"National Socialism"--
Or Factional Tail-End?

By *WILL HERBERG*

In the *Militant* of May 3 there is an article—*From Hillquit to Lovestone*—in which the author attempts to answer our analysis as contained in the article *Whither Trotskyism?* (*Revolutionary Age, April* 21). And since the best defensive is an offensive the *Militant* writer launches into the old familiar attack upon "national Socialism," etc. It would be worth while to examine this article a little more closely.

Before proceeding to the central question itself, we must take note of the charge of "literary forgery" made against us by the *Militant* article. It is declared that we "omitted quoting the whole sentence" in our quotation from Trotsky about the "honor" of "sectarianism." But the charge is not true! Our quotation is from Trotsky's letter published in *Die Fahne des Kommunismus* (Leninbund organ) of July 5, 1929 and reads in the German as follows: "*Jezt ein 'Sektierer' zu bleiben ist eine Ehre fur jeden wirklichen Revolutionar.*" In English this is: "*To remain 'sectarian' today is an honor for every real revolutionary.*" Nothing at all omitted! So much for this.

Now to the main question. The author of the *Militant* article makes what he considers a very striking parallel between our attitude on "Russian questions" today and the attitude of Hillquit on "Russian questions" in 1921. By a careful slection of quotations he achieve a certain surface effect but the superficial resemblance hardly stands any sort of deeper examination.

The *Militant* author declares in effect: "In 1921 Hillquit said: 'I'm for the Russian Revolution but I don't have to choose between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. I am for the social revolution but that doesn't mean that I have to be for one of the Russian factions.". In 1930 Lovestone says: 'I am for the Russian Revolution and the building of Socialism but I don't have to be for the Stalin faction or the Bukharin faction. In no sense is the international Opposition movement based upon the issues or groupings in the CPSU." There! There is your parallel between two generations of national Socialism!"

Very clever—but there is only one "little" difference—and precisely this difference damns the whole argument. When Hillquit could not choose between Lenin and Martov, between Bolshevism and Menshevism, he refused to choose between the proletarian revolution and the bourgeois counter-revolution—and such a refusal amounts to actual support of the counter-revolution. This is one thing. . . .

But when Lovestone says that the international Opposition movement is not an international extension of either the Stalin or Bukharin factions, he is merely stating a fact: the issues upon which the Communist Opposition has crystallized internationally are not those upon which the Russian factions have been built up. This is another question entirely.

In one case it was a matter of choosing between two parties, the party of revolution and the party of counter-revolution. In the other, it is a matter of choosing between two factions, both in and of the Communist Party, both within the party of the revolution.

Of course the proletarian revolutionary movement all over the world is most intimately connected with, and in fact finds its strongest point of support in the victorious Communist Party of the Soviet Union. But does it follow from this that the international Communist Opposition, fighting to restore the Leninist line of the Comintern, must become the tail-end to a faction *in* the Russian Party? There seems to be a hitch in the political logic of the *Militant* writer.

This is not a mere fault in logic. It uncovers the fundamental political error of Trotskyism. The parallel between Hillquit and us can be seriously made only if it is maintained that the groupings in the Russian Party represent different and *opposing* classes. But to maintain this means to maintain that the Soviet State is now run by elements representing the class enemy — in other words, it is to maintain a variety of the theory of Thermidor which lies at the root of Trotskyism. But since the Communist Opposition—and every real Communist—must start out by rejecting this theory decisively we can hardly be expected to overlook the fact that the whole structure of the *Militant* writer falls of its own weight.

Incidentally, it should be noted that the *Militant* writer carefully avoids making any sort of reply to our remarks about the "new turn" of Trotskyism. The reason is obvious. . . .

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Wreckers Smashed In Cooperatives

In the middle of April there was held the convention of the Central Cooperative Exchange (the Finnish cooperative movement in the North central states). For six months previously the Party press and especially the *Tyomies* conducted a bitter campaign against the leaders of the cooperative because these comrades resisted the introduction of the new narrow sectarian course in the cooperative movement. Hundreds of thousands of words of abuse have been published by the *Tyomies* and the whole Party apparatus was mobilized—but this time it very fortunately proved impossible for the Party burocrats either to deceive the workers or to destroy the organization. The convention decided by a vote of 228 to 51 to uphold the viewpoint of Comrade Halonen and to reject the wrecking attempts of the Party burocrats. One of the big "issues" used against Halonen in the discussion was his "Lovestoneism", especially his "secret meeting" with Lovestone in Detroit!

Two Shop Delegates Councils