

# NOTES OF A JOURNALIST

## STALIN AND THE COMINTERN

In the course of his opposition struggle, Lominadze put into circulation one of his conversations with Stalin about the Comintern. "The C. I. in itself does not represent anything and lives only by the grace of our support." Stalin, as is the custom, denied this utterance. However, all those who know Stalin and his attitude toward the C. I. do not doubt for an instant that Lominadze is telling the truth.

By this, we do not want to say that Stalin's words correspond to reality. On the contrary, the C. I. lives regardless of the support of Stalin. The C. I. lives by force of the ideas on which it is based, by the force of October; finally, and primarily by force of the capitalist contradictions. In the past—and in the future, let us hope—these factors have been stronger than the bureaucratic financial noose which Stalin calls support.

But the "aphorism" which we have quoted above expresses better than anything else the real attitude of Stalin and Co. toward the C. I. and supplements perfectly the theory of socialism in one country.

In 1925, when the kulak course of the policy was in flower, Stalin did not at all feel ashamed to express his contempt for the C. I. and for the leaders of its different sections. When Stalin, with the consent of Zinoviev, proposed at the Political Bureau to pull Maslow out of the archives and to send him to Germany, Bucharin, who at that time was following Stalin and Zinoviev, but who was not taken into confidence about all the plots, objected: "Why Maslow? . . . You know this figure very well . . . It is impossible, etc. . . ." To which Stalin replied: "They have all been baptized with the same holy water. There are no revolutionaries among them. In general, Maslow is no worse than the others."

During a consultation concerning a certain concession, one of the members of the Political Bureau remarked: "To grant it for forty or for fifty years—makes no difference. We must assume that up to that time the revolution will not have left any trace of the concessionaries."—"The revolution?" Stalin rejoined. "Do you think the C. I. will accomplish it? Wait: It will not bring about a revolution in 90 years." Is it necessary to recall once more the contemptuous remarks of Stalin about the "émigrés", that is, about the Bolsheviks who had worked in the parties of the European proletariat.

Such was the general spirit of the Political Bureau. A haughty and contemptuous attitude toward the west-European Communists was a requirement of good form. "Do you really think that Purcell and Cook will make the revolution in England?" asked the Oppositionists. "And you perhaps think that your British Communists will make the revolution?" was Tomsky's retort.

The attitude toward the Communist parties of the East was still more contemptuous, if that is possible. Of the Chinese Communists only one thing was required: To keep quiet and not to disturb Tchang Kai Shek in the execution of his work.

It is not at all difficult to imagine what a savorious form this philosophy takes on in the mouth of Voroshilov who is disposed to all sorts of Chauvinism. In the sessions of the delegation of the Russian C. P. immediately before the plenum of the Executive Committee of the C. I. in 1926, Voroshilov "defended" Thaelmann with the competence that is so characteristic, almost in the following manner: "Where can they . . ."

(Continued from page 4)

and the production of the advanced capitalist countries, not only as a guide to the practical needs of exports and imports, but also as the only correct criterion in the question of "catching up with and outstripping."

8. To put an end to being guided in economy by the bureaucratic considerations of prestige. Not to gloss over realities, not to keep silent about the truth, not to deceive. Not to qualify as socialism the present transitional Soviet economy which in its level, is much closer to czarist-bourgeois economy than to advanced capitalism.

9. To abandon the false national and international perspective of an economic development which flows inevitably from the methodology of Lenin.

10. To finish once and for all with the catholic church dogma of "general" infallibility, disastrous in practise humiliating for a revolutionary party and profoundly stupid.

11. To revive the party by shattering the bureaucratic dictatorship of the apparatus.

12. To condemn Stalinism. To return to the theory of Marx and the revolutionary methodology of Lenin.

## By ALFA

find better ones? They haven't any revolutionary. Naturally, if we could give them our Uglanov, he would conduct their affairs in an entirely different manner. For them, Uglanov would be another Bebel". This phrase has had its history: Uglanov in the role of a Communist Bebel in Germany! At that time Voroshilov had not, apparently, foreseen that Uglanov would some day become simply a "pillar of the kulaks" and an "agent of wreckers". Besides, even at present Voroshilov himself does not doubt that the policy of 1925 was the best of all policies.

Thus we see that Lominadze has said nothing new. His testimony only bears witness to the fact that the intimate attitude of the leading summits towards the C. I. has not changed after all these years. And how could it change? The testimony of Lominadze becomes pale and absolutely superfluous in the face of the fact that the leadership of the international proletariat vanguard is at present entirely abandoned to . . . the Maulskys, the Kuusins and the Losovskys, that is, to the people who in the U. S. S. R. are not and cannot even be taken seriously.

No. The C. I. does not live with the support of the Stalinist bureaucracy, but regardless of it. The sooner it will liberate itself from this support, the sooner will it regenerate and raise itself to the level of its historic tasks.

## WHOSE PHONOGRAPH IS THIS?

A certain S. Gorsky, an ex-Oppositionist, repented last summer. We do not deny anyone the right to repent, or to smear the repentance with tears and some such other stuff over his own face. Nor are we inclined to object to the form that this repentance takes, for the laws of esthetics (as well as those of anti-esthetics) require the form to correspond to the content. But nevertheless, it would seem to us, there are certain limits before which even debasement multiplied by lightheadedness should stop. It appears that S. Gorsky succeeded in overstepping all these limits. Of course it is not a question of "Trotsky scaring people with his impossible rhythms of industrialization", nor of the fact that Gorsky, on this subject, identifies Trotsky with Groman, Groman—with the wreckers. Here Gorsky still remains within the confines of the official ritual. It is only after he has gone through the practise of it to the very end, that Gorsky introduces a distinctly personal note into his repentance, by dragging in the Dnieprostroy affair [the hydro-electric construction on the Dnieper—Ed.] against which Trotsky fought and which Stalin rescued. Gorsky ends his article with the following words: "Those who considered the Dnieprostroy as a 'phonograph', are dancing on their own political tomb. Unfortunately, to the tune of their music. I myself once danced.—S. Gorsky". *Za Industrializatsiu*, No. 2544.)

What is this? It is unbelievable! One doubts one's own eyes. In 1925-1926 Trotsky was the chairman of the governmental commission of the Dnieprostroy.

For this reason, in part, and especially because at that time there still reigned in the summits of the party the idea of the "declining curve" of industrialization, all the members of the Political Bureau were unanimously opposed to the hydro-electric station on the Dnieper. At the plenum of the Central Committee in April 1927, in his programmatic speech on economy directed against the "super-industrialist" Trotsky, Stalin declared: "For us to construct the Dnieper station is the same thing as for a Mujik to buy a phonograph instead of a cow." The debates were stenographed and printed as all the minutes of the Plenums are—in the printing house of the Central Committee. Stalin's phrase about the phonograph created a certain sensation and was often repeated in the speeches and documents of the Opposition. This phrase ended up by becoming a by-word. But since S. Gorsky has decided to repent completely, without omitting anything, he attributes (of his own accord or under instructions from Yaroslavsky?) the economic philosophy of Stalin, including the immortal formula to . . . Trotsky.

However, what has become of it? Those who consider the Dnieprostroy as a "phonograph" are dancing on their own political tomb." On their own political tomb! But, it was Stalin who considered the Dnieprostroy a phonograph. Then, who is dancing on his own tomb? Say what you will, the repentance of Gorsky sounds dubious. Is it sincere? And, in general, is this really repentance? Isn't there something back of his mind? Isn't Gorsky trying to discredit Stalin in the language of Aesop? And why does the editor, Boguchevsky, stand by and

look on, Boguchevsky, who has seen things! And what about Yaroslavsky? Why doesn't he put two and two together? And, in general, what are we headed for?

## WHAT IS HAPPENED IN THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY?

The Pravda of December 25, 1930 tells us: "In the fall of 1930, the Chinese Communist party numbered 200,000 members. The party has uprooted the remnants of the ideas of Tchen Du Hsieu and has destroyed Trotskyism ideologically (!)

"However the complicated circumstances of struggle have lately given rise to certain hesitations of a 'leftist' semi-Trotskyist character inside the party. A whole series of leading workers, who believe that a revolutionary situation has matured on an international scale, have posed the question of beginning the immediate seizure of power on a full national plane, ignoring the necessity of consolidating the Soviet power in the regions already occupied by the Red Army. Proceeding from such an estimation, they consider it possible to cease the economic struggle of the proletariat and to liquidate the revolutionary unions."

These lines give an idea of the chaos that reigns in the minds of the leading functionaries of the Chinese party. They have destroyed Trotskyism "ideologically"—that goes without saying—but immediately after this destruction, hesitations of a "semi-Trotskyist nature" rise anew. Such things have happened time and again. These hesitations have arisen even among "a number of leading comrades" That has also happened before.

But what does these new semi-Trotskyist hesitations consist of? They manifest themselves, first of all, in the demand "to begin immediately the struggle for power on the whole international scale". But the Left Opposition has demanded the direct opposite since the fall of 1927: to withdraw the slogan of armed insurrection as a slogan for the moment. Even today our Chinese comrades put on the order of the day, not the armed uprising, but the mass mobilization around the social demands of the proletariat and the peasantry, as well as the slogans of revolutionary democracy, not adventurist experiments in the countryside, but the building up of the trade unions and of the party! If the Pravda is not calumniating (which is very likely) if the new opposition really demands "to cease the economic struggle of the proletariat and to liquidate the trade unions", then this is directly opposed to the proposals of the Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists).

We read further on that the new opposition "ignores the necessity of consolidating the Soviet power"; it demands, so to speak, a revolt on a national plane. Here too, there is nothing in common with the position of the Bolshevik-Leninists. If we regard the Chinese "Red Army" as the weapon of proletarian uprising, then the Chinese Communists must be guided by the general law of every revolutionary uprising. It must take the offensive, extend its territory, conquer the strategic centers of the country. Without this, every revolutionary uprising is hopeless. To mark time, to remain on the defensive instead of the offensive spells defeat for the uprising. In this sense, the new opposition, if its point of view has been correctly reproduced, is far more consequent than the Stalinites, who believe that the "Soviet power" in the countryside can be maintained for years or that the Soviet power can be transported from one end of the country to another in the baggage-train of the partisan detachments, labeled "Red Army". But neither the first point of view nor the second resemble our own. Both flow from a wrong point of departure. They renounce the class theory of Soviet power. They dissolve the revolution into provincial peasant revolts, linking up with them, in an adventurist manner, the entire fate of the Chinese C. P.

What does the latter represent? Quite unexpectedly we learn from this article that "the C. P. numbered in the fall of 1930 about 200,000 members". This figure is given without any explanation. However, last year, the Chinese C. P. numbered only about 6 to 7,000 members. If this gigantic growth of the party during the last year is an actual fact, then this should be a symptom of a radical change in the situation, in favor of the revolution. 200,000 members! If, in reality, the party were to number 50, 40, or even 20,000 workers, after it had experienced the second Chinese revolution and absorbed its lessons, we would say: This is a powerful force, and invincible; with such cadres we can remodel all of China. But we would ask at the same time, are these 20,000 workers members of the trade unions? What kind of work are they carrying on within them? Is their influence growing? Are they linking up the or-

ganizations with the masses of the unorganized and with the rural periphery? And under what slogans?

But the point is that the leadership of the C. I. is hiding something from the proletarian vanguard. We can be certain, that the lion's share of these 200,000—let us say from 90 to 95 percent.—come from regions where the detachments of the "Red Army" carry on their activity. It suffices only to hold before one's view the political psychology of the peasant detachments, and the conditions under which they carry on their activity, to have a clear political picture: the partisans, we can readily imagine, enroll almost to a man in the party, and after them, enter the peasants in the regions occupied by the Reds. The Chinese party, as well as the "Red Army" and the "Soviet power" have abandoned the proletarian rails and are heading toward rural districts and the countryside.

In seeking an issue from the impasse, the new Chinese opposition advances as we have heard, the slogan of proletarian uprising on a national plane. Evidently that would be the best issue if the prerequisites for it were to exist. But they do not exist today. What, then, can be done? We must put forward the slogans of the present inter-revolutionary period, the length of which no one can gauge in advance. These are the slogans of the democratic revolution: Land to the peasants, the Eight-Hour day, the independence of China, the right of national self-determination for all peoples and finally, the Constituent Assembly. Under these slogans, the provincial peasant uprisings of the partisan detachments will break away their provincial position and be fused with the general national movement linking up their own fate with it. The C. P. will rise not as the technical aid of the Chinese peasants, but as the political guide of the working class of the entire country. There is no other road!

## Revolution in Spain

(Continued from page 1)

rights to private property which may have been confiscated." But it is precisely these "rights" that must be destroyed if the proletariat is to live. The industries, the railroads and the banks must be put under the control of the proletariat; the land must be confiscated and given to the peasants; the strangulating hand of the Catholic clergy must be torn from the throats of the people; the right to national self-determination for the Catalonians and Basques must be guaranteed in reality and not in words; feudalism and clerical reaction and capitalist exploitation must be burned out—if the revolution is to mean the liberation of the masses and not the perpetuation of class rule. But the bourgeoisie is utterly incapable of taking these steps, which means its own destruction. The task falls to the only class capable of taking them: the revolutionary proletariat.

The bourgeoisie leads because the proletariat has as yet no leadership. The years of Stalinist reaction and incapacity have left deep scars on Spanish Communism, reducing it to impotence. It can be revived and become equal to its tasks. Here the Left Opposition has an enormous mission. That our Spanish comrades have already furnished many prisoners to the Spanish reaction attests their activity and devotion. That the bourgeois press is even now reporting the appearance in Barcelona and elsewhere of "revolutionary literature with pictures of Lenin and Trotsky" is another harbinger of coming successes. Feeble as Communism is in Spain today, it can grow with phenomenal rapidity out of a soil enriched by the revolutionary fervor of the masses. In the white heat of the revolutionary struggles that are on the order of the day, the troops of the real revolution can be tempered, hardened and fitted for the magnificent task that must be performed—which only they can perform.

The Spanish bourgeoisie is in power today only because the proletariat as a class is not yet strong and conscious enough to take power itself and hold it. Tomorrow may bring a new relationship of forces in Spain. The last word has not yet been spoken. —S-n.

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of the Militant will contain a detailed exposition of the Left Opposition standpoint on the lessons of the recent dress strike conducted by the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union and proposals on the course which the militants in the needle trades must pursue in the best interests of the advancement of our movement. The liquidationist panic which the Lovestone Right wing is seeking to sew especially after the dress strike, and the bankruptcy of the official party leadership, make an analysis of the situation all the more necessary for the Left wing. Watch for the next issue.