

# The Russian Bolshevik-Leninists on the Present Situation

(We publish here only the conclusion of the declaration of Rakovsky and his comrades. We hope to publish the balance of it in an early issue.—Ed.)

In its declaration made to the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission on October 4, 1929, the Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition pointed out the need for a unification of all the Communist and revolutionary forces around the five year plan of industrialization, for the struggle against agrarian capitalism and against the Right wingers. Such a unification, embracing also the Democratic Centralists, on the basis of a recognition of a monolithic Party, is still most indispensable today when the solid proletarian ranks must be opposed to an advancing Thermidor. To the extent, however, that the realization of the slogan for unification of all Communist forces signifies the end of the period of the political monopoly of Centrism, the Centrist bureaucracy will fight against it with the same fury as in the past. The slogan of the unification of all the revolutionary Communists can be realized solely by the masses of the Party in the struggle against the Centrist bureaucracy.

## The Class Relationships

What are the class relationships within the country? The political situation is characterized by distrust on the part of the Party—thoroughly merited—towards its leadership, and the growth of the distrust of the working class, of the poor and middle peasantry towards the Party and the proletarian dictatorship, which is not merited. The leadership has discredited itself by manifesting with material evidence the unprincipled character of its policy which has changed so many times in a few weeks (for instance: the resolution of the Moscow Party Committee on the abolition of the New Economic Policy, which was itself abolished after a few weeks because, we were told later, it was a mistake of the . . . typist). In the eyes of the working masses, the leadership of the Party has discredited the Party and the trade unions. Neither the first nor the second has been able to give the proletariat any defense against the bureaucrats. On the contrary, the Party and the trade unions seemed to support the bureaucrats against the workers.

The poor peasantry has treated the complete collectivization with great distrust. The facts are witness to that. In it, it has seen, on the one hand, a deprivation from the tax exemptions it enjoyed up to then, and on the other, the danger of being submitted to the middle peasants and the Kulaks who joined in with the collective farms. (The facts show that even in the communal farms, the cards are stacked on the peasant proprietor). The so-called groups of poor peasants are a fiction analogous to what, for the workers, are self-criticism, purging of the Party, patronage, and the other shoddy bureaucratic substitutes for Party and workers' democracy.

The agricultural workers, willy-nilly, had to enter the collective farms, for there was no other way out for them.

A special role will be played in the coming period by the middle peasant. He is becoming again the central figure in the class struggle. The love of the Centrists (and the Right wingers for the middle peasantry was pure demagoguery, a means of hunting down the Bolshevik-Leninist Oppositionists. In effect, the Centrists and the Right wingers gave the middle peasantry an apparatus, the mouth of which utters more threats than words, threats which influence by violence and arbitrariness, and apropos of which Lenin said that it humiliates the Soviet citizens who are obliged to be in contact with it.

## The Middle Peasant in the Collectives

In the complete collectivization, the middle peasant has seen primarily a means to extort bread and other products for himself and to overwhelm with good will the poor peasantry with the aid of his live and dead stock (instruments, beasts, etc.) Instead of the example of which Lenin and the program of our Party speak—the living example which should convince and persuade the middle peasant of the advantages of the collectives—he is offered a noose. To a collectivization of this sort, he has replied with his usual procedure: the active and passive strike, or entrance into the collective in order to break it up from within, by technical disarmament (destruction of beasts, etc.)

The political task now put before the Party consists of reestablishing the confidence whose lack facilitates the work of the subterranean Thermidorian forces. No serious struggle against advancing capitalism is imaginable unless the principal positions of the Party have first been consolidated—the proletariat and the poor pea-

## Introduction

After some delay, we have finally received the declaration of comrades Rakovsky, Muralov, Kossior and Kasparova with which these comrades addressed themselves to the Party a little before the Sixteenth Congress. By a fatal chance, the copies of the declaration sent to us at the time were seized. In spite of this great delay, the document which we publish entirely retains its importance. In spite of the terseness of formulation, the document presents clear estimations of the economic and political processes, calling by their name the dangers which are not far off but quite close.

This declaration is intimately linked with the declaration that Rakovsky made at the time when Centrism's turn to the Left still preserved its freshness and was not sufficiently checked by experience. And at the same time, these two documents are distinguished as two steps of different stages on the same road. The first declaration recorded the turn of the leadership in the sense which the Opposition defended for the past number of years. At the same time, it warned against the possible dangers on the new road, demanded the activity of the Party to surmount these dangers, and put the forces of the Opposition at the disposal of the Party. This manner of posing the question—in the spirit of the united front policy—appeared to some "capitulationist" or at the very least, semi-capitulationist. To be sure, these accusations didn't come from a very serious source.\*

Already at that time, we pointed out that politics does not consist of a simple repetition of formulae that can serve in every condition of life. Rakovsky did not entertain the slightest illusion about the political line of Centrism at the time of the Left turn. He clearly and plainly developed his appreciation of Centrism in the theses written at the same time as the first declaration.

\*The pretty thin character of this criticism was branded above all by the fact that at its head was inscribed Paz, for whom the accusation of capitulation against Rakovsky was necessary solely in order to abandon the revolutionary ranks, in which he was but a bird of passage. We cannot, however, forget that in a bloc with Paz against Rakovsky, there was also found comrade Treint, who, with all the mistakes he has committed and still commits, is yet, we should like to hope, no chance figure in the arena of the revolutionary struggle.

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Theoretically, this problem is solved with relative ease insofar as it is a question of the working class and the agricultural day laborers. The matter is more difficult with the middle peasant. Will he be satisfied with the reestablishment of the N. E. P., and revolutionary legality, or will he ask for the Neo-N. E. P. and supplementary demands which are incompatible with the existence of the proletarian dictatorship? How is the middle peasantry to be satisfied without ceasing the struggle against the Kulak? It is already a question that can be settled with clarity in practice. We can only affirm with precision that the establishment of Party and workers' democracy and the Union of Poor Peasantry against which the bureaucracy revolts, is the means by which the demands of the middle peasantry can be kept within limits compatible with the foundations of the proletarian dictatorship. Democracy in the Party, as well as Soviet democracy in the country, will be the shield against unbridled bureaucratic arbitrariness. Without the establishment of a free regime within the Party, the middle peasantry will not believe that revolutionary legality is really established.

The period of politically deceitful slogans is passed. Only an honest and conscientious Communist policy can save the proletarian dictatorship. The Sixteenth Congress of the Party takes on an exclusively serious importance. It is most likely, however, that the Centrist leadership will seek to make it the most insignificant Congress ever held. Even though the Congress is already on the threshold, no matter what the discussions are in the Party, we can have no illusions. The Party cannot permit such a contempt of its rights. Especially must it reject it at such a critical moment.

## The Demands of the Opposition

The whole world has seen the Centre-Right bureaucracy at work. The results are at hand. Every member of the Party sees them around him. We demand a free discussion in the Party and free elections to the Congress. In the discussions and the elections, every shade of Opposition

But the task did not consist of simply repeating in the declaration what was said in the theses, but to assist the Party, even a small part of it, to assimilate what was said in the theses—or at least a part of it. With the stifling of the C. P. S. U., it is very difficult to check what was the immediate repercussion of the first declaration in the ranks of the Party. It cannot, however, be doubted that the declaration of Rakovsky, which made a breach in the wall of lies and calumnies built up by the Stalinists, was one of the causes for the revival of the rabid struggle against the Left Opposition before the Congress. Still, we have another living verification of the question which interests us, outside of the U. S. S. R. Comrade Feroci, one of the leaders of the new Italian Opposition, has told in an article of the great impression produced by Rakovsky's declaration even on the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party, and certainly, upon its Left section especially. Thus, the declaration of Rakovsky not only did not bring anybody to capitulate, but on the contrary, served as one of the impulses to the formation of the new Italian Opposition.

The new declaration we publish now for the first time, draws the balance to the policy of the Left turn at the very moment of a new half-turn to the Right. All these circumstances are submitted in the document to a clear appreciation to which little can be added today. We consider it necessary to emphasize only two points.

## The Union of Peasant Poor

In the declaration, they mention that while preventing the creation of the Union of the Poor Peasantry, the Stalinist leadership nevertheless tolerates this organization in the Ukraine. It should merely be added that if the attempt by Stalin-Bucharin-Rykov-Kamenev and others in 1924-25, to suppress the organization of the poor Ukrainian peasantry did not succeed, it is solely thanks to the firm opposition of the revolutionary wing of the Ukrainian Party under the leadership of comrade Rakovsky.

The second point we wish to speak of here deals with the capitulators. The declaration establishes, with perfect justice and pitilessly, that these people have lost "any right at all to the confidence of the Party and the working class." In natural connection with this, the declaration repeats that no persecutions will prevent the Leninist Opposition from fulfilling its duty to the very end.

L. TROTSKY.

should participate which recognizes the principles of the united Party and the road of reform.

We demand the liberation of the incarcerated Oppositionists, and the withdrawal of the application of Article 58. We demand the recall of L. D. Trotsky from exile and his reinstatement into the Party.

We demand that the Central Committee publish the existing documents of the Opposition in the period of 1927-30, and also the articles by Lenin on the national question as well as his political testament. These demands are only preliminary. The question of Party and workers' democracy must be posed in all amplitude before the Congress itself.

Without Party and workers' democracy, all the corrections will inevitably be converted into deformations. Only the revolutionary control of the masses is in a position to keep the apparatus under its hand. We deem indispensable the reorganization of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission and the restitution to the Congress and the Party of the rights torn away from them formally and transferred to the C. C. and C. C. C.

We deem indispensable the suppression of the post of general secretary and to diminish the role of the Party secretary to the execution of technical functions, with the transference of the political functions to the Political Bureau as a whole.

We deem indispensable the changing of the present method of allocating work to the members of the Party.

We demand the complete reorganization of the Organizing Bureau, which is today the principal prop of the apparatus dictatorship.

We demand the extension to all the elective organs of the Party of the system existing at the elections of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission.

We demand a substantial reduction of the Party apparatus, as well as that of the trade unions, cooperatives, the state,—in order to liberate resources and to destine them for additional investment in the construction of Soviet and collective farms,

and for fundamental investment in industry.

We repeat our demand of October 4, 1929: the thorough adjustment of the five year plan, as to its internal parts and as to the needs of the working class—the revision of the collective agreements in the sense of an improvement of the material conditions of the working class, the scrupulous examination of the results of the uninterrupted working week considered as a temporary, exceptional measure, admissible only with the agreement of the workers, the establishment of a bond between the nominal wage and the increase of the budget, the reestablishment of the real activity of the trade unions.

The policy of the Party in the country: formal abolition of the complete collectivization, halting of the de-Kulakization in mass, and the expulsion of the Kulaks from the countryside, except in isolated cases provided for by law, but without bringing the already expelled Kulaks back to their former localities.

## The Poor Peasants' Unions

Exceptional attention by the state to the movements of the collectives, by giving them necessary financial and technical aid, creation of Unions of Poor Peasants. This measure is indispensable for creating a political base for the collective farms movement and as a political support both for loan policies and social culture in the country.\*

The question of settling the problem of providing the country with food products and agricultural raw materials, through consolidating the building of collectives, while conserving the rhythm of industrial development, is now put before the Party. It is an unquestionably heavy task, but it is converted into a practical, even technical task, if the political premises for its solution are created.

We propose no new program for the reestablishment of the old program tested in hard combats and in glorious victories, and of the tactical line of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

April 1930.

Christian Rakovsky.

V. Kossior.

N. Muralov.

\* In the meantime, the Centrist leadership, which does not permit Unions of Poor Peasants in a part of the territory of the U. S. S. R., is obliged to admit them in the Ukraine, and to put in their hands the work of collectivization. The Committees of Poor Peasants in the Ukraine were maintained because they knew how to defend themselves and did not permit the policy of liquidation of the years 1924-25 to go further than to transform them from organizations of a semi-compulsory type into organizations of a free type.

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BULLETIN of the RUSSIAN OPPOSITION

The latest issue of the official organ of the Russian Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition, published as a double number, has just been received. Some of the material contained in this highly interesting issue is as follows:

Success of Socialism and the Dangers of Adventurism — Declaration of comrade Rakovsky and Others—Statement of Rakovsky, Muralov and Others to the Central Committee of the Russian Party — Comrade Selin'tchenko in Stalinist Exile — A New Victim of Stalin (Comrade Kote Zinzadze) — Lessons of the Moscow Trial — What Next? — The Bloc of Right and Left — A Disorderly Retreat—L. Trotsky: On Thermidorianism Bonapartism — Notes of a Journalist — Letters from the U. S. S. R.— Problems of the International Opposition— Etc., etc., etc.

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