

The Idea of Equality and the Bolsheviks



The 14th Congress of the Russian Communist Party has roundly condemned the notion of equality. Prior to the congress, Zinoviev had mentioned the idea in the course of his polemic against Ustrialov and Bukharin. He declared then that the whole of contemporary philosophy was sustained by the idea of equality. Kalinin spoke up forcefully at the congress against that contention, taking the line that any reference to equality could not help but be harmful and was not to be tolerated. His reasoning was as follows:

"Can we talk to peasants about equality? No, that is out of the question, for in that case, they would set about demanding the same rights as workers, which would be in complete contradiction with the dictatorship of the proletariat. Likewise, can we talk of equality to workers? No, that is out of the question too, for if, say, a communist and a non-party member do the same job, the difference resides in the former being paid twice the wage of the latter. To concede equality would allow non-party members to demand the same pay as is paid out to a communist. Is that acceptable, comrades? No, it is not. Can we call for equality among communists then? No, that is not on either, for they too occupy different positions, in terms of their rights and their material circumstances alike."

On the basis of such considerations, Kalinin concluded that Zinoviev's use of the term "equality" could only have been demagogic and harmful. In his reply, Zinoviev in turn told the congress that, whilst he had spoken of equality, he had meant it in quite a different sense. As for himself, all he had had in mind was "socialist equality," that is, the equality that would one day come to pass in a more or less distant future. For the time being, until such time as the world revolution had taken place and as there was no way of knowing when it would, there could be no question of any equality. In particular, there could be no equality of rights, for that would risk dragging us in the direction of very dangerous "democratic" deviations.

This understanding on the notion of equality was not spelled out in a resolution from the congress. But, essentially, the two camps that clashed at the congress were agreed in regarding the idea of equality as intolerable.

Formerly, and not all that long ago, the Bolsheviks spoke quite a different language. It was under the banner of equality that they operated during the great Russian revolution, to overthrow the bourgeoisie, in concert with the workers and peasants, at whose expense they rose to political control over the country. It was under those colors that, after eight years of ruling over the lives and liberties of the toilers of the former Russia - henceforth to be known as the "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" the Bolshevik tsars sought to persuade the toilers of that "Union", (oppressed by them), as well as the toilers from other countries (which they do not yet control), that if they have persecuted, left to rot in prison or deported and murdered their political enemies, this has been done exclusively in the name of the revolution, its egalitarian foundations (which they allegedly had introduced into the revolution) which their enemies supposedly wished to destroy.

It shall soon be eight years since the blood of anarchists began to flow because of their refusal to servilely bow before the violence or effrontery of those who have seized power, nor before their famously lying ideology and their utter irresponsibility.

In that criminal act, an act that cannot be described as other than a bloodlust of the Bolshevik gods, the finest offspring of the revolution have perished because they were the most loyal exponents of revolutionary ideals and because they could not be bribed into betraying them. In honestly defending the precepts of the revolution, these children of the revolution sought to fend off the madness of the Bolshevik gods and find a way out of their dead end, so as to forge a path to real freedom and genuine equality of the toilers.

The Bolshevik potentates quickly realized that the aspirations of these children of the revolution would spell doom for their madness and above all for the privileges they adroitly inherited from the toppled bourgeoisie, then treacherously beefed up to their advantage. On these grounds they condemned the revolutionaries to death. Men with the souls of slaves supported them in this and the blood flowed. For the past eight years it has gone on flowing, and in the name of what, we might ask? In the name of freedom and equality of the toilers, say the Bolsheviks, continuing to exterminate thousands of nameless revolutionaries, fighters for the social revolution, labeled as "bandits" and "counter-revolutionaries."

With that shameless falsehood, the Bolsheviks have hidden the true state of affairs in Russia from the eyes of toilers the world over, particularly their utter bankruptcy in the matter of building socialism, when this is all too apparent to all who have the eyes to see.

Anarchists alerted toilers of every country in time to the Bolsheviks' crimes in the Russian revolution. Bolshevism, embodying the ideal of a centralizing State, has shown itself as the deadly enemy of the free spirit of revolutionary toilers. Resorting to unprecedented measures, it has sabotaged the development of the revolution and besmirched the honor of its finest aspect. Successfully disguised, it concealed its real face from the gaze of the toilers, passing itself off as the champion of their interests. Only now, after an eight years' reign, increasingly flirting with the international bourgeoisie, does it begin to cast aside its mask of revolution and expose to the world of labor the face of a rapacious exploiter.

The Bolsheviks have jettisoned the idea of equality, not just in practice but also in theory, for the very enunciation of it strikes them as dangerous now. This is quite understandable, for their entire rule depends on a diametrically contrasting notion, on a screaming inequality, the entire horror and evils of which have battered upon the backs of the workers. Let us hope that the toilers of every country may draw the necessary conclusions and, in turn, finish with the Bolsheviks, those exponents of the idea of slavery and oppressors of Labor.

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