

# A SQUEAK IN THE APPARATUS (A POPULAR EXPLANATION) OF RIGHTS AND LEFTS

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(This is the concluding instalment of comrade Trotsky's popular exposition of the differences between Lefts and Rights in the questions of Soviet economy and the associated international problems. The Right wing "theoretician" of the Revolutionary Age surpassing himself in profundity lately attempted to prove that "Trotskyism" has made a "right" turn in denial of its past! It is nothing new for the Right revisionists to set up a straw man and proceed to knock him down—amid their own applause.

The dishonesty of the Right wing group in matters of Marxist theory is in complete accord with the unscrupulous falsification of Trotsky's position on the "rationing" of Europe which Lovestone peddled in the Comintern some years ago and from which he never disassociated himself even after he had been convicted by Trotsky of a literary forgery.—Editors.)

## From the Left or From the Right

As was not difficult to foresee, Yaroslavsky now "testifies" that the Left Opposition has gone to the Right. When we came out against the 4 per cent rate of industrial development and for 20 per cent—we were "ultra-Lefts". When we give warning not to leap over to 30 per cent deteriorating the quality of production and overstraining the working force, we are "rights".

When as against the Thermidorian policy of reliance on the mighty middle peasant we demanded the policy of collectivization—that was denounced as "ultra-Leftism." When in the form of anti-religious propaganda, we come out against the myth of the faultless beginning of socialism, we are... "rights".

Ever since Molotov's feet became the measure of all things questions are decided with great simplicity.

All the Mensheviks, cackles Yaroslavsky, came out against the present tempos of industrialization and collectivization. It is therefore clear that the Opposition shares the Menshevik point of view. Yaroslavsky is out to scare somebody. Is it us? No, he is aiming to intimidate his own people—because he hears a squeak in the apparatus.

Menshevism is for the return of the U.S.S.R. to capitalism which must for Menshevik satisfaction be crowned by a bourgeois democracy. By the way, the Mensheviks supported the Stalinist industrialization program of yesterday against the Opposition platform, seeing in the former the elements of economic "realism" and declaring the latter "romantic." This is the historic fact. It is self-evident that the Mensheviks are now too, for a lowering of the tempos of industrialization. Does this mean that from the Marxian viewpoint the tempos of industrialization have no limits in general?

It is remarkable that in the same article, Yaroslavsky refers with great satisfaction to the old socialist revolutionary, Minor, who spoke sympathetically of the collectivization in the U.S.S.R. at a certain Paris meeting. From the personal standpoint Minor's declaration undoubtedly does him honor, because it shows that he has a socialist conscience, that he is trying to understand what is actually happening, without the malicious pre-conceptions of an offended petty bourgeois. But from political viewpoint, it must not be forgotten for a moment that Minor is one of the oldest Populists (Narodniki) who by his whole past is the most insulated against Marxian ideas. How many spears did the Marxists not break in their struggle against the populist utopians in regard to the construction of a socialism based on the peasant's primitive plow and commune? Agrarian socialism bore an adventurist stamp with the Left wing "social revolutionaries" and a bureaucratic character with their Right. In the Stalinist policy the elements of adventurism and bureaucratism unite. It is no wonder that Minor found in the new Stalinism some of the elements of his own old past.

One of the possible definitions of Bolshevism is that it gave in practise the most remarkable synthesis of reform and revolution. At first the social democracy was for reform against the revolution; now it is even against reform out of fear of revolution. Social democracy is always against revolution. Does this mean that every denial of a revolutionary situation in a given moment is Menshevism?

The Mensheviks were opposed to the October revolution, together with Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Millyutko and others. The Mensheviks were opposed to the revolutionary offensive in Germany in 1923 (together with Stalin). The Mensheviks were opposed to a break with the Kuomintang and the building of Soviets in China in 1925-27 openly supporting Stalin against our views. Our demand to declare war on the General Council of the Trade Unions in the British coal struggle of 1926, the Mensheviks together with Stalin considered an "adventure".

On the other hand the Mensheviks were against the insurrection in Estonia in 1924, against the terrorist adventure in Bulgaria, against the Canton uprising in 1927. Does this mean that we must support adventurist uprisings or organize them?

In our work on the "Third Period" we demonstrated by means of facts and figures the criminal light-mindedness of Molotov and company in declaring France to be on the threshold of revolution. The reformists and capitalists may attempt to grasp at our figures for consolation. Does this mean that we should ignore facts and figures? That we should blow out the lantern? Roam about in the dark?

From this brief and incomplete review we see that at all critical moments for the past thirteen years, the Mensheviks together with the epigones denied the revolutionary situation whenever it was at hand. In all these instances they were opposed to us. On the other hand their judgement episodically and purely formally, happened to "coincide" with ours, when the Mensheviks condemned an insurrection as such, while we denied the presence of conditions for a successful insurrection. The same is now happening in the question of the tempo of industrialization and collectivization.

## Tail-Endism (Chvostism) or Adventurism

Some comrades are disturbed by our accusation of the present Stalinist course as ultra-Left adventurism. One of our friends proves that the "complete collectivization" has on the part of the leadership not an adventurist but a purely "tail-endist" character. There is no contradiction here. "Tail-endism" always and unavoidably results in ultra-Left adventurism, either as its supplement, or else directly. The regeneration of Bolshevism means the unavoidable chemical disassociation of the elements of opportunism and bare "revolutionism".

It must not be forgotten that adventurism can be of two sorts. One expresses the revolutionary impatience of the vanguard and results in running ahead too precipitously, the second expresses the political desperation of the lagging rear-guard. In the April and July demonstrations of 1917, some of the Bolsheviks undoubtedly brought in the element of adventurism. The same kind of tendencies, but expressing itself more sharply and having far worse consequences can be perceived in the insurrection of the Spartacists in 1919, when they attempted to jump over the Constituent Assembly. On the other hand, the tactic of the German leadership in the March days of 1921 was an attempt to stage an insurrection on a declining wave. The tactic of the ultra-Left leadership in Germany in 1924 was an adventurist supplement of the tail-endism of 1923. The Canton uprising of 1927 was an adventurist transformation of the opportunism of 1925-27 and together with that a classic example of the desperation of the rear-guard.

The movement of the peasants into the collectives, called forth by a combination of economic and administrative reasons acquired a mass character. The policy of the bureaucracy was at bottom an example of tail-endism. But the bureaucracy not only proclaimed this policy as its greatest victory—to speed is to speed! exclaimed the parrot, when the cat pulled it by the tail—but also developed a mad pressure on the peasantry under the flag of the liquidation of classes. Tail-endism was transformed directly into adventurism.

Can this adventurism be called ultra-Leftism and can it be said that we, the Opposition, attack it from the Right? Strategically, this would, of course, be sense-

less because the tactical zig-zag of Stalin undermines the revolutionary class strategy. But tactically nevertheless, we have this time on the part of the Stalinists not a Right but an ultra-Left zig-zag—it cannot be called otherwise.

At the Third Congress of the Comintern while working out the tactics and strategy, we rejected the ultra-Left adventurism of Zinoviev, Bela Kun, Maslow and others. Lenin did not at all fear to say that he criticises them this time from the Right. Some of our friends were confused by this. The fetishism of words is an unpleasant illness.

The Right course as a strategical line is the reliance on the capitalist farmer in the village—capitalism in instalments. In the first years Stalin travelled far on this road. At present Stalin is moving in directly the opposite direction. The program of the administrative liquidation of the Kulak is an ultra-Left caricature of a revolutionary course. Tactically we stand at the moment to the Right of the zig-zag course. Strategically, we continue to stand on the basic revolutionary line.

On July 14, 1929, when the official turn to the Left began to make itself felt, I wrote to Ch. Rakovsky and to other exiles as follows: "After the tail-enders missed the revolutionary situation in Germany in 1923, a very deep ultra-Left zig-zag followed in 1924-25. This ultra-Left zig-zag developed into Right channels; the struggle with the industrialists, the coquettings with LaFollete and Raditch, the Peasant International, Kuomintang, etc. When ultra-Leftism smashed its head on the Right path, a Right course developed. It is therefore not inconceivable that we have here an extended reproduction of the same thing in a new stage, that is, ultra-Leftism supporting itself on opportunistic premises. The accompanying economic forces may however, break down this ultra-Leftism at the very beginning and immediately give the whole course a decisive turn to the Right."

As the principal activity of Yaroslavsky is the stealing of Oppositionist correspondence he can easily check up on this quotation. Neither Stalinist ultra-Leftism nor the newest turn to the Right was unexpected by us. As Marxists we should orientate ourselves not on the bureaucrats psychology but on the "accompanying economic forces".

## Our Prognosis

Shall we call for a "retreat"? The above mentioned comrade, expresses the idea that the slogan of "Back" does not suit us. Just the same, he says, Stalin will now continue to retreat. Is it worth our while to add our voices to the outcries of these drag-in-the-rear politicians? If this were a case of a bourgeois state such a criticism would be correct. We are not at all obliged to give advice even to the most democratic and social democratic bourgeois as to how to get out of their difficulties. On the contrary we must mercilessly exploit all its difficulties in order to rouse the working class against the capitalist state. The position of Urbahns in relation to the U.S.S.R. is a caricature of Marxist policy in relation to a bourgeois state. But in spite of the one thousand and one lies of Yaroslavsky we considered and still consider the Soviet State a proletarian state. Even though Yaroslavsky "brings" words he ascribed to us from the Bulletin about the "unavoidable death of the October Revolution", this honorable eavesdropper lies. We never said that, we never wrote that, and never thought that, even though we do not in the least hide from ourselves nor from the Party the tremendous danger that the October Revolution is approaching as a result of the monstrous mistakes of the last period. The Opposition does not identify the Soviet State either with Yaroslavsky or with Stalin. It considers the Soviet State its own State and will defend it not only from its open class enemies but also from the internal damagers among whom Yaroslavsky occupies not the last place.

In the same article "About the Evolution of the Trotskyites" Yaroslavsky once more repeats that "L.D. Trotsky was convinced a year ago that our Party would be compelled to call him back for aid." In that sense Trotsky was supposed to have warned those who "accompanied him"

(agents of the G.P.U. that in all probability he'd be called to save the situation within a few months." Yaroslavsky lies! This is not what I said. This is not how I spoke. Together with the whole Opposition I said, that the country is entering on a period of new difficulties on a higher historical basis; that the leadership does not see anything and does not foresee that these difficulties may bring about a sharp crisis after two years, after a year or even after several months. Then, I said, it will be revealed that the government apparatus as well as the Party is over-run with bureaucrats, careerists, political betrayers, etc. But the Opposition will devotedly fight together with the revolutionary core of the Party. You will be ashamed, I said, to those "accompanying" if you will have to call back for aid in that difficult moment the Oppositionists directly from the prisons and exile. This prognosis remains in force even today. What is truer, is that now it takes on a more real and acute character.

## Flattering the Peasantry

The crude and senseless economic plucking of the peasantry is supplemented by Yaroslavsky with indecent politicalattery. In regards to my words that the peasantry, finding itself before the closed gates of the market "flings" itself in the direction of collectivization, Yaroslavsky writes, "Trotsky, still retaining his past views on the peasantry as an enemy force, cannot imagine the peasantry as any different than cattle which 'fling' themselves into the open gates in the direction of collectivization." I did not compare the peasantry with cattle. For such comparisons the lackey psychology of Yaroslavsky is needed. At no time did I consider the peasantry an enemy force, neither did I consider it a conscious socialist force. The peasantry is contradictory. Within it the dependence on the elementary forces of nature are still terribly strong even today, with its terribly split-up and helplessly economy. Marx and Engels wrote in their time about the "idiocy of rural life". The Populists uttered not a few sorry words on this theme, and deduced from the Communist Manifesto the supposed enmity of the Marxists towards the peasantry. In what way does Yaroslavsky differ from them? In as much as the peasant is a realist towards the questions surrounding him, just in so far does he become a victim of blind instinct on bigger questions. The whole history of the peasantry is such that after decades and centuries of heavy immobility, it plunges either in one or another direction. The peasant-soldiers crushed the Revolution of 1905. The peasantry elected in 1917 Social Revolutionaries to the Constituent Assembly but helped the Bolsheviks to throw off the "Social Revolutionaries" how many times did it fling itself from one direction to another during the civil war before it firmly bound its fate to that of the Soviet power. To liberate the peasant from the elementary forces pressing down on his consciousness, he must be "de-peasantized". This is the task of socialism. But this is decided not by a formalist collectivization, but by a revolution in agricultural technique. The advanced peasant will sooner or later understand that the Oppositionist is far more farsighted in the question of peasant economy than the ruling bureaucrats.

Evidently, fate wanted to enjoy a particularly hearty laugh at the expense of Yaroslavsky. In the same number of the Pravda (March 30th) where this malicious and wretched article is printed there is a report of Bullat's speech at the Plenum of the Moscow district conference. Bullat says, that in one of the sections "the Right moods within the Party organization were very strong. The district committee removed several leading functionaries. And then the whole organization flung itself to the 'Left' to the extent of a complete turn." This is what was literally said. This speech is not about a peasant mass but about a party organization which is supposed to personify the consciousness of the working class. And the official leader tells us how after removing several "Rights" the organization was "flung" towards ultra-Leftism. This is far more becoming of "cattle", to make use of the lackey vocabulary of Yaroslavsky.

Nevertheless, the picture drawn by Bullat symbolizes the whole fate of the Party for the past two years. After the

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