

Who Is Leading the Comintern To-day?

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE

THE "RALLIES"

As can be seen, the general spirit of the changes that have taken place in the leadership of the International appears in full light in the procession of its responsible figures. The International is led by the Martinovs, by the conformers of every description. The French have the political expression "rallié" which means one who has become reconciled. The need for such a term was born out of the frequency of political revolution. If the republican had to accustom themselves the Empire, the royalists and the Bonapartists, in their turn, had to get used to the Republic. They did not do this right away, but only after convincing themselves of the stability of the republican regime. They are not the republicans who fought for the Republic, but those who charitably accepted positions and stipends from it. They are the ones who are called "ralliés". But one must not think that this type is peculiar only to the bourgeois revolution. The basis of ralliement is not the revolution, but its victory and the State created by this victory.

It goes without saying that true fighters, especially in other countries, belonging not only to the younger generation but in a certain measure also to the older generation, have rallied and are rallying to the October revolution. But the present regime in the International does not permit them to rise to the level of independent directors not to speak of revolutionary leaders. It removes, sweeps away, deforms and tramples under foot all that is independent, ideologically firm and inflexible. It needs conformers. And it finds them without much difficulty, groups them together and arms them.

Among the "ralliés", two nuances can be distinguished, running from the politically dull but honest elements, devoid of perspicacity and initiative, up to the most arrant careerists. But even the best of these "ralliés" (as psychology suggests and experience proves) demonstrate towards new revolutions the same qualities that they showed before and even on the eve of the October: lack of foresight, want of creative initiative and real revolutionary courage. The Kolarovs, the Peppers, the Kuusinen, the Valetskys, the Martinovs, the Petrovskys, the Lozovskys and the other heroes who overslept, who missed or destroyed one, two, three and even more revolutions, are undoubtedly saying to themselves: "Let a new revolution come our way and this time we will prove ourselves." It is like the unlucky hunter who swears after every miss that he will take better aim at the next bird. Remembering their faults and uneasy at the idea that they have not been forgotten, these post-revolutionary revolutionists are always ready, on a sign from above, to prove their fearlessness to the four corners of the earth. That is why missed revolutionary situations alternate with no less tragic revolutionary adventures.

The best that can be done to all the varieties of Martinovs, Kuusinen and Peppers is to keep them beyond cannon range of the institutions where the destinies of the revolution are decided.

One can object that all the figures I have enumerated above are only of second order and that the "real" leadership is concentrated in the Political Bureau of the Russian Communist Party. But that is an illusion. Under Lenin, the immediate leadership of the affairs of the International was confided to Zinoviev, Radek and Bucharin. In the solution of questions of ever so little importance there took part Lenin and the author of these lines. Needless to say that in all the important questions of the International, the key was in the hands of Lenin. Not one of the present members of the Political Bureau, with the exception of Bucharin, took the slightest part in the leadership of the International, and naturally that was not by mere chance. The nature of this work presupposes not only a certain theoretical and political level, but also the direct knowledge of the internal life of the Western countries and the possession of languages permitting one to follow the foreign press continually. In the present Political Bureau, no one possesses even these formal qualifications, with the exception of Bucharin, who, while Lenin lived, was only a candidate to the Political Bureau.

BUCHARIN.

The "Testament" of Lenin, at first glance, gives Bucharin a somewhat contradictory characterization. On the one hand, he is spoken of as one of the "most valuable and outstanding theoreticians of the Party", on the other hand it is pointed out that "it is very doubtful if his theoretical conceptions can be taken as Marxist conceptions, for there is something scholastic in them (he has never wholly understood the dialectic)". How can a non-dialectician and a scholastic be the theoretician of a Marxist Party? I will not dwell upon the fact that the "Testament", written for the Party with a definite aim, is permeated with the desire to "balance off"—it was that to a certain extent—the characteristics of each militant leading the Party: Lenin carefully withholds any too marked praise just as he softens too harsh a judgment. Still, this has reference only to the form of the "Testament" and not to its essence, and it does not explain how the Marxist works of a writer who has not mastered the dialectic can be "valuable". Nevertheless, the characterization given by Lenin, despite its seeming contradiction meant to sweeten the pill a little, is not contradictory in essence and is entirely correct.

The dialectic does not do away with formal logic, just as the synthesis does not do away with analysis, but is, on the contrary, supported by it. Bucharin's mode of thought is formally-logical and from

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to the other abstractly-analytical. His best pages relate to the domain of formally-logical analysis. Wherever Bucharin's thought moves along the furrows already drawn by the dialectic blade of Marx and Lenin, it can give valuable *partial* results, even if it is almost accompanied by an after-taste of scholasticism. But where Bucharin penetrates independently into a new sphere, where he is obliged to combine elements borrowed from different fields,—economy and politics, sociology and ideology, in general, basis and superstructure,—he manifests a completely irresponsible and untenable arbitrariness, pulling generalizations out of the clouds and juggling with ideas as if they were balls. If one took the pains to assemble and classify chronologically all the "theories" that Bucharin has served up to the International since 1919, and especially since 1923, he would have a picture recalling the Night of Walpurgis where the lean shades of Marxism shiver in the winds of scholasticism.

The Sixth Congress of the International brought the contradictions of the leading apparatus to their apex, and therefore to absurdity. Outwardly, the leadership seemed to belong to Bucharin: he made the report, indicated the strategical line, proposed and put through the Program—no trifle, that—opened and closed the Congress by drawing its balance. His domination seemed complete. And in the meanwhile everyone knows that the real influence of Bucharin upon the Congress was next to nothing. The interminable babblings of Bucharin were like bubbles thrown up by a drowning man. In the meantime, without regard to the spirit of the reports, nay even counter to this spirit, a regrouping went on among the delegates and their factional organization was consolidated. This monstrous duplicity disclosed what a secondary, subordinate and decorative role is played after all by "ideology" under the bureaucratic regime of the apparatus. But, now that there is no longer any reason to speak of the leadership of Bucharin, inasmuch as the main point of the Sixth Congress was to liquidate him, there remains Stalin. But here we fall from one paradox into another: for he who is called today, with some reason, the leader of the International, did not even show up at the Congress, and in his later speeches disposed of the questions of the Program and the strategy of the International with a few meaningless phrases. And that again is no accident.

STALIN

There is no need at all to dwell upon the grossly empirical character of Stalin's policy. With more or less belatedness, it is only the passive reflection of the subterranean social clash. The strength of apparatus Centrism for a certain period and under certain conditions, lies in an empirical adaptation. But that is precisely where its Achilles heel is.

Those who do not know it, find it difficult to imagine the primitive niveau of the scientific knowledge and the theoretical resources of Stalin. When Lenin was alive, it never occurred to any of us to draw Stalin into discussions of theoretical problems or strategical questions of the International. The most he ever had to do was to vote sometimes on this or that question whenever the differences of opinion among the Russian leaders of the International necessitated a formal vote of the Political Bureau. In any case, up to 1924 it is impossible to find a single article, a single speech of Stalin dedicated to international problems. But this "quality"—the fact that he was not bound personally by any ideological obligation or tradition to the fundamental theoretical and international questions—rendered him only the better fit to lead the policy of retreat while, in the country, the classes crushed by the October revolution began to rise again by exerting pressure upon the Party. Stalin became necessary when the October film began to be wound backwards. "Every social epoch," said Marx, invoking the words of Helvetius, "demands its great men; when they do not exist, it invents them." (*Class Struggles in France*). Well, Stalin is the great man "invented" by the period of the reaction against October.

It is known that Marxism does not at all "deny" the personal factor in history; on the contrary, better than any other doctrine, it is capable of elucidating the historical function of an outstanding personality. But the fetishism of the personal factor is entirely alien to Marxism. The role of a personality is always explained by the objective conditions contained in class relationships. There have been historical periods in which, according to the expression of an intelligent enemy, Ustrialov, "to save the country", an outstanding mediocrity and nothing more proved necessary. In his *Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx showed, according to his own words, "how the class struggle created the circumstances and the conditions that permitted a mediocre and vulgar personage to play the role of a hero." Marx had in mind Napoleon III. The social subsoil of the latter was formed by the small peasant proprietors, under the mutual neutrality of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Essential elements of such a situation exist among us also. Everything is in the mutual relation of forces and in the tendencies of further evolution. We are still fighting for these tendencies. But in the meanwhile it is incontestable that the further we go the more the Stalinist regime appears as the preparation of Bonapartism.

Can't tempt for questions of principle and meagerness thoughts have always accompanied Stalin. In 1925, his Party paper, *Saria Vostoka*, did him a bad

turn, by publishing his letter of January 24, 1911. The bloc of Lenin with Plechanov for the struggle against the liquidators and the conciliators, Stalin calls in this letter a "foreign tempest in a glass of water"—neither more nor less—and then continues:

"In general, the workers are beginning to look upon the foreign groups with disdain; let them get into a rage to their heart's content; we, however, think that he who really has the interests of the movement at heart, work—the rest then passes on. My opinion is that the result will be best."

Thus, in 1911, Stalin disdainfully left it to Lenin to "get into a rage" in his struggle against liquidationism. As for the group that Lenin formed ideologically, Stalin called it contemptuously "a foreign tempest in a glass of water". What disgusting hypocrisy is Stalin's retrospective intransigence today towards the old ideological struggle!

But it is not only a matter of 1911. In the Spring of 1917, the semi-Defender of the Fatherland, Stalin, was in agreement in principle that the Party should unite with the Defender of the Fatherland, Tseretelli. In the minutes, concealed up to now, of the Party Conference in May 1917, we read:

"Order of business: Tseretelli's proposal for unity.

"Stalin: We must accept. We must define our proposal to realize to unity. A unification is possible on the basis of Zimmerwald-Kienthal."

To the fears expressed by certain delegates of the Conference, Stalin replied:

"Differences should neither be anticipated nor warned against. Without differences there is no Party life. Once inside the Party we will liquidate the little differences."

The differences with Tseretelli appeared to Stalin as "petty differences", just as six years earlier the theoretical struggle of Lenin against liquidationism seemed to him "a tempest in a glass of water." In this cynical contempt for political principles and in this conciliatory empiricism lies the whole basis: of the future alliance with Chiang Kai-Shek, of the collaboration with Purcell, of the theory of socialism in one country, of the dually-composed workers' and peasants' Parties, of the unity with the Martinovs, the Peppers and the Petrovskys for the struggle against the Bolsheviks-Leninists.

Let us quote another letter of Stalin, written on August 7, 1923, on the situation in Germany:

"Should we, the Communists, (in the present stage) strive to take over power without the social democrats, are we mature enough for that? That, in my opinion, is the question. In taking power, we had in Russia such reserves as a) peace, b) the land of the peasants, c) the support of the great majority of the working class, d) the sympathy of the peasantry. The German Communists at this moment have nothing of the sort (?). Of course, they have the Soviet nation as their neighbor, which we did not have, but what can we offer them at the present moment? If today in Germany the power, so to speak, falls, and the Communists seize hold of it, they will fail with a crash. (!) That in the 'best' case. And in the worst, they will be torn to pieces and thrown back. The whole thing is not that Brandler wants to educate the masses, it is that the bourgeoisie and the Right social democrats will surely transform the lessons—the demonstration—into a general battle (at this moment all the chances are on their side) and crush them. Of course, the Fascists are not asleep, but it is to our interest that they attack first: that will rally the whole working class around the Communists (Germany is not Bulgaria). Besides, according to all information, the Fascists are weak in Germany. In my opinion, the Germans must be held back and not spurred on."

To this amazing document, which we must refrain from analyzing here, it must simply be added that in the Spring of 1917, before the arrival of Lenin in Russia, Stalin did not pose the question of the conquest of power in a more revolutionary manner than he did in 1923 with regard to Germany. Is it not evident that Stalin is therefore the most qualified person to brandish the thunderbolts over Brandler and the Right wing in general?

As to the theoretical level of Stalin, finally, it is enough to recall that, in seeking to explain why Marx and Engels rejected the reactionary idea of socialism in one country, he declared that in the epoch of Marx and Engels "there could be no question of the law of unequal development in the capitalist countries". There could be no question of it! That is what was written on September 15, 1925!

What would be said of a mathematician who came to maintain that Lagrange, Hauss or Lobatchevsky could not yet know of logarithms? With Stalin this is no isolated case. If the hashed eclecticism of his speeches and his articles are examined, one will perceive that they consist almost solely of this kind of pearls and diamonds of almost virginal ignorance.

TO BE CONTINUED

ONCE AGAIN—PALESTINE!

Just a few days after the publication of the "thesis" of the recent Party Plenum, there arrived Inprecorr Vol. 9, No. 54, containing a statement by the C. P. of Palestine on the recent events. The U. S. Party thesis denounces the viewpoint of the *Militant* as counter-revolutionary. Unfortunately for the local Stalinites the statement of the Palestine C. P. is entirely identical with our view and opposite to that of the *Daily Worker* and *Freiheit*.