

The Theory at the Root of Lovestoneism

The organized appearance throughout the Communist International of Right wing groups—separate from their former Centrist allies—took place after the Sixth Congress of the International in 1928. Since that time there has been the distinct, organized formation of the Brandler group in Germany, the Jilek-Hais group in Czecho-Slovakia, the Kilboom group in Sweden, the Hueber group in Alsace-Lorraine, Right wing groups in France and Austria, and their replica in the United States the Lovestone-Gitlow-Wolfe group. There is only one "principle" that "unites" all these factions; national autonomy, opposition to international revolutionary action coordinated and directed by an international leadership, non-interference in each other's affairs.

We do not interfere in the Russian Party struggle, says Brandler, and we don't want the Russians to tell us what to do, either. Quite right, my dear fellow, says Jilek, if you will only keep out of my parliamentary dickerings in Czecho-Slovakia, I shall not say a word about your conduct in the Saxon Landtag. Entirely correct, interposes Lovestone, if you, comrade Hais, will keep hands off my opportunist and adventurist policy in the American needle trades, I will overlook your reformist conduct in the Czecho-Slovakian red unions. As for myself, says Hueber, if I am just permitted to remain the Left wing of the Alsatian Catholic-Autonomists without any criticism from you fellows, I shall swear by internationalism and keep a discreet tongue about my good comrade Kilboom's combinations with the Swedish social democrats. Let us, finally declares Kilboom, form our international opposition. Three cheers for unfalsified Leninism! shouts Schlamm.

The "internationalism" of the Right wing is of that buttery kind which retains its freshness so long as it is kept on the ice of mutual respect for national opportunism. But it melts into a sickly yellow in the heat of international revolutionary struggle. It can develop only at the expense of the Communist movement.

What is at the root of this disintegrating development in the ranks of Communism?

Spurious vs. Real Internationalism

We have emphasized numerous times that we have nothing in common with that spurious, artificial "internationalism" of the Zinoviev-Stalin-Bucharin type, which stifles all independent thought and healthy development in the various parties of the Comintern, reduces the national leaderships to the rank of subsidized agents of the dominant faction in the Russian party, and transforms the tribune of the International Congresses, plenums and sessions of the presidium into dreary circuses for political infants and rubber-stamping idiots. We have never understood by internationalism that poisonous atmosphere developed by Zinoviev and Co., to serve the needs of the struggle against "Trotskyism". It only replaced confident, firm and competent political direction with mechanical measures, wire-pulling and cablegram leadership. It is precisely in this atmosphere that the Lovestones flourished for years like a stinking weed in a swamp.

We have been and remain, however, convinced partisans of the genuine internationalism that was the foundation stone of the Communist International. It was this feature that so largely distinguished the Communist movement from the social democratic. In the Second International of the days before the war, the representatives of the various national parties would come together and agree that internationalism was a very good thing and highly desirable, but it did not follow—Messrs. Hillquit, Scheldemann, Thomas, Turati and Co. agreed—that these international gatherings shall establish the policies of the individual parties or shall presume to "dictate" in any other way. The "happy" results that followed this "noble independence of action and thought" are quite well known. The monument to it is the socialist betrayal of the workers during the war. Each party of social patriots betrayed its respective working class on a free, independent, "national" scale. . . .

The Communist International, born in the struggle against national reformism and patriotism, took an opposite path from the outset. Its relentless antagonism to national prejudices was not a weakness but a strong point, as was demonstrated by the growth of its influence, prestige, as well as its numbers in the first five years of its existence.

A Nationalist Theory

It was in the second five years of its

existence, following upon the defeat of the German revolution in 1923, that the Comintern began to march under a new banner: the theory of socialism in one country. It was a theory proclaimed and adapted for a period of back-sliding into national limitedness. It arose out of a disbelief in the teachings of Lenin on the revolutionary nature of the epoch, out of an awesome respect for the length of stabilization in capitalist Europe after 1924. Losing faith in the revolutionary support of the European working class, the "leaders" chosen for Russia in this period, of whom Stalin was the perfect type, developed the theory that Russia, backward and surrounded by world imperialism as it was, could establish socialism by itself, without the state aid of the European workers. That this "theory" flew in the face of all that Marx, Engels, Lenin and every other revolutionary teacher had ever said, did not dissuade these neo-national Communists in the least.

But theories are not harmless things to be played with. Out of this pernicious theory of "socialism in one country" came the destructive policy of Stalin-Bucharin-Martinov in the Chinese revolution, a policy which made of the Communist Party a ladder for the rise to power of the Chiang Kai-Sheks. Out of this theory came the policy pursued in England where the Comintern jilted the British working class and the Communists in order to become the anxious and willing servant of the General Council of the Trade Unions.

Out of this theory came the course that the Russian Communist Party steered towards the Kulak and away from the proletarian core of the country. In 1926, Stalin announced that "nine-tenths of socialism" already existed in Russia! Bucharin deceived the workers with his "brilliant" theories that the "kulak was growing into socialism", and Stalin nodded his head in assent. The most modest objection to these reactionary, chloroforming ideas was met with violent attacks by the Stalin-Bucharin regime and finally with the exile and imprisonment of the Opposition. It is quite as it should be that the most prominent "theoretician" of socialism in one country, Bucharin, finally ended up as the outspoken leader of the Right wing, with his opposition to industrialization, his protection of the "economically powerful peasant" (the mellifluous name the Right wing gives to the counter-revolutionary Kulak), etc., etc.

Trotsky's Warning

This anti-Marxist theory still remains the guiding, dominant line for the Russian Party and the International, the vade mecum of Stalin as well as Bucharin. The organized splitting-off of the Right wing internationally shows that the fatal results of the theory have not yet come to an end. Comrade Trotsky raised a warning cry, made his predictions of these results, years ago. As late as a year and a half ago, in his letter to the Sixth Congress of the International, he wrote with remarkable foresight:

"If it is at all possible to realize socialism in one country, then one can believe in that theory not only AFTER the conquest of power but also 'prior' to it. If socialism can be realized within the national boundaries of backward Russia, then there is the more reason to believe that it can be realized in advanced Germany. Tomorrow the leaders of the Communist Party of Germany will surely bring forward this theory. The Draft Program empowers them to do so. The day after tomorrow the French Party will have its turn. That will be the beginning of the downfall of the Comintern along the lines of social patriotism. The Communist Party of any capitalist country which will have become imbued with the idea that its particular country possesses all the 'necessary and sufficient' prerequisites for the independent construction of a 'complete socialist society' will in substance in no respect differ from the revolutionary social democrats who also began not with Noske but who definitely stumbled on August 4, 1914, on this very same question." (The Draft Program of the Communist International, p. 74, American edition).

Sauce for Stalin is Sauce for Brandler

Less than a year after its utterance, the warning has been essentially realized. If Stalin and Bucharin can build socialism in Russia alone, without the state aid of the workers in other countries, why cannot Brandler and Thalheimer build a "Communist" party in Germany alone, which has "fraternal" relations with other "revolutionary" parties, but wants no "rigid international centralization" for itself or for its

"friends" in other countries? For Brandler, this is quite logical. If Stalin and Bucharin can build socialism within national borders—and those of a backward, agricultural country, at that—why cannot Lovestone and Wolfe build a "Communist" Party within national borders, strengthen it, "arouse the masses" to revolution, and then "build socialism in the United States alone"? Surely, the magnificent industrial and financial structure of the United States, for which Lovestone has such an overwhelming admiration!, offers

What Now?

By the Editors of the Bulletin of the Russian Opposition

Numerous Oppositionists have rallied, as is known, to the "Declaration" of Rakovsky, Kossior and Okudjava. This "Declaration" brings no change in the fundamental line of the Opposition. On the contrary, its sense is a confirmation of this line at a new stage. The declaration rejects the tactic that the Stalinists have so perfidiously and with so much insistence attributed to the Opposition: the armed struggle for power against the C. P. S. U. The "Declaration" reiterates that the Opposition remains entirely on the path of internal reforms and that, as before, it is quite ready to pursue its work within the framework of a single party. This state of mind is dictated to it by its unshakable conviction that, under the conditions of party democracy, the Opposition, by normal methods, will gain the proletarian kernel of the party to its cause. But, it will be said, you yourself admit that this is possible only with a real party democracy. The complete absence of democracy constitutes the principal characteristic of Stalin's regime. Under these conditions, does not the declaration become a fiction?

No, the "Declaration" is not a fiction but a new public examination of the party regime. Is this regime capable or not, in spite of the lessons received, of remedying, be it only in part, the enormous evils it has caused the party and the revolution? Is it today capable or not of showing some initiative in putting an end to the dangers that only a blind man can fail to see? Is it capable or not—after the experience of the last years, the swinging from one side to the other, the severest losses, as well as the relentless decline in authority suffered by the party leadership,—is the apparatus of Stalin capable or not of taking a serious step toward Leninist methods of party life and leadership?

The Intentions of the Declaration

The declaration of the Opposition puts this question once more on a new plane. The extremely reserved tone of this document, the absence of indications of the pernicious character of the Centrist policy from the international point of view, as well as the remarks on the evolution of the Centrists towards the Left in various questions, all this was indicated without doubt by the intention to make it easier for the apparatus to take the first steps towards a healthier party regime. Furthermore, this tone should again demonstrate to the party that the Opposition puts essence above form, and the interests of the revolution above personal and group ambitions. It is ready to occupy the most modest place in the party. But it is willing to occupy it only by remaining what it is, not only by retaining all its points of view which, in the course of events, have received such a striking confirmation, but also by defending its right to internal struggle in order that its points of view may become those of the party. That is the significance of the declaration of August 22.

Now we have a reply to this declaration, an unofficial but quite authentic reply in the form of an article by Yaroslavsky. With us it is a matter of a very great and very important question, that of the future of the C. P. S. U. and the revolution. Everyone will understand that for this reason we would have preferred to disregard a dishonest article and its impudent author. But Yaroslavsky is now the guardian of the party apparatus. His article is the document of a responsible person. By this fact, it is impossible not to dwell upon it.

The article of Yaroslavsky represents the "Declaration" of the Opposition as an attempt to deceive the party. By this evaluation, as we shall demonstrate further on Yaroslavsky not only gives a crushing criticism of Stalin's regime but confirms the correctness of the tactic of the "Declaration".

at least as good a basis on which to erect a socialist society as agricultural Russia. For Lovestone too, this is quite logical.

Only these "logical conclusions" have a fundamentally wrong premise, the theory of socialism in one country. Grant the correctness of that theory and Brandler, Lovestone, Hais and Hueber are also correct. But grant the correctness of the same theory and you have the essential theoretical justification for the social democrats of Germany and France on August 4, 1914. Social nationalism—not Communism: That is the positive outcome of the philosophy of national socialism, that caricature of revolutionary internationalism for which Stalin and Bucharin alone—not Marx or Lenin—are entitled to full credit.

The Bolshevik Opposition and the C. P. S. U.

In what and how does the declaration deceive the party? Yaroslavsky does not make a political reply to this, but a policeman's reply. It is by tearing quotations out of a confiscated letter from a deported Oppositionist, and by grossly cheating that he constructs his "accusation". The political significance of our "Declaration" does not exist for him. Nevertheless its significance is obvious to those who deceive the party and those who utilize this deception.

When Radek declares in his conversations and private letters that the platform of the Opposition was brilliantly justified, then officially disavows this platform as being allegedly false, Radek is deliberately deceiving the party. Yaroslavsky is perfectly informed on matters for he lives only upon confiscations of letters of the Opposition. But Yaroslavsky is not only the protector of the party but also the inspirer of Radek, so far as the ideological hoaxing of the party is concerned.

When they were part of the Opposition, Zinoviev, Kamenev, etc., recounted in detail how they, in company with Stalin, Yaroslavsky, etc., had invented the myth of "Trotskyism" in order to struggle against Trotsky. Now these people abjure Trotskyism at the demand of Yaroslavsky: are they not buying their return to the party at the price of a deception?

A Regime of Systematic Deception

When, at the Sixth Congress and afterward in August, 1928, Stalin publicly affirmed that there existed no differences in the Central Committee and that rumors of a struggle between the Centrists and the Right was invented by the Trotskyists, Stalin deceived the party in order to transform the ideological struggle against the Right into organizational machinations, and to prevent the party from understanding that Stalin quoted only a few scraps and morsels from the platform of the Opposition. The number of these examples could be multiplied without end, for a regime of Centrist unsteadiness and bureaucratic violence is necessarily only a regime of systematic deception of the party.

But in what does the deception on the part of the Opposition lie. It says only that which is, it does not disavow its opinions out loud in order to preach them in an undertone. It does not attribute to itself the mistakes committed in reality by the Central Committee. Without shamming, without changing its path, without camouflage it has once again knocked on the door of the party. To the question of the doorman: Who's there, it replies: "The Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition)." To the question: Do you renounce your opinions? it replies: "No, we consider them absolutely correct."—"Then what do you want?"—"We want," replies the Opposition, "to fight with the party against the class enemies and to fight in the party for our opinions with the methods of persuasion of a normal party."

Where is the deception? Where is the shadow of a deception?

And what can the shabby swindles and quotations from a personal letter change in this clear and direct dialogue?

But the candor with which the Opposition demands its readmission into the party does not appear at all accidental to the guardian of the apparatus who sees in it an attempt to deceive it. Do not the Oppositionists know—this is the private but quite obvious idea of Yaroslavsky—that he can let in only people who have broken legs, bent spinal column, and who declare that white is black? By what right do people who have kept their political spine intact dare to knock on the door and disturb the repose of the doorman? Obviously to deceive the party!

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