

OF THE SOVIET UNION :-: by L. D. Trotsky

MICS AND ITS DANGER

the NEP. But getting over its astonishment, the leadership created a new theory: the building of socialism—it enters its "third" stage: there is no more need for a market; in the near future the Kulak as a class will be liquidated.

The Bureaucrats About-Face

Essentially it is not a new theory. It is the old theory of socialism in one country; only the gears are shifted to the "third speed". Formerly we have been taught that the building of socialism will go with a "snail's pace" (Bucharin) and the Kulak will be painlessly "growing in" to socialism. Now the "snail's pace" is replaced with a speed almost that of aviation. The Kulak does not "grow in" any more—not a chance at such a speed—the Kulak is simply being liquidated through the order of an administration.

The liquidation of the Kulak, seriously taken, is unquestionably the liquidation of the last capitalistic class. Without the basis of the Kulak, a jobber, a speculator, a city Neyman, cannot exist economically. It is even more so since the official program of the liquidation of the Kulaks as a class, includes in it the petty bourgeois elements of the city.

To include the entire peasantry in the socialistic economy means to transform the Soviet Union into a society without classes in two or three years. The society which has no classes does not need a government, especially such a concentrated form of government as a dictatorship. No wonder that some of the young "theoreticians" of the new course expressed an idea that it would be advisable to liquidate the Soviets, at least in the villages, and to replace them with the merely productive organizations, namely, with the administration of the local collective economy. These "theoreticians" were, however, brought to their senses by a declaration, from the top, that the dictatorship will be necessary for a long time yet. But why and what for it will be necessary to have a dictatorship after a complete liquidation of the Kulaks—that is to come in a year—the leaders did not explain. And it is not an accident either. Otherwise, they themselves would have to admit that the program of the speedy liquidation of the Kulaks, with the aid of peasant ploughs and old mares and wagons, is a bureaucratic adventure, spiced with theoretical charlatanism.

The Kulaks and Industrialization

In practice, the liquidation of the Kulaks led to merely administrative methods of the confiscation of the Kulak's property, his house, his lot and to his exile. This policy has been carried out in a way which regards the Kulak as an entirely foreign body among the peasants, some kind of invader, like a nomad or a Tartar. As a matter of fact, the Kulak represents only one of the stages of the development of the middle peasants. It is possible, of course, to liquidate every individual Kulak. It can be achieved with the aid of two well-armed policemen. But to prevent the re-appearance of Kulaks, at least in the collective economies, is much more difficult. For that, industrialization and the cultural revolution are necessary.

There are three types of collective economies in the Soviet Union, depending on the degree to which the means of production are in common use. These kinds are: the Partnerships, the Guilds and the Communes. In a Partnership the work in the fields is being done by private equipment: the labor is common, but the means of production belong to the individuals. In Guilds the most expensive machinery is the common property. And, finally, in Communes all means of production are the common property. The ways of dividing profits among the members of these types of economies differ according to the forms of ownership: from the capitalistic to the near-communistic way.

These three types of collective economies represent the three stages of the progress of collectivisation. The highest type demonstrates to the lower one its tomorrow.

The transition from one stage to another—its volume and its tempo—is fundamentally determined by the technical conditions of production. Therefore it is perfectly clear, that the wider is the scale of the present collectivisation, the more primitive form it will have to take, thus opening the way to capitalistic tendencies. But the last order of the Central Committee demands as far as possible, full common ownership of the means of production from the very beginning. In other words wholesale collectivisation supported mainly by peasant equipment, must occur in a form approximately between a Guild and a Commune. The contradiction is striking: the wider the scale of forced collectivisation, and consequently, the lower its technical basis, the higher is the type of social relations that the utopian-bureaucratic leadership is trying to impose.

At the same time the question of intra-relation of the collective economies is not discussed in the press. To avoid the decisive social question concerning the distribution of profits, the leaders and the executors replace the Marxian analysis with an unbearable propagandistic noise.

The Class Character of the Collectives

It goes without saying, that if the state industry could supply the collective economies with state means of production, it would soon remove the difference between these collective economies and the state farms. It would transform the peasants into regular socialistic workmen for state wheat factories, and would once and forever, take the ground from under the feet of the Kulaks. But from such a regime we are as yet separated by many years. The prevailing majority of collective economies will be compelled, for several years, to fall back upon the live-stock and other equipment of the peasants themselves.

Let us admit, however, that even under these conditions, collectivisation will show serious and direct advantages, capable of overcoming the individualistic tendencies of the peasants. Immediately, a new difficulty arises; not one of an administrative but of a social nature; not the difficulty inherent in methods of collective economy, but the class character of small producers: namely, the problem of distributing profits. Would a peasant who gave to the collective economy two horses, have a right to more profit than a farm-hand who brought with him only his two arms? If the percentage on the "capital" should not be credited, nobody would want to supply his own property for nothing. Then the state will meet with an insurmountable task: to equip anew all the collective economies with necessary machinery. Should the percentage on the "capital" be allowed, an economic differentiation of individuals within the collective economies will inevitably follow. And in case collective economies prove to have considerable advantages in comparison with individual farming, differentiation through them will develop faster than it did before.

The problem is not, however, exhausted by the matter of equipment alone. A family which has three workers, would want to receive more than a family with only one grown-up worker. Should a collective economy want to use the unexpended part of the earnings of its members as a loan to buy new machinery, or for a turn-over of capital, again it would have to pay a percentage. This in turn opens the way to more differentiation within the economy, and thus, to its possible transformation into a petty bourgeois cooperation, with the concentration of leadership in the hands of the well-off, and the majority of its members in a position close to that of a mere farm-hand

Such phenomena have already been observed in the past, when collective economies remained, with rare exceptions, entirely selective. They are even more inevitable in face of the wholesale collectivisation, which, by retaining the practical basis of a small farm, brings with it all the contradictions inherent in the small productive unit, and thus the inevitable reappearance of the Kulaks within the collective economies.

The Kulaks in Masquerade

It means that the next day after the official "liquidation of the Kulaks as a class" i. e., after the confiscation of the property of "named Kulaks", and their exile, the Stalinist bureaucracy will declare the Kulaks within the collective economies to be progressive or "civilized co-operators", falsely quoting, of course, Lenin's formula ("Concerning Cooperation"). The collective economy may become, in this case, only a new form of social and political disguise for the Kulaks. As director of such a masquerade, the present Commissar of Agriculture, Jakovlev, is perfect. Not in vain did he occupy himself for several years with statistical equilibristics to prove that the Kulak was invented by the Opposition. Not in vain was he, till yesterday, together with other officials, declaring that the Platform of the Opposition was a counter-revolutionary document—the Platform which demanded the speeding up of collectivisation on the basis of planned industrialization.

In the meantime the peasants react to the contradictions between the collectivisation and its insufficient technical basis in advance, by selling their live-stock right and left before joining the collective economies. The official press is full of alarming reports of the mass destruction of working live-stock and its sale to slaughter houses. The leadership reacts to this with orders, telegrams and threats. But it is obviously insufficient. A peasant does not know whether he will get credit for his horse or his cow, or in what way. He hopes that a collective economy will get a tractor from the state. In any case he does not see any reason why he should give his cow to the collective economy for nothing. A peasant is still a narrow realist. Seeing himself compelled to join the collective economy, he hurries to get the advantages from the liquidation of his individual property. The working live-stock decreases. Meanwhile the state has no possibility to replace it with mechanical power, or at least with other stock of better quality. This prepares the exceptionally acute difficulties for the collective economies at the very beginning of their activities.

The Panicky Retreat of Stalin

It is not difficult to foresee that after the present insecure offensive, the panicky retreat will follow, elemental down below, and pretending to be a "maneuvering" policy above. The collective economies hastily built up, will either simply fall apart, or will begin their degradation. In a cruel internal struggle, the individual means of production will be liberated, thus opening the way to capitalistic tendencies. Irreproachable leadership will blame, of course, the executors of being "Trotskyists", and will bring out from some hidden corner Stalin's capitalistic-farmer's formulae of 1924-25, in case the party will give the bureaucratic fourflushers the necessary time.

What the Bureaucrats Will Say

It is not difficult to foresee what reaction our analysis will arouse in the official circles. The government officials will say that we are gambling on a crisis. Scoundrels will add that we desire the fall of the Soviet government. People of Yaroslavsky's type will explain that we write in the interest of Chamberlain. It is possible that the Mensheviks and liberals will drag out a score of sentences to prove that it is indispensable for Russia

to come back to capitalism. The Communist officials will again establish the "solidarity between the Opposition and the Mensheviks". So it happened before, so it will happen again. But that will not stop us. Intrigues pass, but facts remain. The Stalinist bureaucracy, after several years of opportunistic policy, is going through a period of short-lasting but acute madness of ultra-Leftism. The theory and practice of the "Third Period" carry with them equally destructive consequences within the Soviet Union as well as outside its borders.

Some people will say: the Opposition has changed places with the Apparatus. The Opposition accuses the Apparatus of super-industrialization while it itself pulls to the Right. Other thoughtful souls will add: the Right wing that used to accuse the Stalinists of super-industrialization and of "Trotskyism" has capitulated to Stalin, while the Left Opposition, it seems, is taking the point of view of the Right wing.

All such reasonings, comparisons and approximations can be foreseen beforehand. And it is possible to write in advance all articles and speeches that will be written and said on the subject. It is not difficult to disclose the superficiality of these reasonings.

The Opposition has never undertaken "to catch up and pass in quick time" the capitalist world. We demanded the speeding up of industrialization, because it is the only way to secure a leading position for the cities in their relation to the country, and thus to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Our Estimates for Industrialization

Our estimation of the possibilities of industrialization was immeasurably broader and bolder than that of the bureaucrats during all the time till 1928. But we never regarded the resources of industrialization as inexhaustible. We never thought that its tempo could be regulated by the administrative whip alone. We have always advanced, as a basic condition of industrialization, the idea of the necessity of a systematic improvement of the conditions of the working class. We have always considered collectivisation as dependent upon industrialization. We saw the socialist reconstruction of peasant economy only as a prospect of many years to come. We never closed our eyes to the inevitability of internal conflicts during the socialistic reconstruction of a single nation. To remove contradictions in country life is possible only by removing contradictions between the city and the country. This can be realized only through the world revolution. We never demanded, therefore, the liquidation of classes within the scope of the Five Year plan of Stalin and Krzhizhanovsky. We demanded the limitation of the exploiting tendencies of the Kulaks, and the systematic cutting off of his accumulation in the interest of industrialization. For that we were exiled on the strength of article 58 of the Criminal Code.

The Marxian Opposition was denounced by the bloc of the Right and the Center. They separated for a while. But now they are united again. They have a common basis: nationalistic-socialism. Together they made a curve of 180 degrees over our heads. They transform more and more the problem of industrialization into a hazardous bureaucratic super-industrialization. They abolished the NEP, i. e., committed the very "crime" of which they falsely accused the Opposition and for which our friends are still filling up the prisons and places of exile. The limitations of the Kulaks they replace with the official "liquidation", which yesterday they have been ascribing to us and which we denied with clear Marxian conscience.

The Rights, who were afraid to take the most necessary steps ahead, now joined with the Center in a frantic rush "forward". The bloc is restored and the snail's pace is replaced by the speed of an airplane.

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