

# Problems of the Soviet Regime

## 3. Official Explanation of Bureaucratic Terror

"Some comrades," Stalin said at the January Plenum of the C. C., "understood the thesis on liquidation of classes, creation of a classless society and withering away of the state as justification for laxity(?) and placidity(?). Justification for the counter-revolutionary theory of the slow extinguishing of the class struggle and weakening of state power." Vagueness of expression serves Stalin in this case, as in so many others, to cover up the logical gaps. A programmatic "thesis" on the liquidation of classes in the future need not mean as yet, it is understood, the extinguishing of the class struggle in the present. But it is not a question of a theoretical thesis but of an officially proclaimed fact of the liquidation of classes. Stalin's sophism consists in the fact that he times the idea of the inevitable strengthening of state power in the transitional epoch between capitalism and socialism, an idea which, following Marx, Lenin advanced for the explanation of the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship in general, to a definite period of the dictatorship, after an allegedly already accomplished liquidation of all capitalist classes.

To explain the necessity for the further strengthening of the bureaucratic machine, Stalin said at the same plenum: "The Kulaks are routed as a class but not finished off." If we should accept this formula, it would seem that to finish the routed Kulaks off, a more concentrated dictatorship is necessary in the literal expression of Stalin—"to finish off the remnants of the dying classes." The finished expression is, in its way, given to this paradox of bureaucratism by Molotov, who has, in general, a fatal inclination to develop the idea of Stalin to completion. "In spite of the fact," said he at the January Plenum, "that the forces of the remnants of the bourgeois classes of our country melt, their resistance, anger and fury grow, knowing no bounds." The forces melt, but the fury grows! Molotov does not suspect, it seems, that the dictatorship is needed against force and not against fury: fury which is not armed by force ceases to be dangerous.

### Class Enemy Powerless—Why the Repression?

"It cannot be said," Stalin admits on his part, "that these former people could change anything in the present situation of the USSR by their damaging and thieving machinations. They are too weak and impotent to resist the measures of the Soviet power." It seems clear that if all that is left from these former classes are "former people", if they are too weak "to do anything" to change the situation in the USSR—that from this should have followed both the extinguishing of the class struggle and the easing of the regime. No, Stalin argues: "the former people can play us some tricks." But revolutionary dictatorship is needed not against impotent tricks but against the danger of capitalist restoration. If, for the struggle with powerful class enemies, it was necessary to put into use the steel-clad fists, against "tricks" of former people the little finger will do.

But here Stalin introduces still another element. The dying remnants of the routed classes "appeal to the backward strata of the population and mobilize them against the Soviet power". . . But have the backward strata grown in the period of the first five year plan? It would seem, not. Does it mean that their attitude toward the state changed for the worse? That would mean that the "maximum strengthening of state power" (more correctly repressions) is necessary for the struggle against the growing discontent of the masses. Stalin adds: "through the mobilization of the backward strata of the population, 'fragments' of counter-revolutionary opposition elements from the Trotskyites and Right wingers may again stir and come to life." Such is the final argument: since the fragments (only fragments!) may stir (so far they only may) . . . the greatest concentration of the dictatorship is necessary.

Entangled hopelessly in the "fragments" of his own ideas, Stalin unexpectedly adds: "Of course, we have no fear of that." Then why be frightened and frightened others, if "we have no fear of that." And why introduce a regime of terror against the party and the proletariat if it is only a matter of impotent fragments incapable of "changing anything in the USSR"? All this piling up of confusion, leading to pure nonsense is a consequence of the inability to tell the truth. In reality, Stalin-Molotov should have said: due to the growing discontent of the masses and an ever stronger gravitation of the workers to the Left Opposition, the intensification of repressions is necessary for the defense of the privileged positions of the bureaucracy. Then everything would easily fall into place.

## 4. The Withering Away of Money and the Withering Away of the State

The knot of contradictions in which the theory and practice of bureaucratic centrism got itself hopelessly entangled will become clear to us from a new side when we draw an analogy between the role of money and the role of the state in the transitional epoch. Money, just as the state, represents a direct heritage of capitalism: it must disappear but it cannot be abolished by decree, it withers

## (The Degeneration of Theory and the Theory of Degeneration)

away. Different functions of money, as those of the state, expire by different deaths. As a means of private accumulation, usury, exploitation—money expires parallel with the liquidation of classes. As a means of exchange, standard of measurement of labor value, regulator of the social division of labor, money is gradually dissolved in the planned organization of social economy, it finally becomes an accounting slip, a check for a certain portion of social goods for the gratification of productive and personal wants.

The parallelism of both processes of withering away, that of money and that of the state, is not accidental; they have the same social roots. The state remains a state so long as it has to regulate the relations between various classes and strata, each of which draws up its accounts, endeavoring to show a profit. The final replacement of money as a standard of value by the statistical registration of live productive forces, equipment, raw materials and needs will be possible only at the stage when social wealth will free all the members of society from the necessity of competing with each other for the size of the dinner-pail.

This stage is far off yet. The role of money in Soviet economy is not only not completed but in a certain sense, is only about to be developed to completion. The transition period, in its entirety, means not the curtailment of the turnover of goods, but on the contrary, an extreme expansion thereof. All branches of economy are transformed, are growing and must determine their relation to each other qualitatively and quantitatively. Many products, which under capitalism are accessible only to the few, must be produced in immeasurably greater quantities. The liquidation of the peasant economy, with its internal consumption, the closed family economy means the transition to the field of social

## The Meaning of the Farm Revolts

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tion, Australia,—these characterized American agriculture to a large extent in the so-called "good" years, and led to devastating intensification of the agrarian crisis since the cyclical crisis began in 1929.

### Perspectives for Agriculture

There are at least two probable perspectives: the mechanization and concentration of the farm into larger units, and the degradation of the farmer into a peasant, thru similar average holdings (the average for the whole United States today is 50 acres or 20 hectares per farm), longer hours, harder work, smaller returns, heavier indebtedness. Capitalism in industry has produced both the Ford plant and the sweatshop; on the farm, it is tending toward both the "Giant" and the small holdings.

The significance of the recent revolts is that to a limited extent and in certain localities, the first steps to the collaboration of the worker and the farmer in open militant struggle against the parasitic banker have been taken. The farmer has hitherto put forward class demands such as inflation, which have tended to separate his class interests from those of the worker. Inflation relieves the burden of debt of the agrarian bourgeoisie, but also raises the cost of living for the worker and so reduces his real wages.

The official party, while rejecting inflation, has put forward a slogan, "Higher prices for the farmer, lower prices for the worker,"

## (Money) turnover of all that productive energy which is now being used up within the limits of the village and the walls of a private dwelling.

### Money Socialized Under Planned Economy

Taking complete stock of all the productive forces of society, the social state must know how to apportion and use them in a manner most advantageous for society. Money as the means of economic accounting evolved by capitalism is not thrown aside but socialized. Socialist construction is unthinkable without the inclusion, in the planned system, of the personal interest of the producer and consumer. And this interest can actively manifest itself only when it has at its disposal a trustful and flexible weapon: a stable monetary system. Increase in the productivity of labor and improvement in the quality of goods, in particular, are absolutely unattainable without an exact measuring instrument which penetrates freely into all the pores of economy, that is, without a stable monetary unit.

If capitalist economy which reached its unstable proportions with the aid of wasteful fluctuations of the conjuncture, needs a stable monetary system, the more so is such a system necessary for the preparation, make-up and regulation of planned economy. It is insufficient to build new enterprises; an economic system must familiarize itself with them. This means testing in practice, adapting and selecting. The mass, nationwide check-up of productivity can mean nothing else but a test by means of the rouble. To erect a plan of economy on a slipping valuta is the same as to make a blue print of a machine with a loose compass and a bent ruler. This is exactly what is taking place. The inflation of the Chernovetz is one of the most pernicious consequences and also instruments of the bureaucratic disorganization of Soviet economy.

### The Official Theory of Inflation

The official theory of inflation stands at the same level as the official theory of the dictatorship analyzed above. "The stability of Soviet valuta," said Stalin at the January Plenum, "is guaranteed

which in effect attempts to win the support of the farmers on the same basis as inflation (by raising prices of farm products and so reducing the burden of debt). Under such a slogan, the farmer can gain, but the worker will lose, unless genuine steps toward workers' control of production are taken.

The joint action of workers and farmers in resisting the foreclosure of mortgages on farm points to an immediate tactical line of militant class struggle. Joint strike committees of workers and farmers, joint committees for the regulation of prices and production, can assume great importance if they are oriented clearly toward a program of workers' control of production. At the same time, the steady flow of revolutionary agitation and propaganda must be kept up, to strip away the democratic and bourgeois illusions of the farmer, and show him that the capitalist system has nothing to offer him, the life of an exploited tractor chauffeur on a huge ranch, or that of a down-trodden, super-exploited peasant. Only in a workers' state developing toward socialist society can there be hope for the farmer, and his basic task is to help the workers' revolutionary party to create this essential condition for the taking over of power and the construction of the workers' government in the present United States of America.

— B. J. FIELD

## Nazis, Poles Plot War

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has laid it open to decay from within by the adventurist reeling of bureaucratic centrism.

The fortress of the world revolution is in danger. By the perfidy of non-aggression pacts, by the trust it gives to the conflicts of world imperialism, Stalinism is only throwing dust into the eyes of the workers. It is only undermining the workers' fatherland and the cause of world revolution.

If workers' Russia is to live, Stalinism must go. If the land of the Soviets is to light the way for world revolution, the reactionary theory of socialism in one country must be thrown overboard.

Back to the line of Marx and Lenin—back to the Marxist perspective of the permanent revolution! Return the exiled Bolshevik-Leninists, Trotsky, Rakovsky and their comrades, to the post of struggle which they held in the victorious October! That is the command of the hour.

Every Communist worker who sees the danger; to whom the Four Power Peace Pacts and the Hitler-Pilsudski plots reveal it; who is not fooled by the capitalist non-aggression pacts and the peace talk, must do his duty.

Demand the reinstatement of the International Left Opposition into the Communist International! Demand the return of Trotsky and Rakovsky! That is the way to bring new vigor, a new source of strength to the proletarian army, which is sorely in need of it.

Act while there is still time to act!

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## On the Morgan Inquiry

(Continued from page 1)

gation, show that they were quite ready to "reciprocate." And they have! A mere glance at the banking holiday proclaimed by Woodin and the "diplomacy" of Norman H. Davis, ambassador at large for the U. S. is proof sufficient that J. P. does not scatter his money idly. Every dollar given to a government official brings results!

The inquiry in Washington, despite the facts brought to light, is a circus of such dimensions as would make the great showman, Barnum, look like a miserable piker. The avowed purpose of the investigation is to reform the banking laws so that the "little fellow" will have a chance. In this connection it is interesting to note that the banking bill which is to do that has been proposed and drafted by the most ardent proponent of Morgan in the investigation, Senator Carter Glass, Virginia millionaire newspaper publisher.

Like the Pujol investigation under the "New Freedom" of Wilson the Pecora Inquiry of the "New Deal" is a grand stage to divert the attention of the discontented away from struggle, give them confidence in the administration, only in reality to fasten the strange hold of finance capital upon the millions of masses.

— G. C.

"Since Lenin Died"

Comrades who can turn in extra copies of *Since Lenin Died* by Max Eastman, are asked to do so. They will be refunded the original cost price.

— L. TROTSKY

# Unemployment & Political Parties

## (Continued from page 1)

the united front unemployed movement. Other issues exist, but unless this question is given a clear answer, the movement of the unemployed can easily disintegrate and founder. Under the best of conditions, an unemployed movement is the most difficult of all movements to hold together because of the natural looseness of organization, state of employment, etc., that conditions its existence.

The first question that must be answered is the political question: the matter of organic participation of the political parties and groups of the working class in the united front movement of the unemployed.

At the national conference of unemployed movement groups in Chicago and at local conferences in New York, representatives of the Lovestone group came out for non-participation organizationally of the political parties or groups in the unemployed movement. In essence, their position was that the interests of the unemployed can best be served if the united front is made up organizationally only of the various organizations of the unemployed: Unemployed Councils, Association of the Unemployed, Workers Leagues, etc. The political parties and groups must be kept out and also, even labor unions should be represented only fraternally in the united front.

But the mere posing of the issue by the Lovestone Right Wing is sufficient reason for taking up the matter of relations of political forces to the unemployed, or for that matter of any other movement of labor. It has to be said plainly that Lovestone proposal, however intended, is an outright reactionary one, completely in line with the proposals and objectives of the A. F. of L. and other fakery in the labor movement.

This is a politically functioning age, as never before. Every group, one could almost say each individual, whether stupidly or intelligently, solves its problem in terms of class and government—that is, class interest and class power. The political question enters, and rightly so, into every step and action of the workers. It has been

## I.L.D. District Workers Meet

New York—On Sunday, May 21, a district meeting of the functionaries of the I.L.D. took place at Irving Plaza. The meeting had been called to discuss the new turn in I.L.D. policy. A turn in the policy of an organization is a very serious and important step and should arouse the interest and response of at least the leading members of the organization. However out of the 300 functionaries (branch executive members, section representatives, etc.) of the district, there were only about 75 to 100 present at this meeting and even this small number dwindled to about 40 after the recess.

This lack of response is merely a reflection of the condition of the I.L.D., which can best be described as stagnation. This fact is so glaringly obvious that it has not escaped the attention of even the top leadership, which is so busily engaged in faction fights for leadership, constantly changing its form of organization so as to either eliminate certain individuals, or secure vantage points for others.

And what better method could there be to explain away this lethargy among the membership than by an orgy of self-criticism? The self criticism was carried on in the best Stalinist, that is confusionist, manner. John Ballam, District Organizer, in his first report criticized the membership for its low political level, criticized the leadership because it does not function collectively. He admitted that the I.L.D. had put legal defense first and mass pressure second—an outright admission of the failure of the I.L.D. to accomplish that for which it was created. "All these shortcomings," he said, "must be remedied and the I.L.D. must become a mass organization and not a Legal Aid Society and a collection agency."

Why is the political level of the membership been so low? Isn't it because it has been miseducated along Stalinist lines? Why is there no collective leadership in the I.L.D.? Isn't it because the bureaucratic regime in the I.L.D. nurtures clique leadership in which appointments and dismissals "from above" play a large part?

Comrade Ballam should put the blame squarely where it belongs—on the line of the third period sectarianism—which the membership has been carrying out only too faithfully.

The comrade from the Left Opposition speaking in the discussion, pointed out that Ballam had failed completely to mention work within the Right wing unions; that it was due to the absence of a Left wing within the reformist unions, which could exert pressure, that the leaders of these unions have been able to sabotage the Mooney, Scottsboro and other struggles which the Left wing is carrying on. We must break down the wall between ourselves and the Right wing workers and show them that the I.L.D. is ready to defend any worker regardless of his political and trade union affiliation. Every worker in the I.L.D. issues and work from within both for individual membership and for collective affiliation of his union to the I.L.D. It is only in this manner that the I.L.D. can win back the confidence and prestige which it once enjoyed and become a really functioning organization.

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and is the aim of all capitalist politicians, and their lieutenants in the ranks of labor—the Greens, Weils, Levises, etc.—to keep the working class out of politics, that is, working class politics and action.

These frauds and deceivers have said to the workers: look only to your bread and butter, the economic side; and the not very far-seeing IWW and syndicalist echo the admonitions of the bourgeois liberal and working class opportunists to evade or keep away from the decisive, the political question.

### The Communist Position

Every movement of the working class is bound to have impressed upon it a political ideology. That outlook is determined essentially by the general conditions and outlook prevailing within society; within the labor movement itself, it is largely determined by the political force that most intelligently and consciously makes its class outlook and program felt upon the workers.

Communists take it for granted that every movement of the workers must be penetrated and fractions organized therein: trade unions, cooperatives, fraternal organizations, etc. Why exempt the organizations of the unemployed?

What justification or reason can there be for the formal exclusion of the forces that really determine, for good or bad, the functioning and outcome, within limits of the objective situation, of the united front of the unemployed movement?

Who is being fooled, what is being gained by the exclusion of the intelligence, the political force, the class expression of any movement? Nobody; least of all, the unemployed. Not maneuvers, but plain, direct speech and direction to the unemployed, on the immediate and ultimate class solution of unemployment is the way to advance the cause of the workers. Direct participation of the Communist party, the Communist League of America (Opposition), the socialist party, etc., is a test for all the tendencies within the labor movement.

Moreover, this can and must be done while maintaining the discipline of action of the united front. A united front movement is organized to achieve certain immediate objectives. In the case of Mooney and Billings and in the case of the Scottsboro defendants, to free the Scottsboro boys; and likewise, with the objects of each united front movement that is built.

### Stalinist Errors

And certainly in the case of the unemployed, of far greater significance than the Mooney issue, the possibilities for educating and winning the workers to a class viewpoint are at hand. Nothing is to be gained in such instances by "hiding the face" of the movement. The official Communist party (Stalinists) has gone in for that also a great deal lately, and in each instance the Stalinists have been wrong. Their outstanding error and crime is their formal ejection from the leadership of the struggle against imperialist war and for the defense of the Soviet Union. What needs to be remembered is: the political party joins the unemployed United Front. The Unemployed Council or group does not join the party.

The unemployed movements will assert themselves politically. Witness Seattle and other places. The point is, shall the opportunists and fakery take over the political and class direction of the unemployed? This must not be.

The next logical step of those who would exclude the political parties from direct organizational part in the unemployed united front is to exclude the trade and labor unions. And the Lovestone group proposes exactly this!

Yet the failure of the labor unions to rally behind a united front of the unemployed is a basic cause of the movement's weakness today. The unions and the unemployed must be linked organizationally for the objectives of the united front. Moreover, such a correct relation within the united front should be an excellent means for organizing the unorganized unemployed, which means the overwhelming bulk, into the unions. An unemployed worker is no less a worker because he is unemployed, and there is no less, but more need to organize him into a labor union in his interest as well as in the interest of the employed worker to preserve and better working conditions.

Lastly, from a fundamental view, why do the Communists bring all possible support on behalf of the unemployed? Because we must develop, in whatever way is permitted, their political, their class consciousness. Otherwise, the actions and aims of the unemployed will prove valueless in a lasting sense. The class question must be raised, even as in the trade unions, or the really worth-while and positive side of the unemployed movement will be dissipated and disappear, and hard work will have gone to naught.

We have to develop class conscious and revolutionary workers in the unemployed movement, while at the same time working militantly to achieve the immediate demands of the united front. All elements can try their hand at the task. But the Communist is the historical instrument for that task, functioning through his party or group. This is the standpoint of the Left Opposition.

— F.

— MARTIN ABERN

## The Reactionary Character of the Lovestone Policy Among the Jobless

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