

# The Removal of Bucharin

By Maurice Spector

*Pravda* has published a long statement on "the deviations and mistakes of Comrade Bucharin". By order of the Stalin bureaucracy, Zinoviev's successor may now be openly and fearlessly reviled by all the faithful who but recently applauded his every utterance as the distilled essence of Leninism. Perhaps we may yet read the sad story of the "golden child of the revolution" who was transformed into MISTER Bucharin and trod the snowy wastes of Siberia—with notes and addenda by the saintly fish-wife Emelian Yaroslavsky.

The official comunique on Bucharin's fate finds our eyes dry. In 1917 he paid tribute to Trotsky as "that brilliant and heroic tribune of the insurrection, that flaming apostle of the revolution". That did not prevent him, on the death of Lenin, from joining in the bureaucratic conspiracy to distort the history of the revolution and defame the great revolutionary he had admired. Thereafter there was no gathering of the Communist International in Moscow where Bucharin was not set up to deliver scholastic diatribes against the "permanent revolution" and to lecture Trotsky on his "mistakes". The innocent by-stander would never have guessed of this theoretician, of whom Lenin wrote in his last Testament that "he never has learned, and I think never fully understood the (Marxian) dialectic".

## THE "INFALLIBLE OLD GUARD"

We did not have to wait for the latest ukase of *Pravda* to learn that "it is impossible for the Party to consider Comrade Bucharin as the infallible guardian of Lenin's legacy". One by one the vaneer has been scraped off these "infallible guardians". We have got to know the individuals of this self-congratulatory "Old Guard", who have resorted to every expedient of demagoguery to usurp the power in the Party. The story of the strikebreaking role of Zinoviev and Kamenev in October has been retold officially. Rykov and Losovsky were no better. But when will *Pravda* oblige us with some data on the role of Stalin, this artificially manufactured "great man" who never had an idea before the revolution, hatched one for a coalition with Tseretelli during the revolution, and became joint author with Bucharin of the reactionary idea of national socialism since. When will *Pravda* oblige with the political biographies of the crowd of lesser guardians of Leninism, the motley crowds of ex-Mensheviks, nationalists, Social Revolutionaries, Bundists, and adventurers, who wormed themselves into the apparatus of the Comintern, Bela Kun, Remmele, Semard, Smeral, Manuilsky, Martinov, Petrovsky—Goldfarb, Pepper and Lovestone, Jilek, Hais, Brandler and Thalheimer—these too once did great feats of arms in the crusade against Trotsky.

Somewhat tardily the political biography of Bucharin is gone over in the stereotyped verbiage of the officialdom. It would have been more important to have gone into that a couple of years ago, to have warned the Party then that Bucharin was not "infallible", to have told of his differences with Lenin on the Brest Treaty and the Trade Unions and state capitalism and Comintern strategy, to have pointed out at the time the reactionary nonsense implicit in his theory of building socialism "even at a snail's pace". But the Centrist Stalin faction was as deeply involved in steering a course towards the "development of capitalist relations in the village" and towards slowing up the tempo of industrialization, as Rykov, Bucharin and Tomsky. When over two years ago the Platform of the Opposition warned against the Right danger and named the groupings and persons in the Central Committee, it was denounced as slander. The present *Pravda* statement relates that there have been "profound, fundamental differences for more than a year" but the Centrist boss Stalin has lied to the Party again and again, denying that there were any internal differences in the Politbureau. This is the typically bureaucratic method of leading the Party blind-folded.

## THE CENTRISTS AND THE RIGHT

Under the crack of the Opposition whip, the Centrists have executed a series of manoeuvres to give the appearance of a change of course. They have made it lawful to talk of the "Right danger is the main danger". But the bloc of the Centrists with the Right wing in the Russian Party has not yet been dissolved. Rykov, Kalinin, Voroshilov and many more like them still sit either in the Politbureau or the Central Committee biding their time, waiting for more favorable winds to resume the offensive. Impolite words may be used against the Rights, but the Stalin machine redoubles its measure of savage persecution of the Lenin (Trotsky) Opposition of the Left. The Centrists are incapable of waging a serious or prolonged battle against the Rights. The removals of Bucharin and Tomsky are apparatus manipulations. A serious fight would involve the mobilization of the masses and the Stalinite bureaucracy is afraid of the masses no less than the Right wing. The Rights would prefer an orderly and bureaucratic orientation in favor of their policies and hesitate at the moment to appeal to their real constituency with the battle cry used so effectively against the Opposition: "Peasants Unite! Trotsky is going to rob you of your little properties and savings". Without the Party apparatus in their hands the Rights would have to appeal practically for civil war, and for this they are not prepared.

Only the Communist Opposition of Trotsky which retains its independence of both the Right and Center

can afford to appeal to the masses to be on their guard against the Thermidorians.

"Where is the Party?" is a question that is frequently asked. The answer is that the bureaucracy has kept the Party strangled. With the machinery of repression in its control, the Stalin officialdom talks in the name of the Party. For the Opposition therefore the serious fight against the Right wing which must emanate from the mobilization of the masses, involves the fight to free the Party masses from the stranglehold of the Centrist bureaucracy. It is a struggle not only against Bucharin but no less against boss Stalin, with his national socialism.

Bucharin started out as an ultra left. John Reed in his *Ten Days* reported that Bucharin was deemed by many to be "more Left than Lenin". Today Professor Ustrialov, the spokesman for the new Soviet possessing classes (Nepman, bureaucrat and Kulak) hails him as the hope of the Soviet bourgeoisie. "Bucharin—that means peace," writes this former Cadet.

## The Conflict in the Muste Group

Young as it is, the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, or the Muste Group as it is commonly referred to, is already experiencing storms. Since this movement is a reflection of a significant trend in the American labor movement today, it is important to consider what is transpiring within it, so that the Left wing and the Communists may have all possible material before them in outlining their own course of action. The prevailing official Party method of analyzing everything in a "simple" (in reality, a simple-minded) way, by "simply" dumping all who disagree with its momentary line into one huge pot—fascism, social-democracy, Hoover, Woll, Green, Hillman, Muste, Lovestone, Trotsky and whatever and whoever else happens to be handy—obviously leads only to confusion and secretarianism. Now, as to the C. P. L. A.

Muste's initial attempt to organize such diversified elements as the Right wing needle trades bureaucrats (Hillman, Schlesinger, Dubinsky, etc.), Norman Thomas, Justus Ebert, Ludwig Lore, Muste, Oneal, Tom Tippet and others, and pass off this multi-colored conglomeration as a progressive faction in the A. F. of L. has already hit the reefs of struggle and cracked. The Socialist Party bureaucrats saw in the movement growing up around Muste and his colleagues a chance to infiltrate and annex a socialist trade union wing in the official labor movement. So long as it was quiet little sect, which vented only the meekest criticism of the dominant A. F. of L. bureaucracy, it was not difficult for the S. P. priests to flirt with it and even become a little enthusiastic over it. The result was the foundation conference of the C. P. L. A. a number of weeks ago.

## THE SENTIMENT IN THE RANKS

While the conference was a victory essentially for the more reactionary elements of the S. P., particularly in the condemnation of the Communists and Communist methods, the problem was neither solved nor ended. The C. P. L. A., unfortunately for many of its administrators, is an expression of the growing hostility in the ranks of the A. F. of L. to the class collaboration methods of Green, Woll and Co., and a simultaneous demand for more militant policies and action. This pressure from the ranks exists for Schlesinger and his type, for instance, only as something that must be suppressed or guided into harmless channels. Such people can—and will—no more carry on a struggle against Woll and Green than Hoover will against Morgan.

Muste and Tippet, who appear to give a clearer reflection of the sentiment in trade union ranks, are failing entirely to do this. They cannot understand that such hopelessly discredited elements as Schlesinger and the whole Jewish Daily *Forward* gang are completely incompatible with even the mildest of progressive movements. It was the Right wing needle trades leaders who allied themselves with Woll and Green to crush the Left wing movement. It was these same leaders who came down to the *New Leader* and raised the Old Nick over the mild criticisms of Woll it had been printing serially, with the result that the *New Leader* very courageously toned down its criticism until it was almost invisible to the naked eye. Muste's pitiful pleading with these fakers to give him support, his apologies to the cynical officials of the United Hebrew Trades, will never gain the movement an ounce of genuine militant adherence, or arouse confidence in him. Nor, for that matter, will his tenderness move the stone hearts of the Right wing gang. Vladeck has already quit the C. P. L. A. and Thomas' support to it becomes perceptibly leaner every day. And more of the same can be expected in the future as the movement takes on flesh and the genuine sentiments of the workers break through the timidity and vacillation of the leaders.

Muste and Tippet can no more organize a militant movement against Woll and Green that will not "antagonize" the latter than they can eat their cake and have it. The C. P. L. A. supporter, Alfred Hoffmann, may have walked out in disgust from the conference between the bosses and the union officials which arranged the shameful sell-out of the Elizabethton strikers, but he never dared call upon the workers to repudiate it or to place the blame squarely on the should-

ers of the U. T. W. and A. F. of L. traitors. Because, you see, Messrs. Woll, Green and Co. must not be offended too much, else they will denounce the progressives! The same holds for the messianic hopes that many of the leaders place in John Fitzpatrick to "come out into the open" to lead the progressive movement. Fitzpatrick, however, already gave us his measure as a "progressive" back in 1924, when he crawled cravenly before Gompers.

## THE FEAR OF GREEN

This nightmare of fear for the thunderbolts of the Executive Council of Mr. Green possesses the trembling progressive leaders to the point of paralysis. A progressive movement that does not meet with the condemnation of such as Woll; that is, on the contrary, tolerated by the bureaucracy; that does not throw overboard the Hillmans and Schlesingers and proceed to clean their houses of reaction—is not a progressive movement at all. A progressive movement that does not include in its ranks the Communist workers who know how and why to fight for the class struggle in the trade unions; that has, on the contrary, an officially antagonistic standpoint towards them—is not a progressive movement at all. A progressive movement that plays fondly with the idea that some "respectable" and authoritative leader, some Fitzpatrick, will be able to lead it to victory over Wollism, instead of relying basically upon the fighting spirit of the workers in the ranks, instead of mobilizing them for direct struggle against class collaboration and its spokesman—is not a progressive movement at all.

If the C. P. L. A. does not remain a little sect of leader, but grows as a representative of the stirrings of revolt in the ranks of the unions, it will undoubtedly develop only by ridding itself of leaders who cannot or will not lead and of apologetic and timid policies that only make the A. F. of L. officials laugh in derision. The present attitude of sterile, aristocratic aloofness from the progressive movement which is held by the Communist Party only retards this development, so essential before any real forward step can be made. A change of course by the Party, and entry into this movement regardless of who says No, will spell progress for Communism and the labor movement as a whole in the United States.—M. S.

## Thaelmann on the Toboggan

"Unprincipled factional struggles" to which the Sixth Congress and the 10th Plenum of the Comintern so solemnly put an official end, continue to break out in the various Parties of the International, and reach their most debased form in the German Party. Without any principles being involved—except that of clique control of the apparatus—a movement has been set on foot there to remove from control Ernest Thaelmann, the notorious Stalinist puppet who was foisted upon the German Party by his Russian faction masters as "the historical leader of Bolshevism in Germany." The German Opposition press now publishes authentic reports of the Tammany Hall game that is being played by Thaelmann, the hero of the Wittorf corruption affair. Heinz Neumann, who had virtually disappeared from the political scene at the 12th Congress of the C. P. of Germany has suddenly bobbed up again. At that Congress, Thaelmann had been unanimously elected chairman of the Party and its official leader. It was announced from the platform that Neumann was seriously ill and could not appear. Comrades noted however that Neumann was taking the cure for his "serious illness" in the coffee shops of Western Berlin. At the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, Neumann was walloped right and left by the "big guns". Suddenly, he has reappeared on the scene, simultaneously with Thaelmann's vanishment. At the 10th Plenum, Kuusinen lavished praise upon his head, and he was hailed as the theorist, or one of them, of the struggle against Bucharin. Back in Germany, he has joined hands with Remmele, and the two of them have now become the actual political directors of the Party, while an underground, behind-the-scenes campaign is being carried on against Thaelmann. The Berlin district organization is being purged of Thaelmannites, and at the recent convention of the Berlin Communist Youth, a whole series of arbitrary organizational changes were made under the instructions of Remmele, to provide for strengthening his hand against any strength Thaelmann might mobilize.

The real reasons for this repulsive clique struggle for apparatus power has not yet become manifest. We may be sure, though, that it will soon become clear that the factional needs of the Stalin machine in the Russian Party are the strings that make the German puppets dance. So far no principles are involved; they will be invented later, for the benefit of the Party masses who will be called upon, as usual, to endorse an accomplished fact or be kicked out of the Party. It is by these shameful methods that Stalin besmirches and destroys the name of Communism.

## A LECTURE IN BOSTON

"Pogrom or Revolution in Palestine?" is the subject of a lecture to be given by Max Shachtman, on Friday, November 1, 1929, 7:30 P. M. at 62 Chambers Street, Boston, under the auspices of the local branch of the Communist League (Opposition). Admission is 25 cents and tickets can be obtained from members of the League, and at Shapiro's Bookstore, 7 Beach Street, Boston. All workers are invited to attend.