

The Cuban Situation After Grau

Grau's government has crashed, and with it all the "groups" and "sectors" that chattered its shouting for the four hectic months. In spite of its war apparatus, in spite of its menacing gestures, in spite of its appeals for "Law and Justice," it was displaced from power without a serious attempt at resistance on its part.

A simple diplomatic maneuver by Caffery with Batista's avowed complicity was sufficient to sweep out, like a little heap of refuse, the Government of the "True Revolution." All the demagogic adulation of the people, all its decrees for the "nationalization of labor," all of its criminal legislation dealing with the famous 80 per cent move, was of no use to Grau's government. Upon the first threat of a change, the groups directed by Brangier and the "National Reconquest" mob, the loud-mouthed legion of professional "Cubanists," which, backed by the armed forces, made a practice of attacking workers' centers, decamped leaving to its fate the "authentic revolutionists." And the jumpen proletariat, always ready to back new masters, is again going thru the contortions ordered by the old politicians of the bourgeois parties.

The Petty Bourgeois Farce

The first act of the petty bourgeois farce is ended. As the curtain falls, new political experiments appear before us. There are Menocallists, clever at all sorts of tricks and ready for all crimes, old Machadistas, emaculated nationalists,—in short, the entire assortment of political dabblers, who are now repeating the maneuvers they tried in the days of Cespedes, who are now walking arm in arm with Caffery as they did yesterday with Welles. At their head is old Colonel Mendieta, who bends his back loyally in the service of Yankee finance in the name of "peace and friendship." Behind these puppets is the omnipresent American ambassador and Batista with his iron hand, utilizing the U. S. ambassador for the imposition of his designs on the country. Camp Columbia rules today more effectively than in Grau's days. Ulsiceno is in the Palace; Colonel Mendieta reigns but does not govern.

The liquidation of the Grau government is complete. It is our task now to draw up a balance sheet for the Cuban proletariat, indicating the lessons to be drawn from the tragic experience with the petty bourgeois rulers. These lessons will be of value in future battles.

Position of the Bolshevik-Leninists

From the very first days of September, we Bolshevik-Leninists said that the insurrection of September 4 had a profound revolutionary content. The very technique employed, bringing the intervention of the soldiers and classes, and the demagogic program flaunted by the petty bourgeois of the Junta of Five obliged the government to certain measures that might have made possible the broadening out of the revolutionary movement. We affirmed that the hegemonic role of the petty bourgeoisie led the government to an indecisive policy of zigzags. The ascendant march of the Revolution, the formidable strike struggles of the proletariat forced the Government to aggressive acts against the bourgeois and imperialists. This did not exclude, as we said a hundred times, repression against the proletariat, and even barbarous acts, against which we should always fight.

The correct position of the vanguard of the working class hinges on an understanding of a situation. The tactics followed had to be conditioned by living reality, and had to follow the ascendant rhythm of the revolution.

The Fight for Revolutionary Juntas

To ardently continue the work of regrouping the proletariat, to exact from the petty bourgeois Government the fulfillment of its own demagogic program (Revolutionary tribunals, the distribution of land, the Constituent Assembly, etc.); to fight for the constitution of Revolutionary Juntas, as a step to the organization of Soviets, and at the same time carry on intensive work among the masses to prepare the latter for defense against the aggression of the Government, such were the tasks set for itself by the Bolshevik-Leninist Party.

We continued to maintain that such tactics would maintain the movement on the upgrade, and as a result the Government would soon pass from words to compromising acts. The day would come when the cowardly petty bourgeois would have to turn against the masses. The entire effectiveness of our tactics lay in that we insisted on making use of this period to give the workers the force necessary for further advance.

But stupidity and the inability to understand is characteristic of Stalinism. Devoid of any critical judgment of reality, they launched the slogan of Soviets as soon as the

DeCespedes government fell. They described against the "murderous Grau-Batista-Carbo government" describing it as a "bourgeois-feudal landowners-imperialist block." And then they called for the insurrection. The official Communist Party, taking a schematic and sectarian stand, led the proletariat to massacre, and caused it to lose confidence in its own revolutionary capacity. The 29th of September was the culmination of that political imbecility. The day of Mella's burial was decided on as the day of the insurrection, and then the army, which had already begun to fraternize with the workers, massacred the latter in the streets of Havana.

C. P. Loses Its Bearings

Then the Party, losing all its bearings, launched the call for a general strike. This would have led to the most complete rout of the workers if the Labor Federation of Havana, foreseeing the disaster, had not then shown the way. The Bolshevik-Leninists succeeded in having the workers return to their positions, and this is the reason why the present period of struggle is not closed.

But this was not sufficient to heal the wound made by the adventurers. The disorder provoked in the proletarian ranks enabled the Government to stop short the workers' offensive. The sectarian adventures of the Stalinists explain in part the harm produced by the 50 per cent law and other decrees of fascist nature. The weakness of the proletariat in opposing such decrees, and the cowardice of the official party are results of the advent of September 29th.

The Duty of the Vanguard

Therefore the displacement of the Grau government by a rightist block, manufactured by Caffery finds the proletariat in a defensive attitude. It is the duty of the revolutionary vanguard to take careful cognizance of this fact: The immediate task of the day is a fight without quarter against the fascist laws and in defense of the conquests won such as the eight-hour day in all industries. In these battles, which will assume gigantic proportions in the sugar mills, it is possible to build more firm resistance for the beginning of greater struggles by the union organizations. A realistic acquaintance with our past acts and methods are essential in guiding our future revolutionary activity.

Translated from "Rayo," organ of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of Cuba.

LEON TROTSKY A Centrist Attack on Marxism

Dear Comrade Sneevliet:

I was much interested in the theoretical article of Comrade de Kadt ("A few Remarks on the Program of the New International") as it represents a very important theoretical avowal of one of the leaders of the O.S.P. (Independent Socialist Party of Holland—ed.), I thought at first of waiting for the completion of this article in the "De Nieuwe Weg." But as I note this article still remains unfinished. But even what has appeared suffices. We know that centrism always holds back with its strength from entering the field of "gray theory" precisely because it does not want to reveal itself clearly. De Kadt found himself impelled by the whole situation to take a stand on the programmatic problems of the New International, and this step of his can be regarded as nothing short of ominous.

In this letter I wish to touch on only a few points which, though lying in different planes, are equally characteristic of centrist thinking.

A "Non-Orthodox Point of View"

"It is not our task," de Kadt writes, "already to present today the formulations which we consider necessary. The aim of these remarks is to establish in advance our right (!) to defend a non-orthodox point of view in the coming programmatic discussion." Here it is a question—is it not?—of working out the fundamental principles of the New International. It would be difficult to conceive in this epoch of a more important document. Under the circumstances what should be the most urgent, immediate, deepest need of every Marxian revolutionist? At the least, the formulation of the most important observations, generalizations, statements and slogans which should be incorporated in the program precisely because it concerns the vital matter of giving the uprooted, disoriented, disappointed, groping workers the answer to the burning questions of our period. At least so the question appears to us, "orthodox" Marxists.

Not so, however, to de Kadt. He approaches the problem in a purely individualistic, subjective, dilettante fashion. For him it is not a question of formulating definite ideas, but of reserving the "right" to present a "non-orthodox" point of view in the future. The question of program is however not a question of right. What needs to be presented is the point of view

and not the right to the point of view. Nobody in the working class world is particularly concerned about whether anybody has the "right" to bring to light at some later day a non-orthodox point of view. What one wants to know is the point of view itself so as to test its real content. But the secret lies in the fact that the centrist has in general no definite, clear-cut, well-thought-out point of view. Therefore, he remains content with the right . . . to have no point of view.

The Class Theory of Society

Immediately following the above words of de Kadt, the latter continues as follows: "To give an example: must we continue to speak of the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' when in reality the dictatorship can be exercised only through the socialist portion of the proletariat and the non-proletarian elements that are devoted to socialism? In reality we have to deal with a 'socialist dictatorship,' a dictatorship exercised through socialists for socialism." Well said indeed: "to give an example!" The critic does not notice at all that by his "example" he attempts to sweep away, in passing as it were, the whole structure of Marxism. For here it is not a question of the name dictatorship of the proletariat but of the essence of the class theory of society. Marx who at any rate was not satisfied with the mere right to ideas but had many a good one, considered the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat as precisely his most important contribution to the science of society.

Back in 1852 Marx stated to Weydemeyer that the class theory of society had been discovered and formulated long before him by bourgeois scientists, that he—Marx—applied this theory to the further development of capitalist society, carrying it to its final conclusion, that is to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin wrote his book ("State and Revolution") in which he clarified this fundamental Marxian tenet and freed it from the "non-orthodox" revisionist fog of Kautsky, Otto Bauer, etc.

Now comes de Kadt with his "right to a point of view" and makes plain to us "for instance" on the dictatorship of the proletariat: "Nothing of this sort exists at all," since in reality "the dictatorship is realized only through the socialist portion of the proletariat" and what is more, non-proletarians participate in it too. In other words, it is not a matter of the dictatorship of a class, but of a rule of a like-minded group, a gathering of people around the idea of socialism. Thus we see that not classes decide in history but ideas. It follows therefore that every self-respecting person must safeguard his right to ideas. De Kadt counterposes to Marxism "for instance" a thorough and through idealistically metaphysical philosophy of history. A dozen lines suffice for him to break from the fundamentals of Marxism.

Ideas and Classes

We poor "orthodox" ones believe even today that not ideas determine the fate of society but classes; that social ideas—as the old, wise Italian Antonio Labriola said—do not fall from heaven, but give expression to immediate or historic interests of classes. The "idea" of socialism is the theoretical expression of the historic trend of the proletariat coordinated with the logical development of capitalist society. The relation between class and "idea" is not mechanical but dialectic. The class attains self-consciousness not through revelation but through difficult struggle which takes also the form of an internal struggle within the proletariat itself. So—by your leave—our struggle against centrism is an important component part of the struggle of the working class for self-knowledge. It is inevitable

The Austrian Constitution

The new Austrian Constitution, according to recent press dispatches, is basing itself on the papal encyclical issued by "His Holiness," Pope Pius on May 15, 1931. There will be a "legislative" chamber composed of 59 delegates—all elected by State officials and the church. The duties of the "legislature" will be limited to accepting or rejecting measures submitted by the government.

Correspondent Gedy, of the N. Y. Times, summed up the situation as follows: "Other autocracies, even Hitlerism, preserve the outward form—however worthless it is in practice—of a popular vote. In the new Austrian autocracy general elections find no place in the constitution." The Dollfus government has also issued a decree that anyone is liable to detention in a concentration camp on suspicion of having worked for a forbidden political party.

therefore that in the process of development of the proletariat a crystallization of the most advanced, far-sighted, courageous, of the elite, of the real vanguard, should take place. And only through the aid of this, its most important organ, can the proletariat fulfill its historic mission, that is to conquer power and maintain it in the form of a dictatorship until the complete liquidation of all antagonisms. That it is a question of a dictatorship of a class is proved by the relation between the class and its vanguard: without the support of the vast majority of the class the establishing of a workers' state would be impossible. That the proletarian revolution is however accomplished through the intermediation of the vanguard is explainable by the heterogeneity of the proletariat as it is given us by history. Marx operated not with bare abstractions—"Class," "Socialism"—but with historic realities, their actual interrelations and their effects on each others.

Historic Role of Classes

That deserters from other classes participate in the dictatorship is explained by the fact that we deal with living social matter in which classes merge into one another, affect one another, and not with the druggist's compartments in which each preparation has its special packing and label. It is precisely the decisive historic role of classes that imparts to the progressive class the ability to carry along with it the best elements of other classes. To declare the class theory null and void on this account, as de Kadt does, is the same as denying the law of gravity because a balloon travels up and not down.

De Kadt takes next another "example," this time not against Marx, but against Lenin: "Why must we," he asks, "accept in our program the 'Soviet principle,' since not even a trace of proof exists that the 'Soviets' were anything (!) else than temporary (!), improvised (!!) forms of organization in which the masses unite immediately prior to and immediately after the struggle for power." The idealist and metaphysical is not inclined to attribute to the "Soviet principle" any great importance, for Soviets are nothing more than "temporary" forms of organization; they serve the proletariat only "immediately prior to and immediately after the struggle for power." We Marxists are not at all set upon including in our program "eternal," "everlasting" values; we are satisfied just with "temporary" things like Soviets, which—and de Kadt admits this too—are instruments of the seizure and maintenance of power by the proletariat. So far that is completely sufficient for us. We are willing to grant the "right" to de Kadt and his co-thinkers in future to invent far more "eternal" forms of organization; first however let them try at least to create "temporary" soviets and to conquer power.

Echoes of Bernstein

In this fashion I could take up the whole article sentence by sentence to prove that—excepting for meaningless platitudes—de Kadt's article consists only of horrible mistakes against the fundamentals of Marxism. De Kadt never mentions the lights that have given him inspiration. Certainly they are not Marx, Engels and Lenin. But in his latest, revisionist revelations we find only echoes of Bernstein, the German Neo-Kantians and also of the Austro-Marxists. And all that should serve for the setting up of the program of the New International? Oh no! De Kadt will have to look for some different application for this.

Our critic is very harsh with regard to Bolshevism, even the genuine—Lenin. He does not want to "idealize" it. That is not at all necessary. But what de Kadt says on Leninism is truly lamentable. We are faced here not with principled criticism but with distorted facts, anachronisms, misunderstood relations, false, personal estimations, etc. Refuting all this would, without being of any great value, take up too much time. It is sufficient to establish here, that de Kadt criticizes most severely the "system of Lenin-Trotsky" in order to attach himself to the system of . . . Tranael. Hand in hand with the Norwegian social-democracy which is only the diluted edition of Austro-Marxism de Kadt wants in a "revolutionary" manner to reconstitute the international working-class movement . . . on the basis of principles which will be revealed to us only later.

We do not want to dispute anyone's "right" to a distorted point of view. But to the Dutch workers we want to say with full conviction: To build a party on the philosophy of de Kadt is to build on sand. Beware of doing so; build on Marxist granite!
—L. TROTSKY.
March 16, 1934

A Year of Roosevelt's New Deal

Industrial recovery is now under way with "irresistible force," says Alfred F. Sloan Jr., president of the General Motors Corporation, in his report of the corporation's business for 1933. He also added that the labor section of the NRA must be clarified "or there is the certainty of industrial strife the equal of which this country has not yet seen."

Nobody needs to doubt that Sloan spoke from the point of view of his class. As the president of the General Motors corporation he represents the most hard-boiled section of monopoly capitalism. They definitely oppose union organization in any form, save the company union, as long as union organization can possibly be prevented. But that is not exceptional. All employers do; only they are not all equally able to resist as the General Motors corporation is. Yet in face of this fact—which nobody will deny—Section 7a of the NRA, which was sponsored by the Roosevelt administration, recognizes the right of collective bargaining to the workers. Does this mean a conflict of viewpoint and policies within capitalism?

The NRA Illusion

From official A. F. of L. circles this is actually the way in which the matter is presented. According to these labor agents of capitalism, the Roosevelt New Deal is a new deal for labor. According to them the policies of his administration are friendly to labor and fighting for its rights against such hard boiled concerns. At the inception of the NRA this presentation was accepted among the broadest working class strata. They had implicit faith in the NRA.

Now practical experience teaches them something else. The automobile workers learned to their regret that there were no great differences at the recent Washington conference. The automobile manufacturers and President Roosevelt, together with their special agents, Green and Collins, succeeded in spiking the automobile workers' strike for a union, at least for the time being. And since then the President appointee on the automobile labor board cooperated consistently with the manufacturers to stall the movement further until the busy season is over and thereby disorganize its attempts to get action.

Unionism the Issue

Throughout the whole of the NRA experiences so far the main issue of ever sharpening conflicts concerns the question of union organization. Today it is most acute in the automobile industry, tomorrow it will come to a head in other industries. Everywhere the mechanism created by the New Deal program, the industrial codes, the labor boards and the arbitration schemes, appear in operation as means to harness the labor movement within definitely laid out channels. In that there is a specific function assigned to the reactionary trade union leaders.

During the crisis the general wage standard had become vastly reduced, as the standard of living for the working class as a whole. How to maintain this level—level—keep near as possible to this level—while advancing commodity prices in order to restore the profit inducement and finally set the wheels of industry into motion,—this was the problem which the owners of capitalist monopoly concerns set out to solve in their reorganization for "recovery."

Peaceful class relations would be the main prerequisite. Restlessness from the millions of unemployed had to be allayed, actual convulsions ensuing from their desperate position had to be prevented. Some measure against a resurgence of labor militancy had to be found. But the general leveling process by which the formerly privileged skilled sections became further reduced, left the conservative unions, composed almost exclusively of these skilled crafts, almost entirely out of the picture.

Role of Craft Unionism

In the past their officials could be relied upon to uphold their end of the system of cooperation with capitalism. They had been able to turn the conservative craft unions into an instrument to hold the rest

of the working class in subjection by attaining special privileges such as higher wages for their specific crafts, by keeping the unskilled without organization and, thereby, also on a much lower wage level.

These officials have not changed; but on the old narrow union basis they could no longer furnish the guarantee of holding the masses in check—a condition required for capitalism to issue out of the crisis on the backs of the workers. It therefore became necessary to permit a broader scope of the conservative unions in order to make possible the extension of the system of class collaboration and make of it a permanent institution. That is what is really meant by Section 7a of the NRA. The labor agents of capitalism were given a wider field in which to function as salesmen for the New Deal.

Basic Policy of Capitalists

It is this social relation feature which is the most fundamental aspect of the New Deal Program. While the hard boiled monopoly concerns, such as now the General Motors corporation, put the most stubborn resistance to union recognition—for that is what Sloan means when he demands "clarification"—there is agreement in the main amongst the various capitalist representatives in the matter of basic policy towards labor. While each section will fight for special advantages and special modifications for their own benefit, in principle they will support the idea of recognizing and extending the conservatism A. F. of L. unions as a means of preventing more militant organization and action.

In permitting the general extension of the conservative unions it is hoped thereby to draw a line of division more effectively between the employed and unemployed workers. The class collaboration system of which these union officials are to be the guardians is to become a more effective instrument to check the unemployed and keep them in subjection.

Force for Union Organization

But intent is one thing, the realities of life may be another. With the first steps toward a turn in the business cycle the economic pressure upon the workers increased enormously and rapidly. That itself was a powerful motive force for union organization. The workers entered the unions in masses but for quite different objectives than those intended by the NRA. For them it was a matter of regaining a standard of living.

And while today the masses from the very heart of basic industry flock into the existing unions, at the same time, due to the changes in the business cycle, the NRA regulations begin to impose severe restrictions upon them. Resentment is held back only by still lingering hopes, or it is diffused by the various mechanisms of arbitration. But this can succeed only in postponing the decision of what course the working class will take. The resentment is bound to accumulate and is due to be let loose in a series of explosive class battles. The longer they are postponed the more turbulent the explosions will be.

Unions at Crossroads

The conservative unions will be at their crossroads. Recently they have had a big influx of proletarians from the heavy industries. Their composition is being transformed. In that same measure the general working class interests will become more directly reflected within the unions. The more this is held back the more the resentment will accumulate within the unions.

At the same time every collision with the NRA code regulations and every conflict with the state forces, which are now much more integrated with the economic organs of capitalism, will be reflected within the unions in collisions between the rank and file workers and the reactionary officials. To the extent that the unions fail to adjust themselves, in objectives, in policy and in organization forms and methods, explosions will occur within them. But with that also a formidable basis for new unionism will develop.
—ARNE SWABECK.

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«BRAIN TRUST» CONSPIRACY

The greatest issue since the Civil War has been brought into the open by Dr. Wm. A. Wirt, says James H. Rand Jr., who read the revelations of the aforementioned Wirt to the House Committee on Interstate Commerce on Friday, March 23, 1934. The issue is whether the Brain Trusters are going to succeed in their sinister plot to supplant the Keresensian Roosevelt with an American Stalin, or shall liberty prevail.

Through a series of machinations a resolution is to be engineered in the United States by the members of the Brain Trust. Legislation to thwart the recovery program is to be introduced, the government is to assume the operation of industry and banking, and the press is to be prevented from protesting by threatening it with measures which compel the unvarnished truth in advertising. Finally, when the moment is ripe, Roosevelt is to be replaced by a Brain Trusting Stalin.

Patriots to the Defense

Menaced by this insidious and subversive conspiracy, striking like a snake in the White House bosom from men trusted by the President, all Washington has been agitated like shivering gelatin. All patriots have sprung like a man to the defenses. What's to be done? "Let's get out the firing squad," demands Senator Schall, Republican, of Minnesota. "It may be an ancient custom," he says, "but we may have to revive it under the New Deal."

"It's treason!" exclaims Speaker Rainey. "The matter should be investigated by the Department of Justice."

Representative Bulwinkle of North Carolina demands a Congressional investigation, Wirt to be summoned before a special committee and the Brain Trust to be put under the spotlight.

The Brain Trust should be investigated. There can be no objections to such a probing into the gray matter of these intellects who believe that juggling the letters of the alphabet is going to make us all prosperous.

Wm. A. Wirt from Gary
The author of all these hair-raising sensations is Wm. A. Wirt, superintendent of schools in Gary,

Indiana. Although he has been an educator for several decades, the New York Times has the temerity to undertake to educate the learned doctor from Indiana. It was not Stalin who supplanted Keresensky, the New York Times informs Dr. Wirt: no, it was Lenin.

The doctor must have been reading the Daily Worker.

In the investigation of this momentous Brain Trust problem it might be interesting for the sake of science to peer into Wirt's cerebellum to determine whether the day of his appointment to school superintendent in the Steel Trust town of Gary coincides with the day his brain ceased operation.

The plot of the Brain Trusters, shrouded in the darkest mystery, might remain unsolved, and what is of greater concern, succeed, did not the country possess an individual who sees deepest and lowest into such plots. Hamilton Fish appears on the scene. Everything becomes transparent. It's this way: There are twelve Brain Trusters who are Socialists, because they belong to an organization which is closely affiliated to the Communist movement in the United States. This organization is (beware, Hamilton knows all) the American Civil Liberties Union. Now we know. It looks very much like Roger Baldwin is behind the whole conspiracy.

Representative Foulkes of Michigan has his own opinion of the matter. He says of Dr. Wirt: "He is either a faithful servant of the sinister forces of predatory wealth or a consummate ass."

Why can't he be both?
—G. R.

CLASS IN TRADE UNION PROBLEMS

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