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What is "Trotskyism"?

Capitalism 'Under Stress'

"Trotskyism" is variously accounted for. For the vulgar, it is a squabble between two personalities, Trotsky and Stalin, a fight for the spoils of office, a rough and tumble in which Trotsky got the worst of it. Then there is the "Fool" theory, the theory that the followers of Trotsky are poor confused simpletons, taken in by Trotsky's undeniably magnificent literary style, hero-worshipping Trotsky for his brave leonine personality and his marvellous feats of organisation and leadership during the Revolution and Civil War, and incapable of perceiving the fallacies of his doctrine. And then again, there is the "Rogue" theory, the theory that the "Trotskyites" are scoundrelly renegades from the communist movement, that they have crossed sides and allied themselves with the boss-class, that under the leadership of the arch-scoundrel Trotsky, they form the vanguard of the counter-revolution. And finally, there is the "Class" theory, which accounts for the "Trotskyites" by declaring that they are not a working class group at all, but a clique of petty-bourgeois intellectuals and hangers-on of the movement, masking their petty-bourgeois class bias by prattling revolutionary phrases.

The newcomer to the Communist Parties, humbly grateful for the crumbs of information tossed to him by the old hands who know it all, is fed on one or another of these more or less plausible explanations. And, by seeing to it that there never takes place any open public discussion or debate between Stalinists and Trotskyists, the Stalinists have made sure that the newcomer would never hear how the "Trotskyists" themselves explained their doctrines. Yet "only an idiot judges without hearing both sides", as Lenin said. Let us hear the "Trotskyist" side.

The worker today is quite familiar with the class struggle between bosses and workers, and he understands that within each class there goes on a secondary struggle, for example, the

political struggle between the bourgeois political parties who represent different sections of the boss class - the landowners, the industrialists or the finance-capitalists. We have also a struggle inside the working class; for example there is in South Africa a conflict between black and white workers, the latter being a privileged "aristocracy of labour" receiving high rates of pay ^{enough to} ~~to the extent that they act as foremen and~~ ^{as skilled men or foremen} ~~slavedrivers~~ of the bitterly exploited black workers. There is similarly an internal struggle in the Russian working class.

In Russia, the working class is the ruling class, since it possesses economic power in the workers' state ownership of the means of production. But a class cannot rule directly - it expresses its rule through its top layer of leaders. And so there has grown up in Russia a bureaucracy, numbering millions, who rule in the name of the workers. This bureaucracy, headed by Stalin, has separated itself ~~out~~ from the workers in the factories, and enjoys the privileges of power to say nothing of the better material well-being they have achieved, finer clothing, better food and housing, etc.

Nevertheless, they cannot be considered as a separate class, but rather as an aristocratic caste who have concentrated power in ~~the~~ their own hands by choking democracy within the workers' party, by hounding, expelling, exiling, ^{splitting} ~~and murdering~~ those workers who raised their voices in criticism against the growing power of the bureaucracy. The opposition movement within the Russian Communist Party expressed the interests of the workers and demanded the curbing of the bureaucracy and the restoration of workers' control such as had existed during Lenin's lifetime. This left opposition movement for the reform of the Communist Party and the Soviets, headed by Trotsky, also exposed the false policies that arose from this caste which had usurped the workers' power - and so "Trotskyism" came into being.

During the past years, all eyes have been on Soviet Russia, for in that land the five year plan has been going

forward, the plan for the industrialisation of Russia and the collectivisation of peasant holdings. Ringed around as the Russian workers are by the capitalist powers, all eager to smash the Workers' State, it was urgently necessary that the plan go forward as rapidly as possible, in order to strengthen the workers' defences against capitalist aggression, in order to achieve a higher standard of living for workers and peasants.

But the bureaucracy headed by Stalin came forward with a wonderful new theory - that it was possible by means of the Plan to build Socialism in Russia, even if the rest of the world proletariat remained under the rule of capitalism. If such a thing ~~is~~ ^{were} possible, then there ~~is~~ ^{might} perhaps ~~be some excuse~~ ^{be some excuse} for the Stalinist policy of sacrificing the present generation of workers, sacrificing their health and vigour in the endless shock-brigade work and the low standard of living they were subjected to in order to import machinery, etc. But, is it possible to build socialism in a single country?

The most famous slogan of Communism is: "Workers of the world, Unite!" This expresses in the clearest possible way that workers must join together internationally to overthrow Capitalism, ~~and~~ not for any sentimental reason such as "the brotherhood of man" ~~etc.~~, but because Capitalism has created the world-market which unites the workers of the world on an economic basis and so prepares them for international political ^{action} unity in the struggle for their common rights.

agricultural products & raw materials
Russia too is bound up in the world-market, and exports her surplus (petrol, for example) in order to import ~~(machinery, etc.)~~ ^{etc.}

And just because the Russian workers and peasants are connected on an economic basis with the rest of the world, the notion of Socialism in One Country ^{is seen to be} becomes a fantastic, unrealisable dream, a dream to which the Russian workers' standards of living and their unity with the peasantry are being uselessly sacrificed by the bureaucratic apparatus.

After the "Five Year Plan in four years" had run its course,

it was discovered that the too rapid pace had resulted in much that was scamped and shoddy in spite of the devotion and self-sacrifice of the workers, and a halt of a year had perforce to be called for reconstruction. Nevertheless when the opposition condemned the too rapid tempo of industrialisation and collectivisation as a dangerous and futile procedure, when they pointed out that the development of Socialism in Russia could in the last resort only be guaranteed by the support of the revolutionary world proletariat, the Stalinists circulated the naive nonsense that the Trotskyites want the plan to stop, that they want to sit still and do nothing till the World Revolution comes along. In this way it was proved conclusively what fools the Trotskyites were. That they should dare criticise the doctrines of "our revered leader and Master, Comrade Stalin" proved what rogues they were. That they should demand the right of open discussion and criticism within the party - what hopeless petty-bourgeois!

The home of the Communist International is in Russia, ^{R.L.} so that it ~~has~~ ^{was} not ~~been~~ difficult to subordinate all the Communist Parties to the Russian Communist Party, ^{by him} with the result that the Communist Parties of the world have become mere appendages of the Stalinist bureaucracy and their policies have been directed towards the pursuance of the fundamentally false policy of building Socialism in One Country. Out of this fantastic policy has flowed all the blunders and crimes of the Comintern which led to the Anglo-Russian Committee, the defeat of the second Chinese revolution, the defeat of the German working class by Nazism; all these we hope to be able to go into in future issues.

In South Africa, the effects of the corruption of the Comintern are clearly visible in the degenerate little clique which calls itself the leadership of the Communist Party of South Africa (Leaders without a following.) We do not here intend to attack this coterie because we have no time to indulge in rabbit-hunting when there is big game to be tracked

down in the shape of the capitalist imperialist class enemy. We merely point to ~~them~~ ^{what is going on in South Africa} as an example of what has happened to the Communist Parties the world over. There is no serious work done, but noisy reports are sent to Moscow. The African Federation of Trade Unions, for example, is about to hold a "Congress", although there are no unions affiliated to this "Federation", which like many other paper "communist" organisations is only another name for the same small clique. The "leadership" is for the most part heartily despised by the rank and file, who only stay in the party because they are under the illusion that the rottenness is only local; they are not yet aware that ~~the decay~~ it is part of the decay that has arisen from the centre - the Stalinist bureaucracy.

This "Communist" Party, like the "Labour" Party, is now only lumber in the path of the political development of the workers. But a revolutionary movement is arising in this country as in the rest of the world to restore the doctrines of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, to build a Leninist workers' party capable of marching on to the seizure of power by the working class. The new party is the "Trotskyist" Workers Party of South Africa. What is "Trotskyism" then? "Trotskyism" is Communism, the Communism of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

~~R.I.~~

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