

Communist Party Control and Soviet Institutions

THE article by Comrade Sorin originally appeared in No. 4 of The Communist, the official organ of the left wing of the Russian Communist Party (the Bolsheviks), issued in Moscow under the joint editorship of N. Bucharin, Karl Radek, V. Obolensky and V. Smirnov. Aside from this group of editors, the staff of regular contributors comprises, among many others, the names of the following prominent comrades: N. Antonov (Trotsky's predecessor as Commissar of the Army and Navy), Bela Kun, Anna Kollontay (Commissar of People's Welfare), A. Lomov (Commissar of People's Economy), etc.

Incidentally, we reproduce its title-page bearing the following inscription:

THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY
(BOLSHEVIKS)

Workers of the World. Unite!
"COMMUNIST"

A Weekly Journal of Economics, Politics
and Sociology.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE LEFT
COMMUNISTS

This journal is being published in the "Printing Establishment of the Russian Federated Socialist Soviet Republic." The editor-in-chief, N. Bucharin, is a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Russian Communist Party (at a recent session of which he was wounded by a bomb thrown by a counter revolutionist) and is chairman of the Moscow Soviet of the Workers' and Red Army Delegates.

This data is offered to show that this journal represents the views of comrades standing in the front line of Communist thought and action, whom no one, differing radically as he may from their position on the question of control, will be able to accuse of not thoroly understanding the principles of Communism or of being "disloyal" to the Proletarian Revolution.

After these preliminary remarks we shall enter into a discussion of the essential points of Comrade Sorin's article.

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A detailed analysis of this article we will postpone for a later time; at present, we shall confine ourselves to a few brief commentaries.

As the title of this article indicates, its object is to deal with the interrelationship between the Communist Party and the Soviet Institutions (in Russia and other countries) and the question of Party Control over

By Nicholas Hourwich

(Comment on Vladimir Sorin's article under
above caption in The Communist,
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Soviet Institutions.

The author of this article points out the abnormal and yet, as he proves, entirely natural phenomenon that the Soviet officials (especially those of the lower or middle ranks in the "governmental hierarchy") are manifesting a certain professional conservatism, a "fear of perturbations", an inclination toward compromises and following from this a desire "to get away from Party Control." It should be noticed that all this is said of the Soviet officials living and acting in Russia—in an electrified, revolutionary atmosphere under the immediate influence of the dictatorship of proletariat!

How much more will these negative characteristics tend to develop in the foreign soviets, removed as they are from the relatively "neutralizing" environment of the revolution!

The author lays emphasis on the "unprincipled part of the public" and which has now "wormed its way" to the Soviet institutions "and designates as the most reactionary element of this group every variety of technicians and specialists, who undoubtedly do not sympathize with the power of the Soviets. Let us note, in connection with this grouping, that, as was recently reported by a correspondent of so impartial (in this particular instance) a paper as The New York Times, that precisely the technicians and the large variety of technical societies comprise that professional group, in whose environment and under whose protection the counter-revolutionary plotters are concealing themselves.

What sort of an "antidote" does the writer recommend against these undesirable tendencies; what are his deductions?

Agreeing entirely with the spirit of Lenin's article ("On the Question of Slogans" appearing in the first issue of "The Communist International", monthly organ of the Communist Party of America), in which he points out the necessity of purging the Soviets of vacillating and petit-bourgeois parties and in complete agreement with the procedure adhered to by Lenin and Trotsky (the latter describes this in his speech "On the Relation Of the Soviet Government and the Middle Peasantry") and all other Commissars in that every measure to be carried out by the Soviets is previously submitted to the Central-Executive Committee of the

Communist Party,—Comrade Sorin advises not to forget the basic Communist position that "THE COMMUNIST PARTY IS ALWAYS AND EVERYWHERE SUPERIOR TO THE SOVIETS. For only the Communist Party constantly and invariably functions as the champion and the representative of the interests of the world proletariat, of the international working class; while the Soviets are the representatives of the labor democracy in general, and its interests, particularly the interests of the petty-bourgeois peasantry, do not always coincide with the interests of the proletariat",—and also because the Soviets might assume (which Lenin points out in the above-mentioned article) a counter-revolutionary character, as was the case in Russia in the period of the "coalition governments" in 1917 and as it is at present in Germany under the Social-Patriotic triumvirate of Scheidemann-Ebert-Noske.

"The Communist Party, being relatively better safeguarded against disintegration should strengthen its control over the Soviet factions and make the Soviet officials accountable and responsible to the Communist Party"—such is the conclusion of Comrade Sorin, to which we subscribe whole-heartedly.

And these concluding words of the article: "Our Comrades like to reproach us the way we introduce disorganization into the Soviets and so are enemies of the Soviets from the left. How familiar are these accusations to us! And perfectly right is Comrade Sorin when he says these accusations are based on utter incomprehension.

Indeed, here in the environment of our "splendid American isolation" making it as easy to communicate with Russia as to reach the man in the moon, and because here we are deprived of such a chance to defend our position as is afforded our comrades of The Moscow Communist, this "incomprehension" of our comrades from the "right" sometimes assumes an intensely tragic aspect.... But we don't doubt that the correct and not the perverted presentation of our position sooner or later, will penetrate into Moscow through all the ramifications of our present isolation (due partly to existing political conditions). Then our true conception of Communism, and not what amounts to a worship of sheer Sovietism, will triumph. The truth of Communism (not the fetish of Sovietism) must prevail!

It is this Communist certitude that enables us to contemplate with serenely the "utter incomprehension" and the overt calumnies flung at us by adversaries!