
The Moscow Trials and the CI Crisis.

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Attributed to "M.Y." in the original, identity deduced from May Day greetings ad in same issue.

The Moscow trials have exposed the crisis and rottenness in the Communist International more than any other single event. He who thinks that the recent trials are purely a Russian affair, having no connection with the position and role of the CPSU in the CI is deluding himself. The revival and extension of the campaign against all forces that are opposed to the present ruinous policies of the Stalin leadership bears out the above contention.

The recent historic trials and subsequent executions are part of a long course of mistakes and defeats on the part of the Communist International, controlled and dominated by the CPSU headed by the "infallible" leader Stalin. With the execution of the outstanding leaders of the October Revolution and the CI, the Stalin regime completed a bloody circle. From misrepresentation of issues of political opponents to character assassination, from character assassination to physical extermination.

The Stalin regime in the course of its struggle against all opposition forces has destroyed party democracy. Healthy self-criticism was replaced by sickening confessions and self-vilification. The trials are part of a long chain of recantations not taken seriously by sane people. The latest statements of the defendants fall in the same category. To accept these as the full truth amounts to disregarding the demoralizing inner political life in the CPSU.

The unsigned articles appearing in the *Workers Age* of February 6 and 13, "The Moscow Trials

in Historical Perspective," may be an interesting piece of research, but shed very little light on the political implications of the trials. To find a plausible answer to the bewildering situation created by the executions, one must not look to the distant past, but must examine the more recent events and experiences from an international point of view.

Have All Oppositions in the CPSU Embraced Trotskyism?

The strategy of the Stalin regime as demonstrated at the trials and subsequent lynching and terror campaign is to pin the charge of Trotskyism to all forces not in agreement with its present policies. It is now abundantly clear to everybody that the suppression and physical extermination of the opposition forces is not limited to Trotskyites, for no one will honestly believe that Bukharin is a Trotskyite. The present campaign has far greater and deeper meaning than the narrow faction fights of the past. If we were to accept the accusations and confessions as gospel truth, then we must conclude that all the former anti-Trotsky forces have suddenly become convinced that Trotsky is correct and Stalin wrong, that the Stalin regime has become so unbearable that Trotskyism is preferable to Stalinism. This conclusion is as valid as the accusations and confessions. The truth of the matter is: the non-communist policies and tactics of the Stalin regime necessitates the destruction of all forces that are determined

to stick to Marxism and communist principles. In Russia, if the building of socialism at a high speed necessitated the extermination of a generation of Bolshevik leaders, who could have rendered invaluable service to the world revolutionary movement, then, indeed, a high price was paid. The prestige of the Soviet Union and Communism as a philosophy and a practical ideal suffered a tremendous setback.

A Reexamination and Frank Discussion of Perspective.

Our efforts and hopes of reforming the Communist International did not bring the desired results. Instead of reforming the CI, the more reformist it became. It is high time that we draw the necessary conclusion and speak frankly and act boldly.

In the past we were correct in stating that the chief source of the mistakes of the Stalin regime lay in the transfer of tactics applicable inside the Soviet Union to the other sections of the Communist International. This analysis is no longer sufficient. Something new has developed in the last few years.

The position advanced by some forces in the labor movement that the Stalin faction is fashioning the policies and tactics of the various sections of the CI to the needs of Soviet foreign policy cannot so easily be dismissed as completely wrong. This position contains a lot of truth. This position does not invalidate our original view, but it rather supplements it. This statement may sound shocking and may cause all sorts of accusations. But facts must be faced, no matter how unpleasant.

We were entirely correct when we criticize the Stalin-Laval declaration because it identified the CPSU, which is part of the Communist International, with the foreign policy of the Soviet government. We were again correct when we leveled criticism at the Soviet Union's participation

in the Neutrality Pact, adversely affecting revolutionary Spain. Were these incidental mistakes? I hardly think so. They form part of a wrong political line, which led to the suspension of the class struggle; a line that gave birth to the Peoples Front; a line that converted the various sections of the CI into chauvinists of the type of the traditional Social Democracy, as defenders of Capitalism. Can anyone deny that the Communist International, dominated by the CPSU, is playing a Kerensky role in Spain today?

We all agree that proletarian revolution cannot be imported from the outside. But will anyone claim that the present bloody civil war in Spain is a foreign importation? If anything, it is the counterrevolution that has been imported by Germany and Italy. The Soviet Union has surely intervened, but with what aim? It is hounding and slandering the only revolutionary force, the POUM, for proposing and fighting for a Soviet Spain. In using such harsh words I do not in any way overlook or minimize the valuable services the Soviet Union has rendered in the fight against Fascism. These services are in mortal danger of being nullified by the wrong policies pursued.

In face of such a situation, to cling to the ideal of reforming the Communist International is senseless. If the political conditions which make the reforming of the Labor and Socialist International are impossible are correct, then we must conclude that for the very same reasons the reforming of the Communist International is equally impossible. The absence of party democracy in the latter constitutes an even greater obstacle in the way of reforming it. Assuming that our position of reforming the CI is feasible, it is entirely possible that before we will succeed in reforming it, organic unity between the Second and Third Internationals will have been accomplished. The political basis for such unity already exists. Only organizational difficulties — party democracy — suspicion, and distrust stand in the way.

The position of Trotsky for a Fourth Inter-

national, calculated to serve the factional interest of his Russian faction, is both dangerous and unacceptable.

The position of the POUM must be seriously considered, for it seems to be the only road open. It stands for the regrouping of all revolutionary forces outside the Communist and Socialist movements who are ready for a Marxist revolutionary program and are opposed to the reformism of the two internationals.

The organization of a new international center dedicated to the continuation of the revolutionary traditions of Marxism-Leninism is not a matter of making a decision or setting a date for its formation. The problem confronting us today is one of perspective and orientation. We must be ready to discard our previous position that a new center without the CPSU in it is both impermissible and impossible. On the contrary, it seems to me that the inclusion of the CPSU with its present bureaucratic leadership would be detrimental to the independence and healthy development of such a center. The charge that such a perspective amounts to an anti-Soviet Union and counterrevolutionary position is ridiculous. The contrary is true, the organization and development of an independent revolutionary movement will be the most effective defender of the Soviet Union.

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