

A New Step of the International Communist Opposition.

By MAURICE SPECTOR

Comrade Spector, called by Vladimir Lenin the field of the revolution in a Marxist sense, is a subject for the present. The present is a long-pondering between the Russian Opposition and the German Left. The Russian Opposition has come to a point where the abrupt turns of the course of history is futile. The Russian Left in Europe is passing through a process of differentiation which leads to a stronger selection and higher level of the factors of organic unity. The theoretical and tactical confusion revealed in certain groups by the Sino-Russian conflict was a necessary warning. The world situation (Young Plan, London Conference, Young Plan, Indian ferment, World-unemployment) may at any time subject the Russian Opposition to a crucial test. The "Thermidor" stupidities of the official Communist Party to it all the more incumbent on the Communist Party to give Bolshevik leadership.

The compass by which the revolutionary vanguard steers through the waters of events, striking the necessary balance between enthusiasm and objectivity—is the analysis of class relations in dynamic development. This is the method of Marxism, and for decisive reasons—the rich experiences of three revolutions, ceaseless preoccupation with theoretical fundamentals, pre-eminence of its leadership—it finds its finest living expression today in the Russian Opposition. Because as against the Thermidorian Right and bureaucratic Centrist factions, its basic line is still that of the Party under Lenin—the Russian Opposition is the Left. The Russian Opposition is the contemporary embodiment of Bolshevism hardened for decades in the struggle against opportunism as the main danger inside the labor movement, but also against "otsovism" against every form of ultra-Left adventurism. The Russian Opposition represents the spiritual heritage of October and the first four congresses of the Third International. The three issues which L.D. Trotsky proposed as the touchstone of adherence to the Left—Anglo-Russian Committee, Chinese Revolution and Soviet Economy (national socialism)—are no more "merely" tactical differences than the divisions of Bolshevism and Menshevism over the character of the 1905 revolution. They go to the root of the Communist program. They involve questions of the estimate of the epoch, the character of the Russian revolution, the role of the vanguard, the significance of the soviets, the national and agrarian problems.

It is clear that between the Marxist Left that is the Russian Opposition and the "Left" groupings in the Comintern before 1924, there is a yawning gulf. Conjointly with Lenin, in the period of the Second Congress, Trotsky demolished the sectarian abstractions of Gorter and Pannekoek, the theoreticians of the German Communist Labor Party (K. A. P. D.). Conjointly with Lenin, Trotsky at the Third Congress no less vigorously engaged the ultra-Left adventurism (the "Offensive Theory") of the eminent "Leninists" Bela Kun, Maslow and Thalheimer. The severe correction proved such a shock to Thalheimer that he lost his balance and ultimately staggered into the camp of the extreme Right, while Maslow declared a permanent vendetta against the Third Congress as the work of the Mephisto Trotsky who had seduced the innocent Maslowite Lenin.

These reminiscences of the Second and particularly the Third Congresses, unfortunately possess more than purely historical interest. They have a direct bearing on the subsequent fate of the Leninbund. For years a whispering and press campaign was carried on among the Left-inclined workers of Hamburg, Berlin, the Ruhr and elsewhere to depict Trotsky as the Right Danger and Zinoviev and Bucharin as the patron-saints of the Left! This gross disorientation of the German Left, the obstinate Opposition to the Third Congress, the failure correctly to distinguish the tendencies in the Russian Party, were bound up with the ideological perversions of Maslow. The blunders of the Leninbund, the Urbahns theory of the so-called "hybrid" state, its bankruptcy in the Thermidor, its fallacious analysis of the Russo-Chinese issue, its oscillation between Brandier and

Korch, all show that the ghost of Maslow has not yet been laid and the evil of Zinoviev lives after him.

Maslow's method of approach to the problems of the Russian and international revolution was essentially eclectic. It was the method of the editorial writer who upon being asked to compose an article on Chinese Metaphysics read up the Encyclopedia Britannica under China and Metaphysics and combined his information. Maslow learned that Lenin's slogan in the revolution of 1905 was the democratic dictatorship (bourgeois democracy) and that there were two revolutions in 1917. He therefore instructed his associates that if the world revolution did not come to the assistance of Russia, the Bolsheviks would have "to retreat to the positions of 1905", that is, the bourgeois revolution. This fundamentally Menshevik theory is the prop of Urbahn's conception of "Thermidor". If Kamenev and Zinoviev would have had their way in 1917, the Bolsheviks would never, of course, have advanced beyond "the positions of 1905"—and there would have been an end to the revolution. The proletarian revolution is not followed by the bourgeois revolution, the proletarian dictatorship can be liquidated only by a Bonapartist or Fascist dictatorship. To conceive of a Thermidor as the threshold of bourgeois democracy in Russia in the epoch of imperialism, and civil war the epoch of the essential decay of bourgeois democracy is a grotesque misreading of history... In conversation with the writer comrade Urbahn once confessed that he had learned "a great deal" from Maslow. In retrospect, it would have been better if he had learned less and forgotten more.

III

The concrete issue of the Defense of the Soviet Union brought with it more than just a settlement of accounts with the Leninbund leadership. It urgently raised the problem of the unification of the whole International Opposition, which was far from homogeneous in its origins, its traditions and ideology. Here the mature leadership of the Russian Opposition proved indispensable, and it exerted the pressure of its natural prestige in favor of ideological clarity and against a bloc of motley opposition tendencies. Already on his arrival in Constantinople, Trotsky uncompromisingly put an end to all speculations on an unprincipled bloc with the Brandier Right. In equally decisive fashion, he rejected the contraband of "neo-syndicalism" of the Revolution Proletarian (Monatte-Loriot) group. Concurrently, he sharply disassociated the Russian Opposition from fraternity with those for whom the Opposition entailed no obligations of mundane political activity, for whom Opposition had become stagnation, routine and a refuge from Party discipline.

But of supreme importance in the ideological fusion of the International Left is the question of the Permanent Revolution, which comrade Trotsky has placed on the order of the day for discussion. The Opposition must be absolutely clear on the significance of this question. Those who reject the epigone-manufactured legend of "Trotskyism" must realize that the Permanent Revolution is the concentrated anti-thesis of the revisionist program of national socialism, the bloc of four classes, the theory of stages (colonial revolution), Workers and Peasants Parties, the peaceful cohabitation of socialism and capitalism the kulak growth into socialism (Bucharin). Why is it necessary to bring the Permanent Revolution up now, laments Radek, justifying his capitulation. During the period of the first four Congresses of the International it was not necessary to discuss the theory of the Permanent Revolution because its substance was the strategy of the International. It is the revision of Leninism by the epigones that brings the Permanent Revolution into relief as the essence of Bolshevism. It is the attempt of the epigones who before Lenin's April Theses had not advanced beyond the position of the bourgeois revolution, and who would now inflict the international working class with their reactionary theory—that has raised the question. It is the experiences of the Chinese Revolution that have raised the question.

The recently published theses on the Permanent Revolution are the re-affirmation in the present period of the April Theses of Lenin in all their implications. They link up the national with the international, the democratic with the socialist, the agrarian with the proletarian revolutions. They re-affirm that the emancipation of the peasantry can only come from the leadership of the proletariat. They repudiate the idea of two-class parties and maintain the necessity of the independent leadership of the Communist Party.

The misrepresentations and distortions of the theory of the Permanent Revolution—which is Marxist to the bone—was made possible by the domination of the Party and Comintern apparatus by the Right-Center Bloc under the pressure of alien class elements, the growing influence of the Kulak, Nepman and Bureaucrat.

IV

The American Opposition sees in the establishment of an International Bureau of the Opposition, an International Bulletin and Conference—a tremendously significant step forward in the struggle for the revolutionary line and the winning of the Comintern from the opportunist-Blanquist zig-zag of the internationally organized Stalin faction.

The American Opposition was formed under conditions that permitted no illusions of swift victory—or capitulation. It was organized after the Sixth Congress, that is, after the rupture of the bloc with Zinoviev and the capitulation of the Zinovievists. Our group in America attracted militants who realized the consequences of

the step they were taking—who saw the main stream of the Russian Opposition in the Moscow Opposition of 1924. We are a "Trotsky" Opposition, if we may say so without misunderstanding. We repudiate all admixtures of Zinovievism and Maslowism, the theories of Souvarine and those of the Smirnov-Sapronovs. In our Platform we justly recognize L.D. Trotsky as the foremost living teacher and leader of Bolshevism, the foremost representative of the legacy of Marx and Lenin.

With the Russian Opposition we are in complete accord that the Rakovsky declaration was no gesture of capitulation but a necessary demonstration of the united front with the Party. In the same sense do we regard the declaration of October 16, 1926 of the Party loyalty of the Opposition—to which Urbahn takes so much exception.

The situation in the American Communist movement has been immensely clarified since the Sixth Congress, and the greatest contribution in this direction has been made by the militants who formed the Left Opposition. None of the former Party groupings are any longer what they once were. Never was the Lovestone group such an undisguised and outspoken Right wing. Never was the unprincipled swamp-like character of the Foster faction more apparent. Never was there the clear and outspoken conscious Left wing that the American Opposition constitutes today. The limits of the old unprincipled factionalism and intrigue had their rise in the Zinoviev-Bucharin and Stalin regimes. The American Opposition has in the short space of its existence achieved a great revolutionary educational work for the movement that will sooner or later bear its fruit. For this the American Opposition recognizes its historic debt to the Russian Opposition.

MEXICAN WHITE TERROR CONTINUES

Taking advantage of the organizational weakness and demoralization in the ranks of the Mexican Communist movement, the government of the native bourgeoisie at Wall Street's service continues its series of repressions against the Communist and the labor movement in general (through a series of arrests of the leaders on trumped up charges and the regular smashing of labor organizations).

On February 5 the new president—"elect", Pascual Ortiz Rubio was officially inaugurated to office. Even the elements that supported him realized that the election would not have been won on legal grounds over the two opposing candidates, Jose Vasconcelos on the one hand and Pedro Rodriguez Triana, candidate of the "Workers and Peasants Bloc" on the other. Terrorism was used to keep the enemies of Ortiz Rubio from the polls and then he was proclaimed elected by over two million votes as against a few tens of thousands for each of the opposing candidates. As an expression of the popular sentiment against this fake election Daniel Flores, a youth of liberal-patriotic tendencies, attempted to assassinate the new president on the very day of his inauguration, inflicting several serious wounds. But wild hogs and Mexican presidents oftentimes have tough hides and the incident was utilized by the governmental forces as an excuse for a whole series of repressions against the leading elements in opposition to the existing regime. Numerous Communists, syndicalists, anarchists and "Vasconcelistas," supporters of the candidate Vasconcelos (who was supported simultaneously by large elements of the workers and peasants in spite of being sympathetic towards the Catholics). Flores was tortured as were several of the other detained elements, including several Communists, to secure a declaration that the whole thing was a Communist plot. During a demonstration of the Left wing forces in Mexico City where by a great effort the C.P. could mobilize 400 workers on March 20, still more comrades were imprisoned including several leading members of the Left Communist Opposition.

Communist Oppositionists Deported

According to latest reports it appears that due to the government's inability to bring concrete charges or the holding of a trial,

most of the comrades detained in the capital and also the five who had been sent to the penal colony in the "Islas Marias" have been freed again, with the exception of two foreigners, Esteban Pavletich, a Peruvian attached to the general staff of the Nicaraguan leader, C.A. Sandino, and Russell Blackwell (Rosalio Negrete) of the Left Communist Opposition, both of whom were deported from the country.

There appeared recently in the press of this country notices to the effect that the Mexican authorities had nipped in the bud a "Communist revolution" in the State of Veracruz. Although we have no definite information as yet it seems that once more the same method is being used to give an excuse to the government for continued repressions against the revolutionary movement. We do not believe that the adventurous course of the Stalinist leadership in the Mexican party can be so bad as to attempt an insurrectionary movement at this time.

The candidate of the Workers and Peasants Bloc that took part in the last presidential election in Mexico under direction of the Mexican Communist Party, in the midst of the repressions against the movement, made a public declaration congratulating Ortiz Rubio for having won at the polls (!) and pledging the elements of the Workers and Peasants Bloc to support the present regime.

Φ

MOONEY INCENSED BY LIBERTY MYSTERY YARN

SAN QUENTIN, Cal. — (FP) — Tom Mooney is incensed by falsified accounts of the San Francisco preparedness day explosion contained in a "mystery" series in Liberty, reactionary weekly. He declares the article was prepared from prosecution records and that no attempt was made to interview defense counsel or himself.

"To them," Mooney remarked, "it means money, a bit of public sensationalism, and perhaps a few extra magazine sales. To me it means vindication, freedom. Why didn't they bother to get their facts accurate and fair?" Liberty has offered \$1,000 for the best solution to the Mooney-Billings "mystery", which is no mystery to those familiar with the frameup.