

HOW NOT TO PREPARE FOR REVOLUTION!

Com. W. Gallacher here summarises his opening speech in the discussion at the Cober Hill School on Louzon's article last month. For a brief report of the rest of the discussion see p. 305.

THE article translated by Eden and Cedar Paul which appeared in last month's **PLEBS** under the heading "How Shall We Prepare for Revolution?" is a glaring example of the confusion and trickery by which the "liquidationists" seek to undermine the Communist International. Of course it is all very cunningly done under the plea of being more revolutionary than the revolutionaries, but the outstanding and undeniable fact remains that it brings those who are parties to it into line with the international financiers and their Social Democratic lackeys. If one is facing, and fighting against, well-known and ruthless enemies, and while the fight is hottest another attacks from the rear, all the protestations under heaven will never convince the attacked that the attacker is a friend. Nay, rather will he see in him the most cowardly and contemptible type of enemy.

Of such is the group in France represented by Louzon. While his article is in the main muddled and stupid, nevertheless it is dangerous in so far as its misleading phraseology is deliberately used to create confusion. Consider this for a start: "Then abjuring his old 'errors' (it is Trotsky to whom he is referring) he goes on to say that he was wrong when, in the days before the November revolution, he deplored the 'sectarianism' of the bolsheviks." You see how it is done. All that Trotsky did prior to the November revolution was to "deplore" the "sectarianism" of the bolsheviks.

Not much wrong with that and, of course, it leads up naturally to the question which, presumably, forms the premise for Louzon's article :—

“ But was Trotsky wrong in those days, and is he right in his recantation ? ”

Obviously, if Trotsky's offence merely consisted of “ deploring ” the “ sectarianism ” of the bolsheviks, then there would have been little need for a “ recantation.” But the bolsheviks were not sectarian, and Trotsky, able as he is, could not have “ deplored ” that which had no existence.

The bolsheviks were a well-organised, self-disciplined party of workers ; everyone contributing his or her best to prepare the party for its great task of leading the workers in the insurrectionary struggle against Capitalism. In the building up of that party Trotsky played no part. Instead of helping to build it, he did what he could to destroy it, attacking it on every opportunity with as little scruple as his self-appointed disciples are doing now.

Trotsky realised his errors in 1917, and joined the Bolshevik Party. As a member of the party and *following the instructions of the party* he has given great service to the revolution. But the old strain of egotism is still there. If he does not keep it in check, if he allows it to drive him against the party, then he can quite easily undo all that he has done. It is with this thought in mind that the Imperialists have recently been trying to play him up against the other leaders of the Russian Communist Party.

So much for Trotsky “ deploring ” the “ sectarianism ” of the bolsheviks. Louzon then goes on : “ This (Trotsky's) present contention amounts to this, that a strongly disciplined and rigidly centralised party is essential to the triumph of a working-class insurrection. Who can doubt that he is right ? An insurrection is a military affair. . . . Had there not been a Blanquist Party, strictly disciplined and highly militarised (the true forerunner of the Russian Communist Party), the rising of March 18th, 1871, would have been nothing more than a localised outbreak.”

Now if Louzon, Rosmer and Co. believe that, why don't they start organising a Blanquist Party ? For let me say as plainly as it can be said that the Communist International has nothing whatever to do with Blanquism, and the Russian Communist Party is fundamentally different from the party of the Blanquists. The Blanquists believed that a small disciplined military group could at a given moment take the bourgeois by surprise and by a sudden attack wrest the power out of their hands (just as the reformists believe that a small group of duly elected persons can talk their bourgeois into a state of coma and painlessly relieve them of all their possessions). The Communists maintain that this is impossible

and absurd. Only a mass rising of the workers can succeed in overthrowing the bourgeois, but it can only succeed if the rising is led and directed by a revolutionary party of the workers. Without the party the masses cannot carry through a revolutionary struggle, without the masses the party is helpless. In the war against Capitalism these two must go together, the party and the masses, and any attempt to separate them is either a sign of political bankruptcy or a conscious fear of the perils of revolution. But Louzon favours Blanquism. Let us see where it leads him :—

“There can be no victorious insurrection, there can be nothing more than a *putsch* unless the movement is led by a militarised organisation—by a bolshevik party, in a word.”

“That is not the point in dispute. The delicate problem is one of a very different order. What we want to know is, whether a militarised organisation (indispensable for the success of an insurrection) is equally indispensable when our task is to *prepare the whole working class for the revolution*. Can such an organisation effectively foster class consciousness?”

“Trotsky, following Lenin, and Lenin, following Marx, have said that insurrection is an art. To avoid ambiguity (I, Louzon, will correct the three of them), we shall perhaps do better to say that insurrection is a technique. Now, every technique, insurrection not excepted, needs appropriate tools. The technique of insurrection needs the tool which is a militarised, centralised and disciplined party. But, for the very reason that such a party is a tool of this kind, it cannot at one and the same time be a tool fitted for the very different technique of creating a class-conscious and organised proletariat.”

Now that, if it does little credit to their intelligence, makes their object very clear. A bolshevik party will be useful at the moment of insurrection, oh yes, they very considerably grant that, *but it's of no use now*. It's a quite different “tool” that is wanted for the period of preparation. Louzon and his friends will take possession of the field now, and the Communist Party will hide itself somewhere out of the way. Then when Louzon and Co. have “educated” the workers to such a revolutionary fervour that they rise in insurrection, they will intimate that their part of the job is finished and invite us to step out of obscurity and carry through the revolution. It's very kind of them, I'm sure, but I think the intelligent reader will readily understand that a party that has not participated in the everyday struggles of the workers, that is not part and parcel of the workers' organisation, will make a poor job in leading the workers in the biggest fight of all. Another point that Louzon seems to forget is that if there are “tools,” then there must be a “user” of the “tools”—a directing force behind the “tools.” If he

will think over this, he might begin to understand the subject he is attempting to discuss. Prior to the insurrection there will be many "tools" in use, educational and agitational. At the period of insurrection there will be military and other action. All these, the "tools" used in the preparation and the "tools" used during the insurrection itself, must be under a common direction. This direction can only be given by a well-organised, thoroughly disciplined *political* party with its members effectively carrying out the party policy in all spheres of working-class activity. And a bolshevik party *is a political party*, a political party of the workers and not as Louzon tries to suggest, a narrow "sectarian" or "militarist" organisation. The Communist Party will prepare the masses, and itself, for insurrection. No other party can do that work.

The Labour Party, despite its rotten liberalised leadership, can contribute during the period of preparation. The PLEBS, carrying as it does Marxian education to the active workers, will do its share. The Minority Movement will put new fight into the trade union movement and prepare it for the responsible part it will have to play. But while each of these may be a useful "tool," to use the language of Louzon, no one of them is capable of acting as the "tool" director. None of them would make the claim of being able to do so, yet all would admit that central direction is absolutely necessary, if these different movements are all to contribute most effectively towards the common end. Where is the central direction to come from? Let each reader face that question free from all prejudice, so sedulously created by reformists and "liquidationists," and there will be but one answer—the Communist Party.

But Louzon, anxious to give his absurd arguments an appearance of reality, says: "Even as far as Russia is concerned, we have to ask ourselves whether the same sort of considerations do not apply. Down to the opening stages of the insurrectionary period the Bolshevik Party exercised but little influence on the Russian working class." That is a deliberate and stupid lie. Right from the time of the first revolution, the bolshevik party was the most potent influence in the Russian working class. It was because of its influence that Trotsky and the Mensheviks so violently attacked it, just as it is because of its growing influence among the British workers that the party here is being so violently attacked by the bourgeois and the "Menshevik" Labour leaders. For twenty years the bolsheviks were with the workers of Russia in every struggle against oppression. For twenty years they went on building up their party from the workers, and when the test came they were ready for it. So must we, in this country, struggle, so must we build, if we would not fail when the crisis comes upon us.

The most foolish and most dangerous blunder of all is when he

says : " Is it not possible that Trotsky was right to renounce these ' errors ' in 1917 ; and that he was also right to revive them in 1924 ? "

" The situation in Russia has changed a good deal in the meantime. . . . There must, consequently, be a correlative change in the *type of organisation*. The organisation best suited to war time is not the organisation best suited to peace time."

So, the bolshevik party, having carried through the revolution in Russia, will now at the request of Louzon, quietly drop out of the picture, and a new type of organisation specially prescribed by Louzon and Co. will take its place. That is, of course, if " war-time " has passed and " peace-time " taken its place.

Has it not dawned on these " technicians of insurrection " that " war-time " will never pass while Capitalism exists, and that to loosen the revolutionary grip would simply be to invite the counter-revolution to walk in. Peace-time ! And the Imperialists plotting and planning for an advantageous opportunity for launching an united offensive against the Russian Workers' Republic. Was there ever such blind, or criminal, folly ?

But it is all of a piece with what is going on right throughout the whole International. There are Louzons in every country, all of them, consciously or unconsciously, doing their work as the hidden wing of the Capitalist offensive against Soviet Russia and the Communist International.