

Who Is Leading the Comintern To-day?

WARSKI

By L. D. Trotsky

The past of Warski is infinitely more serious. For many years he marched behind Rosa Luxemburg, while Valetsky always looked upon her with the blind hatred of a Polish chauvinist. But Warski assimilated more the weak sides of Rosa Luxemburg than her strong sides, the best of which was its revolutionary inflexibility. In the end, Warski has remained to this day the "revolutionary" social democrat of the old type. This brought him close to Klara Zetkin, as could be seen clearly in the attitude they both took to the German events of 1923. Warski never felt himself quite at ease in Bolshevism. That explains his momentary "conciliationism", based on a misunderstanding, towards the Opposition of 1923. But as soon as the lines became established, Warski found his natural place in the official ranks. The struggle of the epigones against the "permanent revolution" and the "under-estimation" of the peasantry led the timorous Warski to view the victorious uprising of Pilsudski as a sort of "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" and to drive the Polish Communists to support the Fascist coup d'Etat. This solitary example gives the measure of the Marxist perspicacity and the revolutionary firmness of Warski. It is needless to say that after "recognizing his mistakes", he is today one of the pillars of Stalinism. How this old companion of Rosa Luxemburg—that internationalist to the bottom of her heart—teaches the Polish workers the construction of socialism in one country, I do not know. But it is highly doubtful if people of this type can teach the Polish workers how to wrest power from the bourgeoisie.

Let us, however, return to the central apparatus of the International which Warski has left since he became a deputy in the Sejm.

KLARA ZETKIN

For a long time Klara Zetkin has been a purely decorative figure of the presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. One would not have to use this cruel characterization if Zetkin did not serve as a pathetic cloak for the methods that compromise not only herself, but also bring the greatest injury to the cause of the international proletariat. The strength of Zetkin was always her temperament. She never had any independence of thought. For a long time Rosa Luxemburg was her political pivot. Afterwards she looked for a new pivot in Paul Levi, and to a certain extent in Brandler.

After the days of March 1921, Zetkin did not simply revolt against the "supidities of Bela Kun", but she defended essentially the "old, tested policy" of the incessant accumulation of forces. In a conversation that Lenin and I had with her, Lenin said to her, mildly but insistently: "The young ones will commit many stupidities, but they will nevertheless make a good revolution". Zetkin exclaimed excitedly: "They will not even make a bad one." Lenin and I looked at each other and were unable to restrain our laughter.

The brief and vague half-sympathies of Zetkin for the Opposition of 1923 were aroused only because I was against throwing the blame of the International for the German catastrophe of 1923 on to the Brandler group. During 1923, Zetkin showed all the traits of the good old social democracy: she understood neither the brusque change in the situation nor the necessity for a bold change in policy. In the main, Zetkin takes no part in the solution of questions. But her traditional authority is necessary as a veil for the Manuilskys, the Peppers and the Heinz Neumanns.

SMERAL

Among the men who in this last period lead the work of the International from within the presidium of the Executive, not the lowest rank is occupied by the representative of the Czecho-Slovak Communist Party, Smeral, who has today also become one of the inflexible knights of neo-Bolshevism. Smeral and inflexibility, that is the same as Tartuffe and sincerity, or Shylock and unselfishness. Smeral has passed through the solid Austrian school, and if he is to be distinguished from the Austro-Marxist type it is only by the fact that he has never risen to it. In the old Czech social democracy Smeral was in a semi-opposition, the nature of which was so much the more difficult to grasp since the "ideas" of Smeral always gave the impression of a spreading oil stain. One can say that Smeral opposed to the Czech social-nationalism of a Nemetz et tutti quanti an Austro-Hungarian imperialist state power inspired by Renner, but without Renner's knowledge and talent. The Czech republic was realized in the meantime—not as the fruit of the policy of Benes, Kramarsc and Nemetz, but as the bastard product of the work of Anglo-French imperialism. However it may be, Czecho-Slovakia made its appearance and the Austro-Hungarian Smeral landed in a political blind alley. Whither now? There were not a few workers who, in the beginning, were intoxicated with the Czecho-Slovakian state. There were still more workers whose hearts beat towards the Russia of October. But there were none who grieved after the Austro-Hungarian empire. In the meanwhile, Smeral made his pilgrimage

to Moscow. I remember how I disclosed the psychological mechanism of Smeral's Bolshevism to Lenin. Lenin repeated with a thoughtful smile: "It is probable . . . you know, it is very probable . . . Many like that will come to us now. We must keep our eyes open. They must be watched at every step."

Smeral was profoundly convinced that the renaming of the Czech Party a Communist Party exhausted the question. At any rate, he did everything in his power to justify further the saying of Otto Bauer on the two good social democratic Parties in Europe: the Austrian social democracy and the Czech Communist Party. This year's "Red Day" has shown with a tragic éclat that five years of Zinovievist, Bucharinist, Stalinist and Smeralist "Bolshevization" have given the Party, that is, its leadership, in the first place, nothing—absolutely nothing. But in return Smeral has taken root. The deeper the leadership of the International sank ideologically, the higher Smeral rose. Such people constitute an excellent political barometer. It is hardly necessary to say for that this patented "Bolshevik" we Oppositionists are avowed opportunists. But the Czech workers should be told clearly that Smeral will never lead them to the conquest of power.

KOLAROV

Another variety of the same type that has been bred in these last five years in the Hotel Lux is Kolarov. His past is more serious by the fact that for a long time he belonged to the Tesniaki ("Narrow") Bulgarian Party which endeavored to remain on Marxist ground. But in spite of its apparent intransigence, it was a Marxism of expectant propaganda, a passive and tolerably inert Marxism. As for the rest, in international questions the Tesniaki inclined much more toward Plechanov than toward Lenin. The ruin of Bulgaria in the imperialist war, then the October revolution, drove them to Bolshevism. Kolarov settled in Moscow. In the first years that followed the revolution, we jumped avidly at every foreign Marxist, or rather at every one whom we supposed to be a revolutionary Marxist. By virtue of this Kolarov was drawn into the apparatus of the International as a possible general secretary. But a few months later we had to abandon our hopes unanimously. Lenin summed up his impression of Kolarov in terms that I do not want to write down here. In 1923, Kolarov again demonstrated his limits in the Bulgarian events. The same result. While Lenin was still alive it had been decided to remove Kolarov from any leading role in the International. But after the illness and the death of Lenin came the revived struggle against Trotskyism. Kolarov plunged into this bath at the first onset and emerged from it regenerated. He marched first with Zinoviev against Trotsky, then with Bucharin against Zinoviev; today he marches with Stalin against Bucharin. In a word, he is a water-tight, unflammable, unsinkable Bolshevik of the Lux.

KUUSINEN

Kuusinen is one of those who killed the Finnish revolution of 1918. Under the pressure of events and the masses, Kuusinen, in spite of his better judgment, found himself constrained to accept the revolution, but like a good Philistine he wanted to trim it according to the best vegetarian model. During the insurrection, with that eloquence that is all his own, he invited the good public to remain at home so that there would be no victims. If, as in Hungary, events had thrown power at his very feet, he would not have bent down immediately to pick it up. But no one threw power to him. It had to be conquered. The situation was exceptionally favorable. Only revolutionary audacity and a desire to attack were needed. In other words, those qualities were needed of which Kuusinen is the living negation. He showed himself literally incapable of taking the offensive against the Finnish bourgeoisie who were then able to drown the heroic insurrection in blood. But in return Kuusinen gave proof of some aggressive tendencies towards the Left wing of the International, after he examined himself and discovered that, in the words of Shakespeare, he was no worse than those who were no better than he. Here, he risked nothing. He swam with the stream like those who commanded him. The petty logician became a great intrigant. Of the lies used by the epigones to

poison the mind of the international working class in these last years, it can be said that Kuusinen took the lion's share. That may seem paradoxical. But it sometimes happens that the lion's share falls to the hare. As was shown by his report on the colonial question at the Sixth Congress, Kuusinen has remained exactly the same as when he helped the Finnish bourgeoisie to slaughter the Finnish proletariat, and the Chinese proletariat.

PETROVSKY-BENNETT

A very active role is now played in the International by such a person as Petrovsky-Bennett. It is individuals of this kind who decide today, since the official "leaders", aside from their competence, do not bother themselves, so to speak, with the questions of the International. Practically, it is the Petrovskys who direct, taking good care to cover themselves; that is by getting an authorized indorsement for themselves whenever wanted. But we will see that further on.

Petrovsky is a Bundist-Menshevik, American type, of the worst kind. For a long time he was one of the pillars of the miserable and pitiful Jewish yellow socialist journal in New York, which became enraptured with the victories of the Germans before it licked the boots of Wilson. Back to Russia in 1917, Petrovsky moved in the same Bundist-Menshevik circles. Like Guralsky, like Rafes, he rallied to Bolshevism only after the Bolsheviks had conquered power. He showed himself to be a diligent and adroit official in the military work, but nothing more than an official. The deceased Frunze, an excellent soldier, but one who was not distinguished by any keen political judgement, told me more than once: "Petrovsky smells terrible of Bundism." Not only in the questions of military administration, but also in political questions, Petrovsky invariably aligned himself with his superiors. More than once I said in jest to my deceased friend Skliansky that Petrovsky is "trying" too hard to support me. Skliansky, who valued the practical qualities of Petrovsky and therefore defended him, replied to this complaint jokingly: "Nothing can be done about it; it's his nature." And, as a matter of fact, it is not a question of careerism in the narrow sense of the word, but of an instinct for self-sufficient adaptation, for downright mimicry, for organic opportunism.

Rafes, another variety of the same type, proved himself just as capable of being a minister of Petlura as of being councilor of the Chinese revolution. To what extent he contributed to the death of Petluraism by his support I will not judge. But that he did everything he could to lose the Chinese revolution is proved by every line of his reports and his articles.

TO BE CONTINUED

Hey! What's This?

We are amazed and stunned by the new alliance that the Party has made. From the letterhead of the "Reception Committee for the Soviet Fliers, Auspices of Friends of the Soviet Union", we find that along with a list of Party notables on the committee there are such notorious "Musteites, social reformists, liberals, pacifists," etc., etc., as Roger Baldwin, J. M. Budish, Louis Boudin, Stuart Chase, Robert Dunn, Lewis S. Gannett, John Haynes Holmes, Timothy Healy, Darwin J. Messerole, Henry W. Pinkham, Anne Rochester, Gilbert E. Roe and a host of others.

What is this? Where is the "New Line"? Where is the "Third Period"? Where is the "Intensified Campaign to Expose the Fake Progressives and Liberals"? Where is "Class Against Class"? Where is the "United Front from Below"? We want enlightenment!

Plenum Coming

It is authentically reported to us by Party comrades that the Party Secretariat (i. e., the Comintern Commission) has decided to call a Plenary session of the Central Executive Committee right after the Cleveland conference of the T.U.E.L. Now that the bureaucrats have expelled every supporter of the Communist Opposition in the Party they could lay hands on, and, more recently, since they have expelled the main leaders of the Right wing and frightened the others into temporary submission, they feel themselves quite safe in letting the rest of the C.E.C. come together to raise their hands for any policy or line or deed of the new leadership, past, present and future.

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