

THE DRAFT PROGRAM OF THE COMINTERN A CRITICISM OF FUNDAMENTALS By L. D. TROTSKY

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE

Here is what Bucharin wrote on the subject in 1917:

"Revolutions are the locomotives of history. The irreplaceable engineer of that locomotive can even in backward Russia be only the proletariat, but the proletariat cannot stay within the limits of the property relations of bourgeois society. It marches to power and towards Socialism. However, this mission which is being 'put on the order of the day' in Russia cannot be fulfilled within national boundaries. Here the working class meets with an insurmountable wall."—(L. T.)—"which can be broken through only by the battering ram of the INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' REVOLUTION."—(Bucharin, "Class Struggle and Revolution in Russia," page 34, Russian edition).

One could not express himself more clearly. Such were the views held by Bucharin in 1917, two years after Lenin's alleged "change" in 1915. Perhaps the October Revolution taught Bucharin differently? We shall see.

In 1919, Bucharin wrote on the subject of the "Proletarian Dictatorship in Russia and the World Revolution" in the theoretical organ of the Comintern, saying:

"Under existing WORLD economy and the connections between its parts, with the simultaneous interdependence of the various national bourgeois groups, IT STANDS TO REASON" (our emphasis) "that the struggle in one country cannot end without a decisive victory of one or the other side in SEVERAL civilized countries."

At that time this was even "self-evident."

Further:

"In the Marxian and quasi-Marxian pre-war literature, the question was many times raised as to whether the victory of Socialism is possible in one country. Most of the writers replied to this question in the negative" (And what about Lenin in 1917?—L. T.) "from which one does not at all conclude that it is impossible or inadmissible to start the revolution and to capture power in one country."

Exactly! In the same article we read:

"The period of great development of the productive forces can begin only with the victory of the proletariat in several large countries. From here it follows that an all-round development of the world revolution and the formation of a strong economic alliance of the industrial countries with Soviet Russia is necessary." (N. Bucharin, "Proletarian Dictatorship in Russia and the World Revolution," The Communist International, No. 7, 1919).

Bucharin's statement that a rise in the productive forces, that is, real Socialist development, will begin only after the victory of the proletariat of the advanced countries of Europe—why, that is exactly the phrase which was used as a basis of all acts of indictment against "Trotskyism," including also the indictment read at the Seventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. It is only strange that Bucharin, whose only salvation lies in his short memory, read the indictment. Side by side with this comical circumstance, there is also a tragic one—among those indicted was also Lenin, who expressed, tens of times, the very same elementary idea.

Finally, in 1921, six years after Lenin's alleged change of 1915, and four years after the October Revolution, the program of the Young Communist League, approved by the Central Committee headed by Lenin and drawn up by a Commission under Bucharin's leadership, says in paragraph 4:

"In the U.S.S.R. political power is already in the hands of the working class. In the course of three years of heroic struggle against world capitalism it maintained and strengthened its Soviet Government. Russia, although it possesses enormous natural resources, is, nevertheless, from an industrial point of view, a backward country, in which a petty-bourgeois population predominates. It can arrive at Socialism only through the world proletarian revolution, which epoch of development we have now entered."

This paragraph of the program of the Young Communist League—not of an accidental article, but of a program—renders the attempts of the authors of the draft to prove that the Party "always" held the construction of a Socialist society possible in one country and precisely in Russia, ridiculous and inadequate. If "always," why is it that Bucharin wrote such a paragraph in the program of the Young Communist League and why was Stalin looking on? How could Lenin and the whole Central Committee voice such a heresy? How was it that no one in the Party noticed this "trifle" or raised a voice against it? Does this not look like a vicious joke which is a direct mockery of the Party, its history and the Comintern? Is it not high time to put a stop to this? Is it not high time to tell the revisionists: Dare not hide behind Lenin and the theoretical traditions of Marxism?

5. WHERE IS THE "SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC DEVIATION?"

What I have said is more than sufficient to characterize Bucharin's theoretical position of yesterday and today. To characterize his political methods one must recall that having selected in the statements written by the Opposition those which are absolutely analogous with those which he himself (IN THIS CASE in full agreement with Lenin) wrote up to 1925, Bucharin erected on their basis the theory of our "Social Democratic Deviation." It appears that in the central question concerning the relations between the October Revolution and the international revolution, the opposition thinks... the same as Otto Bauer, who does not admit the possibility of Socialist construction in Russia. One would think that printing has been discovered only in 1924 and that everything that happened before that has been forgotten. It is all trusted to short memory.

However, on the question of the nature of the October Revolution, the Comintern settled its accounts with Otto Bauer and other philistines of the Second International at the Fourth Congress. In my speech (on the question of the New Economic Policy and the prospects of world revolution) authorized by the Central Committee, Otto Bauer's position was outlined in a manner which expressed the views of our Central Committee of the time; it did not give rise to any objections at the Congress and, I think, it fully holds good today. So far as Bucharin is concerned, he declined to deal with the political side of the problem since "many comrades, including Lenin and Trotsky, had already spoken on the subject"; in other words, Bucharin agreed with my speech. Here is what I said at the Fourth Congress about Otto Bauer:

"The Social Democratic theoreticians, who, on the one hand recognize in their holiday articles, that capitalism, particularly in Europe, has outlived its usefulness and has become a brake on historical development, and who on the other hand express the conviction that the evolution of Soviet Russia inevitably leads to the triumph of bourgeois democracy, fall into the most pitiful and flat contradiction of which these stupid and conceited confusionists are worthy. THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY IS CALCULATED ON CERTAIN DEFINITE CONDITIONS OF TIME AND SPACE. IT IS A MANOEUVRE OF THE WORKERS' STATE WHICH EXISTS IN CAPITALIST SURROUNDINGS AND DEFINITELY CALCULATES ON THE REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPE. Such a factor as time cannot be left out of consideration in political calculations. If we admit that capitalism will really be able to exist in Europe for another hundred or fifty years and that Soviet Russia will have to adapt itself to it in its economic policy, then the question solves itself automatically because, by recognizing this, we presuppose the crushing of the proletarian revolution in Europe and the rise of a new epoch of capitalist revival. On what basis? If Otto Bauer has discovered in the life of present-day Austria any miraculous signs of capitalist revival then all that can be said is that the fate of Russia is predetermined. But so far we do not see any miracles, and we do not believe in such. From our viewpoint, if the European bourgeoisie will hold power in the course of several decades, it will under the present world conditions signify not a new capitalist bloom, but economic stagnation and the cultural decline of Europe. That such a process might be able to draw Soviet Russia into the abyss can, generally speaking, not be denied. Whether she would have to go through a state democracy, or adopt some other forms, is a question of secondary importance. But we see no reason whatever, for the adoption of Spengler's philosophy. We definitely look forward to a revolutionary development in Europe. THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY IS MERELY AN ADAPTATION TO THE RATE OF THAT DEVELOPMENT." (L. Trotsky, Five Years of the Comintern, Social Democratic Criticism).

This formulation of the questions brings us back to the point from which we started in dealing with the draft program, namely, that in the epoch of imperialism one cannot regard the fate of one country in any other way but by taking as a background the tendencies of world development, in which the individual country with all its national peculiarities is included and to which it is subordinated, as a whole. Theoreticians of the Second International, exclude the U.S.S.R. from the world unit and from the imperialist epoch; they apply to the U.S.S.R. as an isolated country, the vague criterion of economic "maturity"; they declare that the U.S.S.R. is not ready for independent social construction—and draw the conclusion of the inevitability of a capitalist degeneration of the Workers' State.

The authors of the draft program adopt the same theoretical ground and accept the metaphysical methodology of the Social Democratic theoreticians as a whole. They too "abstract" from the world entity and from the imperialist epoch. They start out from the fiction of isolated development. They apply to the national phase of the world revolution a vague economic criterion. But their "sentence" is different. The "leftism" of the authors of the draft lies in the fact that they turn the Social Democratic evaluation inside out. However, the position of the theoreticians of the Second International, no matter how much one would remodel it, is equally bad. One must take Lenin's position which simply REMOVES Bauer's position and Bauer's prognosis as the exercises of an elementary class.

That is how matters stand with the "Social Democratic deviation." Not we but the authors of the draft should consider themselves related to Bauer.

6. THE DEPENDENCE OF THE U.S.S.R. ON WORLD ECONOMY

The precursor of the present prophets of the national socialist society was no other than Herr Vollmar.* Describing in his article entitled "An Isolated Socialist State" the prospect of independent socialist construction in Germany, the proletariat of which country advanced much further than that of progressive Britain, Vollmar, in 1878, refers clearly and quite correctly in several places to the law of uneven development which, according to Stalin, Marx and Engels did not know. On the basis of that law Vollmar arrives in 1878 at the irrefutable conclusion that:

"Under the existing conditions, which will retain their forces also in the future, it can be foreseen that a simultaneous victory of socialism in all cultural countries, is absolutely out of the question."

Developing this idea still further, Vollmar says:

"Thus we have come to the ISOLATED socialist State which is, I hope I have proven, although not the only possible, the MOST PROBABLE WAY." Inasmuch as by the term of isolated State one must understand one State under a proletarian dictatorship, Vollmar expressed an irrefutable idea which was well-known to Marx and Engels and which Lenin expressed in the quoted article of 1915.

But then comes already something which is purely Vollmar's idea which, by the way, is by far not as one-sided and wrongly formulated as the formulation of our sponsors of the theory of socialism in one country. In his construction, Vollmar took as a starting point the supposition that socialist Germany will have live economic relations with world capitalist economy, having at the same time the advantage of possessing a highly-developed technique and a low cost of production. This construction is based on the prospect of a PEACEFUL co-habitation of the socialist and capitalist systems. But inasmuch as socialism must, as it progresses, constantly reveal its colossal productive advantages the necessity for a world revolution will fall away in itself, as socialism will be able to settle accounts with capitalism by the sale of goods more cheaply on the market.

The authors of the first draft program and one of the authors of the second draft, Bucharin, in their construction of socialism in one country, proceed entirely from the idea of an isolated self-sufficing economy. In Bucharin's article entitled "As to the Nature of our Revolution and the Possibility of Successful Socialist Construction in the U.S.S.R." (The Bolshevik, No. 192, 1926), which is the last word in scholastics multiplied by sophistry, all arguments are kept within the limits of isolated economy. The chief and only argument is the following:

"Once we have 'all that is necessary and sufficient' for the building up of socialism, it follows that in the process of building of socialism there can be no such a point at which its further construction would become impossible. If we have in our country such a combination of forces that in relation to each past year, we are marching ahead with a greater relative strength of the socialist sector of economy and the socialized sectors of economy grow faster than the private capitalist sectors, then we are entering every subsequent new year with a greater balance of power."

This argumentation is comprehensible "ONCE we have all that is necessary and sufficient," SO... we have it. Starting out from a point which needs to be proven, Bucharin builds up a complete sys-

* George von Vollmar, son of an aristocratic Bavarian family, was one of the leaders of the German Social Democracy in the days of Babel and the elder Liebknecht. He opposed the Marxian contention on the questions of the concentration of capital, on the agrarian problem, and the like. It was one of the fathers of the "evolutionary" reform movement in the German Party. During the days of the Bismarck anti-Socialist law, he served a term in the Zwickenau prison, where he wrote a work on the question of an isolated Socialist State.—Ed.

FOREWORD

With this issue The Militant prints the third installment of "The Draft Program of the Communist International: A Criticism of Fundamentals" by L. D. Trotsky. This document, a masterpiece of Marxist-Leninist literature was submitted by comrade Trotsky to the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International which finally adopted the draft program drafted by comrade Bucharin and Stalin, without any important changes. The entire validity of this timely and fundamental criticism remains in spite of the fact that it was kept from the Congress and never discussed by the delegates. The sole attention accorded it was its distribution to members of the Program Commission and a report in the document, in the "Lenin-Konvent" of the Comintern, which immediately "decided" the issue without discussion.

A rigid control on this document was established forthwith and the few copies of the document which were distributed were recalled by the Secretariat. Our publication is an authentic copy which we have just received. It deals chiefly with the role of American Imperialism and the prospect of new revolutionary situations, the revisionist theory of "Socialism in one country," with the Chinese revolution and its lessons, and with the formation of workers' and peasants parties with Trotsky, in line with Lenin, in condensed form in principle. Trotsky's comment on the "Third Party Alliance" with La Follette, the fight against which was led by him, will be especially interesting to American communists. The entire document will be put in full in this and the forthcoming issues of The Militant without any changes.

Its basic importance for the international revolutionary movement and the unanswerable correctness of its position on the burning problems of the Communist International make it an invaluable contribution to the Bolshevik literature of our period.

—Editor.

tem of self-sufficing socialist economics without any entrances or exits to it. As to the external environment, that is, the rest of the world, Bucharin as well as Stalin, think of them only from the viewpoint of intervention. When Bucharin speaks in his article about the necessity to "abstract" from the international factor, he has in mind not the world market but military intervention. Bucharin does not have to abstract from the world market because he simply forgets about it in his structure. In harmony with this scheme Bucharin championed at the Fourteenth Congress the idea that if we will not be interfered with by intervention we will build up socialism "although with the speed of a tortoise." The uninterrupted struggle between the two systems, the fact that socialism can be based only on the highest productive forces, in a word, Marxian dynamics in displacing one social form by another on the basis of the growing productive forces—all this has been blotted out. Revolutionary historical dialectics has been displaced by a skintail reactionary Utopia of encircled socialism, built on a low technique developing with the "speed of a tortoise" within national boundaries, connected with the external world only by its fear of intervention. The refusal to accept this miserable caricature on Marx's and Lenin's doctrine has been declared a "Social Democratic deviation." In the quoted article, this characterization of our views, has, in general, for the first time been advanced and "substantiated." History will mark that we have fallen into a "Social Democratic deviation" for failing to recognize as inferior version of Vollmar's theory of socialism in one country. The proletariat of Czarist Russia could not have taken power in October if Russia had not been a link, the weakest, but yet a link, of the chain of WORLD economy. The capture of power by the proletariat has not in the least excluded the Soviet Republic from the international "division of labor" set up by capitalism.

Like the wise owl which comes out only in the dusk, the theory of socialism in one country has appeared at the moment when our industry, which exhausts ever greater parts of the old fixed capital, two-thirds of which is a crystallization of the dependence of our industry on world economics, has manifested an acute demand for a renewing and extension of relations with the world market and when the questions of foreign trade have arisen in their full scope before our economic directors.

At the Eleventh Congress, that is, at the last Congress at which Lenin had the opportunity to speak to the Party, he issued the warning that the Party will have to face another examination:

"An examination which the Russian and INTERNATIONAL MARKET TO WHICH WE ARE SUBORDINATED, WITH WHICH WE ARE CONNECTED AND FROM WHICH WE CANNOT ESCAPE, WILL MAKE US GO THROUGH."

Nothing strikes the theory of an isolated "complete" socialism such a death blow as the simple fact that the figures of our foreign trade have in recent years become the corner stone of the figures of our economic plans. The most "stringent place" of our economy, including our industry, is our import which depends entirely on the export. And inasmuch as the power of resistance is always measured by the weakest link, the extent of our economic plans is measured by the extent of our import.

In the journal Planned Economy (a theoretical organ of the State Planning Commission) we read in an article devoted to the system of planning, that

"In drawing up our estimates for this year we had to take our export and import balance as a starting point; we had to orientate ourselves on that in our plans for the various industries and consequently for industry in general and particularly for the construction of new industrial enterprises, etc., etc."—(January 1927, page 27).

The methodological approach of the State Planning Commission says without any doubt, for all who have ears to hear, that the estimate figures determine the tendency and tempo of our economic development but that these estimate figures are already controlled by world economy; not because we have become weaker, but because having becoming stronger we have outgrown the narrow enclosed circle.

The capitalist world shows us by its export and import figures that it has other means of persuasion than those of military intervention. Inasmuch as productivity of labor and the productivity of a social system as a whole is measured on the

market by the correlation of prices, to the same extent it is not so much military intervention as the intervention of cheaper capitalist commodities that constitute the greatest danger to Soviet economy. This alone shows that it is by no means merely a question of an isolated economic victory over one's "own" bourgeoisie:

"The Socialist revolution which is meant for the whole world will by no means consist merely in a victory of the proletariat of each country over its own bourgeoisie." (Lenin, 1919, Vol. 16, page 388).

It is a question of competition and of a life and death struggle between two social systems one of which only commenced to build on backward productive forces and the other which still rests on productive forces of immeasurably greater strength.

Anyone who sees in the admission of our dependence on the world market (Lenin spoke directly of our SUBORDINATION to the world market) "pessimism," reveals thereby his own provincial petty-bourgeois feebleness in the face of the world market and the pitiful character of his country-bred optimism, hoping to hide from world economy behind a bush and to get along somehow with his own means.

The question of honor for the new theory has become the curious idea that the U.S.S.R. can perish from a military intervention, but by no means form its own economic backwardness. But inasmuch as in socialist society the readiness of the toiling masses to defend their country must be much greater than the readiness of the slaves of capitalism to attack that country, the question is why should a military intervention menace us with destruction? Is it because the enemy is TECHNICALLY immeasurably stronger? Bucharin admits the preponderance of the productive forces only in the military technical aspect. He does not want to understand that Ford's tractor is just as dangerous as the Creusot gun, with the only difference that whereas the gun can act only from time to time, the tractor brings its pressure to bear constantly. Besides, the tractor knows that a gun stands behind it, as a last resort.

We are the first Workers' State—a part of the world proletariat together with which we DEPEND upon world capital. The indifferent, neutral and bureaucratically castrated word, "connection" is set in motion only with the object of concealing the extremely difficult and dangerous nature of these "connections." If we would produce according to the price of the world market, our dependence on the latter, without ceasing to be a dependence, would be of a much less severe character than it is now. But unfortunately this is not so. The very monopoly of foreign trade betrays the severity and the dangerous character of our dependence. The decisive importance of the monopoly in our socialist construction is a result precisely of the existing correlation of forces which is unfavorable to us. But one must not forget for a moment that the foreign trade only regulates our dependence upon the world market, but does not eliminate it.

"So long as our Soviet Republic," says Lenin, "will remain the only border land surrounded by the whole capitalist world, so long will it be an absolutely ridiculous fantasy and Utopia to think of our complete economic independence and of the disappearance of any of our dangers."—(Vol. 17, page 409).

The chief dangers arise consequently from the objective position of the U.S.S.R. as the "only borderland" in capitalist economy which is hostile to us. These dangers may, however, diminish or increase. This depends on the action of two factors—socialist construction on the one hand, and the development of capitalist economy on the other. The second factor of course, that is, the fate of world economy as a whole, is, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, of DECISIVE significance.

Can it happen—and in what particular case—that the productivity of our socialist system will constantly lag behind that of the capitalist system—which, IN THE END would inevitably lead to the downfall of the Socialist Republic? If we will manage properly our economy in the phase when it becomes necessary to create independently an industrial basis with its incomparably higher demands to the management, then our productivity of labor will grow. Is it, however, inconceivable that the productivity of labor in the capitalist countries, or, more correctly, in the predominant capitalist countries, will grow faster than in our country? Without a clear answer to this question the meaningless and wordy statements that our tempo "is in itself" sufficient (let us forget the factitious philosophy about the "speed of the tortoise") are insolvent. But the very mentioning of

the rivalry of two systems leads us to the arena of world economy and world politics, that is, to the arena of action and decision of the revolutionary International which includes also the Soviet Republic, but not by any means the self-sufficing Soviet Republic, which secures from time to time the support of the International. Before, however, taking up this question we will try to reveal its main contradiction, basing ourselves on the draft program.

7. THE ANTAGONISM BETWEEN THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES AND THE NATIONAL BOUNDARIES AS THE CAUSE OF THE REACTIONARY UTOPIAN THEORY OF SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY.

The theory of socialism in one country is confirmed as we have seen by means of several sophist interpretations of Lenin's expressions on the one hand and by a scholastic interpretation of the "law of uneven development" on the other. By giving a correct interpretation of the historical law as well as of the respective quotations we arrived at a directly opposite conclusion, that is, a conclusion at which Marx, Engels, Lenin and all of us including Stalin and Bucharin up to 1925, have arrived.

From the uneven sporadic development of capitalism follow the unsimultaneous, uneven and sporadic nature of the socialist revolution; from the extreme tensivity of the inter-dependence of the various countries upon each other, follows not only the political but also the economic impossibility of the building up of socialism in one country.

From this angle we will examine once again the text of the program a little closer. We have already read in the introduction that:

"Imperialism... intensifies the contradiction between the growth of the productive forces of world economy and national State barriers to an exceptional degree."

We have already stated that this utterance was meant to be the corner-stone of the international program. But it is precisely this enunciation which excludes, rejects and sweeps away beforehand the theory of socialism in one country as a reactionary theory because it is irreconcilably opposed not only to the main TENDENCY of development of the productive forces but also to the MATERIAL RESULTS which have already been attained. The productive forces are incompatible with national boundaries. From here follow not only foreign trade, the export of people and capital, the conquest of land, the colonial policy, and the last imperialist war, but also the economic impossibility of a self-sufficing socialist society. The productive forces of CAPITALIST countries have already for a long time broken through the national boundaries. Socialist society however, can be built only on the most advanced productive forces, on electricity and chemistry in the processes of production including also agriculture, in the combination, generalization and culmination of the highest elements of modern technique. We have been repeating since Marx that capitalism is unable to cope with the spirit of new technique to which it has given rise and which breaks asunder not only the private property rights of bourgeois property but, as the war of 1914 has shown, also the national limits of the bourgeois State. Socialism, however, must not only take over from capitalism the most highly developed productive forces but must immediately carry them onward, raise them to a higher level and lend them such a state of development which has been unknown under capitalism. The question arises, how can socialism drive the productive forces back into the boundaries of a national state which they have broken through under capitalism? Or perhaps we ought to abandon the idea of the "unbridled" productive forces for which the national boundaries AND CONSEQUENTLY ALSO THE BOUNDARIES OF THE THEORY OF SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY are too narrow, and limit ourselves to, let us say, the home productive forces, that is, to our technical backwardness? If this is the case, then we should in many branches of industry stop making progress right now, and decline to a position even lower than our present pitiful technical level which managed to link up bourgeois Russia with world economy in an inseparable bond and to bring it into the vortex of the imperialist war for an EXPANSION OF ITS TERRITORY FOR THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES which had outgrown the State boundaries.

TO BE CONTINUED