

MS/2 77

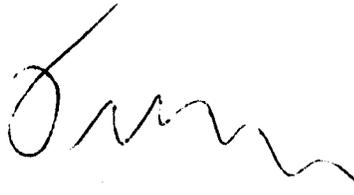
X-PC, NFOs

Jack:

Thought you might find this of some interest. I thought it might be helpful to stimulate these people to think about Healy as well as perhaps to blast him in their respective countries. Could do no harm.

I gave a copy to Gerry Foley who is writing in IP on the article and to Fred F. who needless to say is no lover of Stalinism.

Tim

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tim", written in dark ink.

254 Kingsland Ave.  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11222  
May 2, 1977

Alan Thornett

Dear Alan,

I have just read Banda's statement on Soviet dissidents, "Carter's Fifth Column", and I felt compelled to drop you a note. I am not usually shocked by what I read coming from the WRP but this certainly seems to me to be a certain turning point in their degeneration in a Stalinist direction.

The dissident movement is lumped together and considered as a whole an "insidious disease", "a semi-legal Frankenstein monster whose body is in Russia but whose head remains in Washington" and "reactionary Nowhere in the article does Banda defend the rights of dissidents to democratic freedom within the workers States.

What a sharp contrast from the position Healy took in 1956-58 in defense of the Hungarian Revolution despite the fact that here or there in that revolution reactionary elements were around.

Of course the dissident movement is highly heterogenous and includes elements which are pro-capitalist as well as those who are socialists, and some who identify with the Bolshevik tradition and thus are quite close to Trotskyism politically. We cannot expect such elements to develop complete theoretical clarity in isolation within the USSR, and we can certainly expect the capitalists to play up precisely those elements which are pro-capitalist. But we must take a principled position in defence of the general struggle for democratic rights for all in the workers states as long as they do not take actions to overthrow the property forms there. At the same time we politically struggle against the wrong political positions some of them hold. We see the main threat of restoration coming from the repressive apparatus of the bureaucracy and not from those to rebel against this apparatus whatever their political confusion.

Nor can we simply state that this movement among intellectuals has no connection with the working class and will in the future not establish such a connection. Poland is the most advanced example of how a dissident movement can form links with the working class. There the dissidents are involved in raising funds to aid the families of workers to struck against the bureaucracy to defend their living conditions.

I see no difference in what Banda says and what I read here in the Moscow puppet American CP. The argumentation appears similar to that used by Marcy around Hungary which led him into the Maoist camp as well as the reaction of Pablo and Co, to the East German Uprising. The reasoning appears to be unless and until a "pure" proletarian uprising takes place led by sections of the IC the bureaucracy must be defended and support against any opposition as

the only way to safeguard the socialist property forms.

I was struck by the phrase "The deformed dictatorship of the working class exercised through a bureaucracy...." I do not believe you will find such formulations in Trotsky's writings on Stalinism after 1933. You will find such an approach in Pablo's early writings of the 1950-54 period. I have not seen anything recent from him but I would not be surprised if he persists in such an approach.

Trotsky saw the dictatorship of the proletariat persisting in the USSR primarily through the continued existence of the socialist property forms. He also gave credit to the socialist consciousness of the working class as an indirect expression of the weakened persistence of this dictatorship. But he saw the bureaucracy differently.

Trotsky viewed this bureaucracy as the usurper of the political dictatorship of the proletariat of the USSR. This usurpation however has not been fully competed in that it has not yet led to the overturn of the new property forms. The bureaucracy, of course, will under certain circumstances defend these property forms in a bureaucratic manner, as it did during World War II and in extending these forms throughout East Europe after the war. And yet it works all the time to undermine these forms and stands as the single greatest threat to these forms within the workers states.

To view the dictatorship of the workers as being "exercised" in a "deformed" manner "through a bureaucracy" is to create a theoretical basis for capitulation to Stalinism and leads, as it does in this incidence, to the defense of this bureaucracy against growing internal opposition.

There are several related points in the article to be touched upon.

(1) Czechoslovakia. Since Banda characterizes Dubcek as a "restorationist" has the WRP now come to the conclusion that it was wrong in 1968 to oppose the Soviet intervention which was justified on precisely that line? Of course there was a social democratic side to Dubcek and some of those around him in 1968 but was not the main thrust of those events an opening of workers democracy, a ferment which reached deep in the masses against bureaucracy? I believe it was fear of the movement in the working class in Czechoslovakia which led to the intervention. Banda, like Marcy, appears to have no confidence in the working class to fight for its own interests against both the bureaucracy and any who might seek restoration. He appears, however, to have quite a bit of confidence in the bureaucracy.

(2) Euro-Communism. I do not believe this tendency is to be simply dismissed as "right wing" and having abandoned the defense of the USSR. If we so judge them then the Moscow-Communists must be left wing and committed to the defense of the USSR. This, again, is the way Moscow and its agents pose the problem. I do not believe there is a difference in substance between the two wings of Stalin-

3-3-3

ism on either domestic issues in relation to their bourgeoisie or in their willingness of capacity to serious act in defense of the workers states. We can rely on neither faction for either task. Also I believe the Euro-Communists are seeking to demagogically deal with the very real resentment and hatred of Stalinism among masses of European workers. Banda, for all his slanders over the GPU, does not seem to share this hostility felt by ordinary workers.

(3) Plyusch. It is true Plyusch shared a platform with Jackson despite our urgings upon him not to, and therefore we refused to support this particular meeting. But Plyusch is not to be placed in the same category as Bukovsky and Solzhenitsyn. He is an outspoken and committed socialist with hostility to American imperialism. He made a serious mistake in this case and he should have--as we did--be taken up for it. But this does not make him a restorationist or a representative of "bureaucratic opinion."

Now we know that Banda in particular, as a long history within the SLL-WRP as a pro-Stalinist (the Red Guards idealization, Ho Chi Minh's laudatory obituary, the military genius of General Giap, and the recent uncritical reaction to the NLF's victory in Vietnam no doubt inspired by Banda). The man is now General Secretary of the WRP and of course we know Healy still runs the show, but Banda has more weight within the leadership than he had for some time. He came forward precisely in the purging of you, Dimitris and myself. Then there is Lydia.

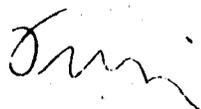
Also we know that there exists within the WRP a completely bureaucratic authoritarian set-up, with various types of corruption and funds, internal terror against potential oppositionists, ultra-left rantings combining with a keen sense of opportunism when it fits in.

Healy used to justify his regime by demanding that his opponents explain its social roots. We know it is rooted internally in a petty bourgeois layer of the party and that a miniscule grouping can survive for a period on such a basis. But could it be that today he is becoming a mini-bureaucracy in search of a social strata, a power base? A group for hire?

In any event I would like to hear from you on this matter and perhaps you will take it up in your press if you haven't already.

Comradely,

Tim



cc: Dimitris