

THE LESSONS OF CAPITULATIONS - - by Alfa

Necrological Reflections

In regard to the capitulation of Bucharin, Rykov, Tomsky there were many conjectures. Is it a shrewd manoeuvre on the part of the Rights, or else, is it a renewal of the Right-Centre bloc? These guesses in themselves are without much content. Maybe the Right Trinity dreams on the quiet about the approach of favorable conditions when it will once more raise its head; maybe, in view of the alarming economic symptoms, it is sorry for having been too hasty in repenting. It is quite possible, on the other hand, that the Stalinists consider it useful to retain the Rights near power, in case of a new turn. But not these considerations are of significance. It is politically important, that, in the very heat of the ultra-Left course, the bloc between the Centrists and the Rights was renewed, at the time that the repressions against the Lefts were not weakened but strengthened. Rykov, regardless of everything—is the chairman of the council of commissars, but Rakovsky cures his diseased heart at Barnaul with frosts of 40 degrees. Tomsky and Rykov—are on the Politburo, Bucharin on the Central Committee, but Sosnovsky, B. Mdivani, Kavtaradze—are in jail, Uglanov—is the Labor Commissar, but Blumkin is shot (yes, Blumkin is shot!). These facts are politically decisive—appraising the Left course as a whole.

However, the capitulation of all the Right leaders after the capitulation of some of the Left is a fact of no little importance in itself. The significance of these ritualistic capitulations for the fate of the Party will become clear, if we look at them not from the angle of subjective intrigues, but objective symptoms. One lesson, one conclusion flows before any other from the twists and turns of the last six years: the stubborn, systematic, tireless, suffocation of the Party.

The "Leaders" Renounce Themselves

The Party is the selection of ideas. It remains a Party only so long as the voluntary tie of ideas lies at its basis. But what meaning can ideas and principles retain, if the leaders of the Party alternately renounce themselves, and the impersonal idea-less apparatus not only asserts its infallibility, once and for all, but even declares openly to the Party: "Us you can remove only through civil war!" (Stalin in 1927.)

We remind once more: Zinoviev—the formal "leader" of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Comintern (1923-25). Zinoviev—in the Opposition repents his false struggle against Trotskyism (1926-27). Zinoviev renounces the Opposition and once more declares war against "counter-revolutionary" Trotskyism (1928-29). Bucharin in 1922—a "Trotskyist"; in 1923-26—hand in hand with Zinoviev; in 1926-28—the theoretical leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Comintern, the inspirer of the Right-Center course. In 1928-29—the theoretician of the Right Opposition. In 1929 Bucharin repents his errors and renounces the very views that inspired him during the whole period of struggle with "Trotskyism".

If we take Stalin from the point of view of his ideas, we find that in different periods he covered himself with the ideas of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bucharin, at present he covers himself with fragments of the Opposition ideas, not having any of his own. But just as "truth is the result of a court verdict" (Schedrin), a reputation is the result of the apparatus manipulations...only for a certain time.

The automatization of the Party life has reached its highest limits. The apparatus does not demand the recognition of any kind of principles—it demands the recognition of its infallibility. The extortion of repenting documents does not have as its task the affirmation of a given sum of ideas. The purpose of the extortion is to instill in the Parties that any kind of counteraction or resistance, any kind of complaint, even a whisper against the apparatus, even a note in the diary, (Kamenev!) bring about only repressions or humiliation of one's ideas. "Self-criticism" serves the same purpose from another side, for it means that the Party members are obliged to criticize the same things that the apparatus "criticizes".

The Capitulations by the Right

The Party is the selection of ideas. The Party is the revolutionary tempering of characters. The Party is the shield of the class, for it is made up of the most con-

vinced, the strongest and the most steadfast. The unification of these elements occurs gradually, under the constant checking up on events. The live texture of the Party is therefore a very complicated and sensitive texture. The Party must not be kept under a vise, just as you cannot keep a human hand under a vise: the blood circulation is interfered with, and the texture dies away.

The process of the dying away of the Party texture occurs before our eyes with the growing material pressure of the Party bureaucracy. The alternating capitulations of all the "leaders" of the Party, in groups and singly, before the absolutely idea-less apparatus, shows an unheard-of power of pressure, that stage of it when the blood-circulation of ideas in the Party ceases almost completely.

The circumstances of the repentance of the Rights are particularly striking—with the transparency of the apparatus cynicism.

Unexpectedly and without preparation humanity finds out that three of the most eminent leaders of the Party and Soviet Republic—the leader of the Comintern, the head of the government and the leader of the trade unions—have been in sharp opposition to the central committee for nearly two years, and that they consider the official policy as detrimental. How is it that this did not come to the surface? The fate of the revolution was concerned! Where were the disputed questions considered and decided? The minutes of the Central Committee are printed for the knowledge of the Party. But it so happens that the apparatus leads a double life. The questions are decided behind the scenes, and on the official scene pretended argument and voting are enacted according to previously prepared procedure. With this the Party is fed. And what is more, during the sharp opposition of the three members of the Politbureau, it was officially declared, and primarily by the general secretary, Stalin, that the rumors and talk about disagreements in the Central Committee and about a Right deviation in the Politbureau, are but revolting calumnies of the "Trotskyists". Afterward, and in a belated fashion, it is ascertained that under "calumny" one must understand that correct and exceptionally important facts were hidden from the Party.

How the Capitulations are Obtained

The open agitation against Bucharin started about a month or two before his capitulation. But the name of Rykov, as one of the leaders of the Right deviation, was mentioned aloud only on the eve of the November plenum of the Central Committee. With particular mercilessness, however, Pravda started to drag about the name of Rykov only after his capitulation, expressing the suspicion that the repentance of the Right leaders is "insincere". In other words, the central organ of the Party considers quite possible, that a person placed by the Party in the most responsible position in the government, is capable of deceiving the Party and the masses in questions involving the fate of the Party and country. The suspicion is hurled in such a tone as if it was a quite simple and ordinary occurrence. Nevertheless, it is a question of political deceit, cynical unprincipledness and betrayal of ideas on the part of central committee members, who even today, when these lines are written, stand at the head of the Soviet government, or are on the staff of its most important organs.

In passing, and already at the conclusion, the Party learns that for a year and a half the head of the government and the head of the trade unions "have been playing with the fate of the Party and revolution" (literally)—"speculated on a catastrophe" (literally!)—all this somewhere in the bureaucratic underground. The help of the Party, it appears, was not at all required to repulse their criminal "game"...How else could the press keep quiet? Nevertheless the press did keep quiet. The Party was lulled and deceived. The Right deviation appeared to be personified in the figure of...Frumkin. Publicly Rykov and Stalin fought equally against Frumkin and Shatunski, and this hypocrisy was called the struggle against the Right deviation. Whether Frumkin fought against himself—

we do not know. At one time we even thought that, according to a decision of the Central Control Commission, Frumkin was sentenced beyond redemption, so that there could always be on hand a ready object for the needs of a struggle against the Right deviation. But these hypotheses were not verified.

Only after Rykov had capitulated—which would make it appear that any further struggle is rendered unnecessary—only from that moment Rykov and with him the whole trinity, were subjected to particularly unrestrained public abuse, before the Party, the population of the country and the whole of humanity in general. The Party was not at all needed for the struggle against the "conspiracy" of Rykov, Bucharin and Tomski. The Party was assured that there is no struggle at all. But after the Rights were defeated behind the scenes, the Party was shown three political skeletons: see, this is how the general secretariat deals with and will deal with all those who get in its way.

And Radek Yelps, "Me, Too."

The method of dealing with the Right leaders is a new stage in the process of the Bonapartist transformation of the Party regime: on the stage they occupy themselves with fighting exercises against Frumkin, and afterwards, unexpectedly, the skeleton of Rykov is shown. The automatism of the struggle and the contempt for the Party are here given expression hitherto unknown.

The picture of the Party regime becomes clearer in view of the circumstances that Rykov, Tomski and Bucharin capitulated a day after the Radeks and Smirnovs considered it necessary to capitulate "in the interests of a struggle against the Rights". On the return from exile to Moscow, Radek wailed at the stations that soon the two parts of the Central Committee will be arresting each other, and that it is therefore necessary to hurriedly aid the Center, that is, Stalin in the struggle against the Right, that is, Bucharin, Rykov and Tomski. But no sooner did Radek finish writing the third or fourth repenting clause, then the stern leaders of the Right of the Central Committee hurried to declare that they, too, burn with the desire to help the Center in the struggle against all deviations, particularly against the Right. Thus, the encircling of Frumkin seemed to be assured one hundred percent. Smirnov and Boguslavski, who were a bit late found all the places in the raid taken. But here, as if for spite, Frumkin himself repented. The Right wing became completely transcendental.

In spite of the tragedy of the whole situation, it cannot be denied that the Left capitulators bring into it an element of buffoonery. Hurrying to join the apparatus in a struggle against the Right danger, the capitulators of the Left lead a struggle exclusively on the Left, that is, against... Trotskyism. And it is for this purpose that Yaroslavsky recognized them as "the best elements" of the Opposition. Yaroslavsky should know where are the better, and where the worse!

Zinoviev and Kamenev "Repent" Once Again

It is clear that Zinoviev could not but make use of such an explosion in the bureaucratic tangle, in order to remind everyone, that he, thank god, is alive, and as a capitulator of the first order, so to say, an aristocrat in the family of deserters, he should have all the privileges in the struggle against deviations, and before all, it is understood, against "counter-revolutionary Trotskyism".

Properly speaking, the need of a new and such a fiery repentance of Zinoviev ("conclusively fused with the Party") may appear puzzling at first: it would seem this man has already repented and could let others get in line. But in reality it is not so. The first repentance lacked the necessary enthusiasm. The lack of this element that is so hard to catch, became particularly clear to Yaroslavsky, since the Opposition published the minutes of negotiations for a struggle against Stalin, carried on between Kamenev and Bucharin, with Sokolnikov as the intermediary. Kamenev kept these minutes for the sake of Zinoviev who still remained at Kaluga for a time after his first repentance. While negotiating with Bucharin, Kamenev and Zinoviev, upon meeting Oppositionists, would sigh

deeply about the split in the Opposition, complain of the sharp attacks by Trotsky, and express the hope for common work in the future. When all this was incidentally revealed, these elders of the capitulationist clan took on a morose silence. Kamenev declared that he would write a book on Lenin, for he saw that he could not bake a pudding with Stalin. But at the very moment that the general secretariat waved the scalp of the repentant Rykov over the Party, Zinoviev, very opportunely, thought of his own scalp and repented for the second time, and this time with such mighty enthusiasm, that it should have touched even the tempered heart of Molotov himself.

But in vain. In Stalin's report to the agrarian-Marxists, the "Trotsky-Zinoviev" and even "Zinoviev-Trotsky" opposition figured more than once. A careful reader could not but notice it. The fact is that among the bureaucracy the opposition was always called "Trotskyite"—so as to underline Zinoviev's lack of independent ideas. Why is it now, after Zinoviev's numerous capitulations, when he has succeeded to "conclusively fuse with the Party"—why and what for is the talk about the Zinoviev opposition now raised? Accidentally? Oh, no, there may be accidents in the five year plan, but not in the apparatus maneuvers. The design became clearer yet in the utterances of the obliging Kaganovitch. This latter, in one of his recent jubilee speeches, spoke about the opposition of Zinoviev and Kamenev, as if we had been living in 1926. The general political sense of this reference to the long-silenced struggle was clear, even without special comment. The Stalinist apparatus "hinted" to Zinoviev and Kamenev: do not think, please, that we will let you raise your heads. The leaders of the apparatus "hinted" to their underhand men: Under no circumstances must you let these equivocal repenters raise their heads! No more and no less.

Stalin's Equilibrium is Shaky

The equilibrium of the present one-man apparatus leadership rests on an extremely artificial and constrained system of theoretical fictions, historical legends and the actual seduction of the Party. This system requires the further tightening of the screws and by no means their loosening. For this system even Zinoviev is dangerous. Every one of his puffed articles in Pravda puts the international upstart, Molotov, alarmingly on guard.

Now we find out the reason that prompted the apparatus marshals to remind Zinoviev and Kamenev that they should drop forever their "senseless dreams". It seems that Zinoviev attempted to imply, during his oral repentance, that the Opposition was not wrong in everything, as the struggle of the Rights proves. And Kamenev admitted (in the diary) that Trotsky was right when he warned him and Zinoviev, that capitulation is the road not to the Party, but to political death. Kamenev always showed more inclination and ability to make ends meet than Zinoviev. But as Lenin said in his Testament: "it is no accident" that Kamenev was with Zinoviev. "It is no accident" that he went with him through all the stages of degradation of ideas in order to come to the simple conclusion that was outlined to him before: this road leads only to political death. Whatever it is, both had to repent anew, this time with enthusiasm, which, by the way, did not protect them from the public slap in the face by Kaganovitch—the Amsterdamer

The Danger of Bonapartism

More than once we had occasion to explain that the Party regime does not take shape of itself, but is a function of policy, which, in its turn, carries through the interests, and reflects the pressure, of classes. The bureaucratization of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, beginning in 1922, continued parallel to the growth of the economic strength and political influence of the petty bourgeoisie, basing itself on the N. E. P. and parallel to the stabilization of the bourgeois regimes in Europe and the whole world, as a result of the successive defeats of the proletariat. But the Party regime is not merely a passive reflection of processes of a deeper order. The Party is a live force of history, particularly a ruling party, under a regime of a revolutionary dictatorship. Bureaucratism does not have an immaterial character. Its bearer is the large solidified bureaucracy with a whole world of interests,

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