

Major points in Coolidge's to be answered:

*I. Nat. Bus
II. ~~the phrase~~
III. i.w. r in wt
IV. Dual movement
V. Blame
VI. Subj.*

(1) Quotations... Throughout history the main current in the struggle for democratic rights has been the organization of the toilers. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ This holds no less today than for the past. Consequently, the Ns in the US must lay their case before the t.s. - Not as outsiders seeking a united front but from the inside as an integral & integrated party of the labor movement." (my emphasis,) p.10, col.2)

* (2) T.U.--Has entry into the labor movement solved problem of wh kws?
* Unionization will not solve the N problem any more than "
* unionization" will solve the problem of the wh.wkr." (my em."
* Difficulties wh. wrks. face are at bottom identical with
* those faced by N workers & all workers.

p.92, coll.--"N not a passive force & under the leadership of the t.u.&the Mxist party Nx will become one of the potential pacilli of the prol. rev."
Rts. cannot be acquired outside of general class struggle
p.91, col.3

(3) Dual movement. "What is it over against or parallel to?" (p.90, col.1)
dual movement IN(????) the t.u.

(4) Vague phrase. "Do not disregard N's struggle but direct that struggle into the labor movement, p.91, col.3

p.10, col.2, las par. WP will not be indifferent to the militancy of the N in his own behalf..will not exalt . will not denigrate."
QUOTE LT "least able to carry the load"

(5) BLAME: p.10, col.2. "Already there has been far too much indifference on the part of the Ns in the matter of leading pushing wh. workers into action in behalf of the Ns--"

p.8, col. Neither did the N understand ... led into R.P. until 1932"
p8, col.2, --K of L inclusion of N added to its disintegration.

(6) Subjectivist: untoward events, p.8 col.2 5 mln. 1880-90
7 decades--- (immigration 2 1/2 mln 1850-80
! ! conscious plan to provide No with white cheap labor -
Stage was set --N assigned special role

Dear Rex:

I thought that as the basis of discussion tomorrow, and also because I am not meeting you tonight, I might send you a special and bring certain disputed points to your attention. I'm sure you yourself know the answers to the various arguments, but perhaps it will bear repetition.

(1) "Chauvinism". That is the main bugaboo of Coolidge to hint that we the Johnsonites are "chauvinistic". First of all, it is important to understand that though revolutionists are internationalists, not chauvinists, that they nevertheless always made a distinction between the chauvinism of an oppressor nation, and the chauvinism of an oppressed nation. The one to fear is that of an oppressor nation. That is why Com. Trotsky said: "In America, where the Negroes are in a definite minority, serious fear of black chauvinism on the part of white revolutionaries seems to me not only unnecessary but dangerous." Trotsky further emphasized that it is white chauvinism, which is the chauvinism of the oppressor nation which is what has to be fought, and that our fear of black, instead of white chauvinism, showed "a concession to white chauvinism, which seems to me to be dangerous." Com. Trotsky further stated that he based himself on the documents the American comrades had given him. That is, his fear of our making a concession to white chauvinism was derived from the point of view held by Com. Shachtman, and now developed by Coolidge.

Com. Johnson makes the distinction very clear when he says that "The party wages a merciless war against Negro nationalist movements such as the Garveyites, the pro-Japanese organizations, etc. ... At the same time, however, the party must study these movements, to differentiate between the Negro nationalist leaders and their sincere but misguided followers. ... The party, while boldly attacking the nationalist movement, does not in any way treat these movements in the same category as it would a fascist movement. It attacks them on the basis of a program for Negro struggle."

(2) "Class versus race". Com. Coolidge seems to think that by shouting that he is for the class struggle, not merely the race struggle, that therefore that makes him more class-conscious than Johnson. That is far from the question. Everyone in a Marxist organization is for the class struggle. But what distinguishes true Marxists is that they are also able to see where a special problem arises, such as the Negro question and all national questions, that the dual oppression of the Negro both as a worker and as a Negro poses new problems and makes necessary not only the fight for democratic rights, but the realization that that fight leads to socialism because it is impossible otherwise to gain full democratic rights.

Com. Johnson therefore states: "The party must be on its guard to scrutinize all policies which may deflect the Negro proletariat in the labor movement from considering itself first and foremost as an integral part of the struggle of organized labor for the rights of labor and for socialism. The oppression of the Negroes as a national minority specially prepares the Negro proletariat in the organized labor movement for a place in the very vanguard of the struggle for socialism."

That is why he concludes, relating to an independent mass Negro organization, to be championed by the party: "The party is certain to reap concrete results because there is not at present time a single labor or radical organization which looks upon the militant Negro demonstration as anything else except at best justifiable because of unfortunate necessities. This means the party will be listened to eagerly by the Negro masses."

That was precisely the whole point of Com. Trotsky who urged we "utilize the sojourn of Com. Johnson in the States" to

9009

build an independent Negro organization. "I propose," said Com. Trotsky, "there is an obvious way.--the organization of a Negro movement. That the Negroes certainly want--they will respond to it and therefore must have it. They will follow such a movement ably and honestly led. One of the main tasks (of this movement) will be to demand and struggle for the right of the Negro to full participation in all industries and all unions. Any Negro organization which fought militantly for such an aim would thereby justify its existence.... A six months program can be elaborated for the Negro question so that if Johnson should be obliged to return to Great Britain, after a half year's work we have a basis for a Negro movement and we have a serious nucleus of Negroes and whites working together on this plan. It is a question of the vitality of the party. It is an important question. It is a question whether the party is to be transformed into a sect or if it is capable of finding its way to the most oppressed sections of the working class."

So that it is not at all a question of disregarding the class struggle, but on the contrary, so stimulating both the Negro masses in their own organization and in the unions, that together with the white working class it can bring on socialism. Com. Trotsky in fact insisted that ~~xxxxxx~~ "It is then possible that the Negroes will become the most advanced section. We have already a similar example of Russia. The Russians were the European Negroes. It is very possible that the Negroes... will furnish the vanguard. I am absolutely sure they will in any case fight better than the white workers" because they have least to lose and once given the revolutionary program by our party who is with them in their own organization, and outside, will make their struggle "a direct part of the struggle for socialism."

Now it is this program for an independent organization, this relationship to the Negroes as a nationally oppressed minority that Com. Coolidge fought from the first day Com. Johnson came back from Com. Trotsky in 1939 with this program until now when he was able to get our "National Committee to break with the past Trotskyist tradition on the question."

So far, by the way, they have not published my answer to his criticisms of me, so I enclose part of that article for your information too.

Moreover, it is not only the Negro question, but the concept of the proletariat as a whole that is at the basis of all the Majority Resolutions. Just as they do not think that the Negroes by themselves "cannot get to first base" (Of course they cannot succeed fully without being led by the socialist proletariat, but it is not now a question of final success but the process and development of the struggle and the stimulation that independent movement also gives to the labor movement), so the Majority does not think that the American proletariat is ready to receive consistent revolutionary propaganda until after it has built an independent labor party. Com. Johnson on the other hand, says that the American proletariat is not that backward, that it is great strike wave and soldier demonstrations show they are ready for revolutionary propaganda in a steady way IF WE KNOW HOW TO BRING IT TO THEM AND REALIZE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS REVOLUTIONARY LEADERS BY ADVANCING SLOGANS AHEAD OF THEIR PRESENT OUTLOOK, and at the same time rooted in their present struggles.

This concept of the American proletariat is translated in the concrete terms of party building in the Majority Resolution, thus: (p. 12 of Party Resolution) "Under what we must consider less favorable circumstances, that is, circumstances in which the American workers do not soon form a party of their own, we must continue to concentrate as now, upon individual

recruitment, no matter how slow the process may be at first."

Comrade Johnson, on the other hand, in his Resolution on THE TASK OF BUILDING THE AMERICAN BOLSHEVIK PARTY, shows that we must not merely continue to recruit by ones and twos, that it is possible to recruit in greater number IF "our activity be now harmonized with the rhythms of the developing class struggle in the U. S." He shows why we were unable to recruit as many as we could have if we had had different and bolder propaganda, but that we could also have integrated more workers, and particularly Negro workers, if our education had been different. For example on p. 14 of that bulletin he writes:

"The Negro worker, far more than the white worker, requires ideological understanding not only of the development of the American proletariat in American society but of the development of the Negro struggle. An important part of his integration in the Workers Party is a Leninist education in the objective role which the Negro masses have played in the past and will play in the coming proletarian revolution."

Finally, we have the International Question, and there too the concept of the proletariat, this time European and world, is involved. The Majority insists that the proletariat has been so hurled back by the years of fascism that you cannot now pose the direct socialist tasks before them, but must pose only democratic tasks. The Minority on the other hand insists that since there is no solution to the problems of Europe than socialism, and since the proletariat by its militant struggles is trying precisely to rid themselves of the bloody chaos we must pose directly before it the Socialist United States of Europe. He points to the quick development of the Japanese proletariat, and shows how militantly and politically it acts now, though until very recently it was a very backward and feudal country. The Majority, on the other hand, insists that the Japanese worker is "extremely backward".

Now, from the very first work Marx wrote, as you remember when we studied the Communist Manifesto in the Harlem Branch, the entire activity as well as theory of Marx was built on the revolutionary role of the worker's not merely "in general", to which the Majority, would, of course, agree, but in particular. That is, Marx insisted that because of the worker's role in production, he is disciplined and organized to overthrow the capitalist class. That moreover all of socialism is nothing but the "scientific expression of this instinctive striving of the proletariat to reorganize society on communist beginnings". Now we either base ourselves unequivocally on this instinctive striving and thus lead it socialist consciousness and ~~bring~~ bring to its the necessity of the revolutionary party through the actual struggle, or we wait for the proletariat "to show us" that it is actually ready to receive this socialist propaganda, in which case we shall be not the vanguard, says Trotsky, but the rearguard.

I have talked on too much, but you see how important this all is for the convention, and there will be so little time to talk with you in the morning at 9, that I thought I'll bring these few ideas to your attention before meeting, so I hope you will forgive me for disturbing you thus.

(By the way the apartment number of Shesket is 3-c, 319 W. 18th St.)

Looking forward to seeing you,

Comradely,

Rae

9011