exploit the common points of interests between the imperialists and in particular between the imperialist Soviet Union and U.S. imperialism. That is a matter for People's China. People's China is united with all revolutionaries in all countries. As a big power, it has a special part in this struggle and what it does as a State accords with the needs of the world revolutionary struggle.

REVISIONISTS DISINTEGRATE

Mr. Taft says that in 1963 the views held by those who subsequently reconstituted the Communist Party were overwhelmingly rejected in the then Communist Party. If the question is regarded as of numbers, Mr. Taft's assertion is correct. However, matters of ideology cannot be determined by mere numbers. No matter how many people support a wrong idea, the idea does not become right because it is supported by many. All people are not the same; some have the idea that the earth is flat; that unanimity of idea did not make the earth flat. In Mr. Taft's case how does his 1963 majority stand today? It has indeed disintegrated. That he himself composed the majority is quite put into all sorts of groups; many of them bitterly opposed to Mr. Taft. It is not an exaggeration to say that Mr. Taft's majority has become the minority and the minority has become the majority, indeed, it seems to be part of his communist. The real question involved in the political controversy in Australia in the early sixties, was adherence to or repudiation of the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism. Mr. Taft was prominent among those who repudiated that revolutionary essence. He wholeheartedly embraced the views of the then Soviet Party leader Khrushchev. (Khrushchev, too, in his time, had been an adherent of Trotsky's "Left-wing Democracy" ["Left-wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder—Lenin's emphasis].) In our opinion, the Chinese Communist Party correctly upheld the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism, which the Cominform rejected in Australia. Those who subsequently reconstituted the Communist Party, shared with the Chinese Communist Party, a common adherence to the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism. Mr. Taft and his colleagues shared with the Soviet Party leadership a common detestation of the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism. Thus it was not a question of subservience either on the one side to the Chinese Communist Party and on the other side to the Soviet Party leadership. Neither one of these parties could have imposed their ideas on anyone against the will of that person, but if that anyone had ideas common with either the Chinese Party or the Soviet Party, that is the essence of affinity of ideas. In our opinion there is nothing abnormal in that. We are indeed proud that we did and do have an adherence to the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism along with the Communist Party of China and Chairman Mao. That is our position. That is our position. We did, in the days of Stalin, share with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union a common adherence to Marxism-Leninism. In the early days of Khrushchev's leadership, we were accepted supporters and said so. At that time Khrushchev told carefully in concealing the whole of his real desertion of Marxism-Leninism. It was in this spirit that Hill wrote in praise of the Soviet Union a booklet entitled "Builders of Communism." That booklet did not make any great achievements in the Soviet Union—achievements that are the foundation for which were laid by Lenin and Stalin. Nevertheless there is no doubt that in the earlier years of Khrushchev those who subsequently reconstituted the Communist Party in Australia, did have the mistaken idea that Khrushchev was a Marxist-Leninist. Events unfolded and showed that Khrushchev was a scoundrel. We have never denied that we changed some of our positions on this matter: we have openly said that our original position was mistaken. We have not corrected the mistake. We think events have shown that our criticism of our own mistake was correct.

Mr. Taft denounces Stalin's "Dialectical and Historical Materialism" as a "primitive treatise." Well Mr. Taft is, of course, entitled to his opinion. Everyone should read Stalin's work. It is a very good exposition of dialectical and historical materialism, in our view. These days we prefer Chairman Mao's "On Contradiction" and "On Practice" in their exposition of dialectical and historical materialism. In our view we have a little mechanical, arbitrary and rigid notion that they place the law of contradiction firmly enough as the core of materialist dialectics. This does not alter the historical fact that Stalin's materialism served the revolutionary movement. People can easily enough read the material and choose between Stalin and Mr. Taft. At least Stalin discusses his views and tells us what they are. Stalin never condemned something as a "primitive treatise." He said at that the least he told us why and in what respects it was a "primitive treatise." Only very superior beings are in the position of loftyly dismissing (without discussing) an important discussion as a primitive treatise.

As for alleged denunciation of "Chinese liberalism" what are the facts? Mr. Taft and his colleagues were naturally hostile to the bourgeois rights in China. These bourgeois rights were working hard for the restoration of capitalism in China. When Mr. Taft and his colleagues returned to Australia they adopted similar views and supported the bourgeois rights. They went in for "self cultivation" (a sort of pseudo psycho-analysis), and tried to impose it on the Communist Party as a whole. In our view this was correctly opposed and condemned. Ideas of the bourgeois rights were and are opposed to the Marxist-Leninist position of Chairman Mao and the Communist Party of China. Mr. Taft and his colleagues certainly found themselves at home on the bottom of these Chinese bourgeois rights whose ideas they attempted to import into Australia. It is a question similar to that which we have discussed before. These bourgeois rights could not impose their ideas on Mr. Taft. All their attacks and reproaches were essentially similar to his own in their hostility to Marxism-Leninism. Such ideas in the revolutionary movement were and are in our opinion correctly subject to analysis and criticism and withering scorn.

PROTECTS U.S. IMPERIALISM

Two of the most revealing things in Mr. Taft's article are his protection of U.S. imperialism and his protection of the capitalist state machine. Look at Mr. Taft's article. On the third page, not once but several times he challenges the imperialism of the U.S. "One Enemy, U.S. Imperialism." He uses various pretexts, "reasons" he would call them. But the essence of his position is not done to much against U.S. imperialism. What is this but service to U.S. imperialism? Mr. Taft is even lagging behind the American capitalist class which is increasingly concerned about U.S. imperialism in Australia. But Mr. Taft is serving a definite purpose. That purpose is to paralyze the revolutionary movement against U.S. imperialism. There could be no better service to U.S. imperialism. It is simple fact that U.S. imperialism dominates whole sections of Australian industry and dictates Australian policy. One may think that is good or bad. We think it is very bad but Mr. Taft thinks that to say that is simplistic. He does not say it is very good, that is true. But what is the difference? Mr. Taft is directly aiding imperialism. At the risk of Mr. Taft's scorn, we think we would have been failing in our duty if we did not turn our campaign to against Japanese militarism. Mr. Taft thinks that too is simplistic. Well Australians know Japan's history and think that is good or bad. We think it is very bad but Mr. Taft thinks that to say that is simplistic. He does not say it is very good, that is true. But what is the difference? Mr. Taft is directly aiding imperialism. At the risk of Mr. Taft's scorn, we think we would have been failing in our duty if we did not turn our campaign to against Japanese militarism.
abuse or worse for serious discussion of socialist society". Mr. Taft says: "They believe that the capitalist system in Australia is only maintained by force and suppression. They do not recognize that it is ideological domination the hegemony of bourgeois ideas and that the main cause for the continued existence and acceptance of the capitalist system. Certainly capitalism will attempt to use force to maintain itself if it is seriously challenged. But the majority of Australians despite criticism of the capitalist system at present." (Emphasis ours.) This is really the crux of Mr. Taft's argument. This particular argument serves the specific purpose of disarming the working class and its instrument. The force of the capitalists, Marx and Lenin pointed out in the State machine is an apparatus for the suppression of one class by another, in this case suppression of the working class and people by the capitalist class. Its chief component is the army: other components are the police, courts, gaols. It is a special instrument of suppression. It is organized force and violence against the working people; and its instrument is the instrument of the capitalists and their local collaborators against the Australian people. Contrary to Mr. Taft's assertion that capitalism will attempt to use force if seriously challenged, capitalism is a force that continually attempts to use minute, hourly, daily, and minute force, its lies force in the army, the police, courts, gaols. (Australian anti-imperialists at this moment languish in the capitalist gaols.) Is that not force? Mr. Taft? To simplify, you reply! Capitalism uses systematic police violence, courts as mere ciphers, gaols and the army. So it goes on. One would think all this is clear. Some of these high-sounding words of Mr. Taft dealt with the ideas played by ideas. One idea, the ruling circles promote is that the State is not an instrument of force (Your idea too Mr. Taft), that it does justice, parliament is the thing (no, no, not "a talking shop" as Marx said), parliaments mean nothing. They are just the right of the people to choose few years which member of the ruling class will misrepresent the people in parliament, as Marx said. All far too simplistic. Of course, ideas are disseminated by the ruling circles to smooth the transition of exploitation and their own power. These ideas evolve from capitalism. Revolutionary ideas exist to fight capitalism and capitalist state power on all fronts - the front of ideas and the front of physical force. Mr. Taft says with considerable satisfaction "But the majority of Australians despite criticism accept the capitalist system at present". Note Mr. Taft does not attack capitalism as such, at its root. Despite "criticism", it is good enough at present. Lenin had a good deal to say on now a revolutionary movement lives and develops. For example, he said:

"As for the preaching of revolution being 'inopportune', this objection rests on a confusion of terms customary in the Latin Socialists: they confuse the beginning of a revolution with the open and direct propaganda for revolution. In Russia, nobody places the beginning of the 1905 Revolution before July, 1905, strikes, barricades, had been conducted for a year before that. The question of the revolution, began to be seriously discussed at the end of 1900, as Marx did in 1847, when there could have been no thought as yet of the beginning of a revolution in Europe."

CONDEMNS DEMONSTRATIONS

In revolutionary crisis the people properly led up take a revolutionary position, they overthrow with words books and ideas. Revolutionary, fore and violence the reactionary force and violence of the capitalist class. But this is horrible to Mr. Taft who wants to just sit about debating with the capitalists "the hegemony of ideas". (How you love the everlasting virtues of capitalism!) Mr. Taft condemns demonstrations, says it is no good resisting police, etc. etc. Lenin no doubt is not very pleasant reading to Mr. Taft. For our part we exult in the clarity of his analysis and exposition in the pamphlet as "State and Revolution". ("Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky") In our opinion, the principles Lenin expounded in such works apply to Australia in their entirety. Our job is to integrate them with the concrete conditions of Australia and to press Mr. Taft to quote the somewhat mild statement of Engels (Principles of Communism) on this type of question:

"Question: Will the abolition of private property be possible in a peaceful way?

Answer: It were to be wished that this could happen, and the Communists would certainly be the last to take exception thereto. The Communists know too well that all contradictions are not only useless, but even harmful. They know too well that revolutions are not made arbitrarily and to order, but that they were everywhere and at all times the necessary consequence of circumstan-

cess which are entirely independent of the will and control of particular parties and whole classes. They also see, however, that the development of the proletariat in almost all civilised lands is forcibly approaching, and that in this way the opposition of the Communists are making with all their might for a revolution. Should the oppressed proletariat be in this way driven finally to a revolution, then we Communists will defend the cause of the workers with all the force of our organisation and will defend as we do now with words. (Principles of Communism).

What are we dealing with in Mr. Taft's article here are really two fundamental questions:

(1) the nature of imperialism and (2) the so-called peaceful transition to socialism. What Mr. Taft has done has been to dish up in slightly different words from those previously used by him and his revisionist Trotskyist colleagues, the proposition that the nature of imperialism has changed so that it is no longer necessary to overthrow it and the proposition that socialism can be achieved peacefully. The argument has been thrown discredited by experience; and by debate, Mr. Taft can no longer use the original words. He therefore dresses this old stuff in new words. The new words do not alter the facts.

In this regard, look at his article again. What does he say? He says that the workers Don't demonstrate, don't resist the police, it is too simplistic to single out a "Number One enemy", U.S. imperialism, it is amusing that Japanese militarism is included as such a enemy, the question of state power is merely a question of ideas. In short that means give away all revolutionary struggle: lie down before the enemy.

According to Marxism-Leninism the central question of revolution is the question of state power. The working class and its allies struggle to take power and establish an anti-imperialist democratic dictatorship led by the working class - a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is a desperate struggle - legal and illegal, peaceful and armed, open and secret.

As we have said, ideas are fundamentally important. Our Communist Party espouses its ideas as vigorously as it can. But it recognises that propaganda and agitation alone are not enough. The masses must have their own political parties. To repeat, Mr. Taft is really (although in so many words he doesn't say so) putting the case for peaceful parliamentary trans-

sition to socialism. We content ourselves by quoting Lenin:

"Only sounds and similes can think that the proletariat must win the majority of the elections carried out under the yoke of the bourgeois, under the yoke of the-slaves, and that only after this must it win power. This is the height of falsity and hypocrisy! It is substituting voting, under the old system and with the old power, for class struggle and revolution.

"The proletariat wages its class struggle and does not wait for voting to begin a strike, although for the complete success of a strike it is necessary to have the sympathy of the majority of the working people and, (it follows) by the weight of the majority of the population); the proletariat wages its class struggle and overthrows the bourgeoisie without waiting for any preliminary (supervised by the bourgeoisie and carried out on its own working people and, (it follows) by the weight of the majority of the population) is absolutely necessary." (Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists, October 10, 1919.)

And to deal with Mr. Taft's article on the essence of revolution the question of state power and how to achieve it permit us to quote Lenin again:

"The main question of every revolution is, undoubtedly, the question of state power. In the hands of the latter decides everything." (One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution.) And again:

"To imagine Socialism as though Mears. Socialists will present it to us on a platter, in a ready-made little dress, is not permissible — it will not happen. Not a single question of the class struggle has yet been solved in history except by violence. Violence, when it occurs from the side of the toiling, exploited masses against the exploiters — yes, we are for such violence! And we are not a bit of a lot of guys who, conscienciously or unconsciously, stand on the side of the bourgeoisie or are so intimidated, so oppressed by its domination that now, seeing this class struggle of unheard of sharpness, they have abdicated their responsibilities, their premises and demand from us the impossible — that we Socialists should attain complete victory without struggle against the exploiters, without crushing their resistance."
Lest it be said that we have torn statements of Mr. Taft from their context we have published all his article. Our readers can make their own judgment. Lest it be said we have torn statements of Lenin from their context we earnestly ask our readers to study Lenin’s “State and Revolution” and “The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky”. As to their application to Australia and our failure according to Mr. Taft to make an analysis of Australia, we can do no more than refer our readers to our paper “Vanguard” (so much reviled by Mr. Taft), our journal “Australian Communist”, our pamphlets and E. F. Hill’s “Looking Backward: Looking Forward”. All in all we think we have created a veritable library of material that integrates Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought with Australian conditions. You can look in vain for anything from Mr. Taft and his friends on the same important subjects. Once more it is a matter for you to judge.

Mr. Taft’s article really shows a complete aloofness from the working class. He and his colleagues show clearly they have nothing in common with the workers of Australia. They are professional “revolutionaries” who participate in no genuine struggle but try to divert the struggle into harmless channels.

Trotsky always proceeded in his statements on his own infallibility. Unlike Lenin, nowhere did he admit, or in his own estimation, make a mistake. His material proceeds on the assumption of his own statements being Holy Writ and everyone else’s being rubbish. Such infallibility is reserved for few mortals. Trotsky’s disciples and followers proceed on a similar footing.

Melbourne, June 1922.

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