

Capitalist Monopoly and Organization

By Herbert Zam

AS part of the campaign of revision of the line of the VI Congress and of the basic principles of Leninism, there is now being conducted an offensive on all fronts against the outstanding representative of the traditional line of the Comintern and of the VI Congress, Comrade Bukharin. It is quite significant that the "theoretician" of this offensive should be none other than *Heinz Neumann*, from the Marxist viewpoint a perfect ignoramus, condemned at the IX Plenum as an adventurer and a putschist and very correctly branded by Clara Zetkin as the "evil genius of disruption." It is this Neumann—who together with Lominadze and Schatzkin have been more than once condemned for their opposition to the Leninist theory of the growing fusion of finance capitalism with the state apparatus (state capitalism)—who now appears as the champion against Bukharin.

The campaign against Comrade Bukharin is no case of an individual merely. It is part of the offensive against all those comrades who stand in the way of the revision of Leninism—not only those who fight vigorously against this revision (in the U.S.A.: the C.P.-Majority Group) but also those comrades who, while not taking up the struggle with the weapons at their command, still refuse to give up their Leninist views in favor of revisionism.

The full danger of the revision now officially promulgated by the Ecce is seen in the line of attack against Comrade Bukharin. In its campaign against the Leninist views of Comrade Bukharin, the Ecce and the Neumanns are sinking deeper and deeper into the morass of ultra-Left Menshevism—which is essentially inverted social-reformism.

Lenin has pointed out more than once that ultra-leftism and social-reformism lead in the same direction: they are different only in form and expression, but not in substance. Ultra-leftism is "social-reformism standing on its head." This is amply illustrated in the present case.

The official campaign against Comrade Bukharin centers around the question of monopoly in three of its most important aspects: the relation between monopoly and competition in the period of imperialism, the question of state capitalism and the question of economic organization under imperialism. On all these three questions Bukharin represents the Leninist standpoint while the attack on Bukharin departs from this standpoint in a number of most important points.

The Question of Monopoly and Competition

Neumann and the Ecce begin by denying the very essence of the Leninist analysis of imperialism, namely that imperialism is based on monopoly. Lenin of course never declared that competition ceases to exist entirely. But free competition ceases to exist as the main characteristic of capitalist economy, since competition, as the main feature of capitalist economy has been replaced by its very opposite, monopoly. Monopoly is not a different form of competition, as Neumann insists, but is the exact opposite of competition. Lenin very aptly declared that:

"A half century ago, when Marx wrote his Capital, free competition appeared to the majority of the economists to be a natural law. Official science attempted thru a con-

spiracy of silence to kill the works of Marx, who by theoretical and historical analysis, had proven that free competition leads to industrial concentration, and that this concentration at a certain stage in its development leads to monopoly. At present monopoly is a fact."

Today we have to re-emphasize this statement of Lenin's, because, it is not only the bourgeois scientists who are trying to kill the works of Marx but the Neumanns and their friends who are emasculating the works of Marx and Lenin by a systematic campaign from which not even falsified quotations are omitted. Neumann indeed does not yet dare to polemicize directly against Lenin. His method is to quote Lenin and then modify the quotation by his own interpretation in such a way as to negate Lenin's statement. So much importance did Lenin place on monopoly as a characteristic of imperialism that he declared:³

"If it were only a question of the shortest definition of imperialism, then one could say that imperialism is the monopolistic stage of capitalism. Such a definition would embrace the most important characteristic of imperialism."

He then elaborates, pointing out that this embraces not only the aspect of the fusion of industrial with bank capital into finance capital but also the monopoly of the colonies, thus bringing about a struggle for the redistribution of colonies. The *Program of the Comintern* points out that at the beginning of the twentieth century, the period of free competition was replaced by the period of imperialism during which free competition rapidly gave way to monopoly.

"The law of the concentration and centralization of capital led to the formation of powerful combines (cartels, syndicates, trusts) to new forms of gigantic combinations of enterprises, linked up into one system by the banks."

*"Free competition of the period of industrial capitalism . . . became itself transformed into finance capital monopoly"*⁴

Lenin continually emphasized that imperialism, as a stage of capitalism, has characteristics quite different from the previous stage of free competition, and he emphasized nothing so much as the substitution of monopoly for free competition.

"Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the essential qualities of capitalism in general. But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and a very high stage in its development when certain of its essential qualities began to be transformed into their opposites. The feature that is economically essential in this process is the substitution of capitalist monopolies for capitalist free competition."

*"Free competition is the fundamental quality of capitalism and of commodity production generally. Monopoly is exactly the opposite of free competition, but we have seen the latter beginning to be transformed into monopoly before our very eyes, creating big industry and eliminating small, replacing big industry by still bigger industry, finally leading to such a concentration of production and capital that monopoly has been and is the result."*⁵

It is in this clear manner that Lenin put the question, precisely, as we shall see later, to destroy the arguments of the opportunists that the tendency towards and the actual existence of monopoly eliminates the possibility of the proletarian revolution!

(Concluded in the next issue)

1 Of course it is not deemed necessary to publish exactly what Comrade Bukharin actually says. We are therefore compelled to judge Bukharin's point of view from the distorted and broken citations contained in the polemic against him. But the general line of argument is clear enough.

2 Lenin: *Imperialism*, Chap I.

3 Lenin: *Imperialism*, Chap. VII.

4 Program of the C.I., p. 4.

5 Lenin: *Imperialism*, Chap VII.