

"Marxism - Leninism - Stalinism"

The Birth of a New "Ism"

by Bertram D. Wolfe

A Rival "Ism"

The Trotskyite "International" recently issued a manifesto (March 1932) denouncing this disgusting sycophantic practise of adopting resolutions of loyalty "to the Central Committee under the leadership of Comrade Stalin and the district committee under the leadership of Kaganovich" and ridiculing the "best disciple of Comrade Lenin" formula. But to what purpose? In order to claim the honor for Comrade Trotsky! The manifesto concludes: "Today just as on October 25, 1917, Trotsky remains together, with Lenin, the founder of the Soviet Republic, and the leader of the October revolution. . . . Trotsky too has raised the hero-cult to a system!"

Stalinism And The Stalinettes

As the system spreads. In each party Stalinism begets its embryo Stalinists who substitute power for genuine authority and build up their personality by press releases. So the German party has its Thaelmann (once removed as leader from below but reinstated by order from above), the French party has had a succession of leader-heroes removed too often for their names to stick, and so on. In the American party there is a

none-too-dignified struggle between Browder and Foster for the post of appointed party leader. And Comrade Amter, thru the accident of reaching his fiftieth year on earth while fiftieth anniversaries were on the order of the day, got a birthday celebration, a mass meeting on the subject and a central committee manifesto ending: "Long Live Comrade Amter". We have no objections! May he live to be a hundred! But not as a matter of principle! Not as a thesis! Not in a central committee manifesto! Not as an issue for a mass meeting or a slogan to rally the American working class!

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Manuilsky As A Press Agent

But to Manuilsky, leading member of the executive committee of the Communist International, probably go the flatterer's crown and the courtier's insignia of office. In his report to the twelfth plenum of the International on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution we find: "If the proletariat of the world is marching resolutely towards stormy events, towards great class struggles, stopping into a second round of revolutions and wars, realizing its readiness for these conflicts, if all this is true, this is the historical merit of Comrade Stalin."

When Lenin was alive, he permitted no talk of "Leninism". His fiftieth birthday was no signal for personal tribute, flattery or adulation. No town was named "Leninograd" during his lifetime. No resolution pledged "loyalty to the Central Committee under the leadership of Comrade Lenin."

When the heroic fighter, Clara Zetkin, reached her sixty-seventh birthday, the fifth congress of the Communist International, then in session, tried to make a festive occasion out of it. Her speech was far from "appropriate" to the adulation: "... Such official honors go against my deepest feelings. That I am old is my personal misfortune but no merit. If I have fought my whole life for the party, for the thoughts of the revolution... that was the happiness of my life. . . . To my thinking, every man and every woman, whether sixty-seven years old or older or younger, who call themselves Communists if they have really fought, deserve the same honor."

Engels surely contributed more to the development of Marxism than Stalin to the development of Leninism and was a closer collaborator with Marx than ever Stalin with Lenin, yet we cannot imagine Engels squabbling for the title "best disciple of Comrade Marx" or encouraging the invention of the term "Engelsism!"

Thruout the Soviet Union today and thruout the Communist International, there is an organized campaign for the development of a new "ism"—"Stalinism". Stalin's fiftieth birthday was celebrated with incense and flattery. His picture is the favorite cover illustration of every periodical from "Kino", the movie review, to "Krokodil", the humorous magazine. His photograph appears as often and as universally on the Russian magazine covers as the "Gibson Girl" or Greta Garbo on the covers of American magazines. Towns and factories and clubs and streets are named after him. His speech on the Five-Year Plan was set to music! On his fiftieth birthday, the State Publishing House put out a 270-page book for 30 kopeks (15 cents) in 300,000 copies with the following table of contents: "The Bulwark of Bolshevism", by Kalinin; "Stalin and Industrialization", by Kuybishev; "Stalin and the Party", by Kaganovich; "Stalin, the Leader of the Comintern", by Manuilsky; "Stalin and the Red Army", by Voroshiloff; "Stalin and the Bolshevization of the Sections of the Comintern", by Kuusinen; "Stalin, the Theoretician of Leninism", by Adoratsky; "The Iron Bolshevik", by Orjonikidze; "The Steel Soldier of the Bolshevik Guard", by Nikayan; "Leninist Organizer and Leader", by Bubnov; "Stalin Continues the Works of Lenin", by Saveliev. Such words were written, such speeches spoken of Lenin after his death and for reasons of a different order, but, apparently Stalin insists upon being embalmed and worshipped while yet alive!

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Tribute From The Vanquished

When Lenin defeated opposing viewpoints in the party, he carefully avoided any hint of a personal triumph. He was interested in defeating wrong views, not in annihilating opponents or scoring advantages. His method was not so much to defeat opposing comrades as to convince them and, having convinced them, he did his best not to destroy but to preserve. Under the Stalin regime, opponents in the party are not convinced but silenced, not silenced merely, but compelled to make annual statements on solemn occasions of the "mea culpa" type, ending with humiliation (not merely for them but for Communism) hymns of praise to Stalin's name. There must have been just a touch of irony in Bukharin's "confession" repeated for the third successive year when he recently declared: "Comrade Stalin has conquered (!) the right to the leadership of the party."

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In The International

Nor is the situation any better in the other sections of the Inter-

national. When Stalin "celebrated" the fiftieth anniversary of his entrance into existence, each party central committee was expected and directed to adopt a resolution and send a cable of adulation. When his wife died, the leaders of the various parties cabled condolences, for all the world like bourgeois diplomats cabling a ruler on the death of his consort.

The press of the other sections of the Comintern apes the press of the Soviet Union. The "Daily Worker" of January 19, bears a picture of Stalin headed; "Points Out Tasks!" and beneath it are the headlines: "Stalin Fixes the Fault of Defect In Grain Areas.—Stalin Analyses Work in Village.—Blames Defects on the Party Members."

Such pictures and such headlines are typical. They do not appear oftener, merely because Stalin rarely opens his mouth. But that does not prevent the "Daily Worker" from publishing resolutions of the "under the leadership of Comrade Stalin" and "best disciple of Comrade Lenin" type and even editorials like the one on the anniversary of the Workers School in which it is explained that the school teaches the principles of Marxism and Leninism as developed and interpreted "by the best disciple of Lenin, Comrade Stalin!"

For Labor Unity Against The Fascist Menace!

THE UNITED YOUTH CONFERENCE AGAINST FASCISM

New York City.

Fascism's triumph in Germany is a severe blow not only to the working masses of Germany but to the international proletariat as well. Fascism spells growing reaction in every capitalist country, a new and more concentrated offensive against the U. S. S. R.

In this situation it is imperative that we create the broadest possible basis for a united front of labor against that of capital. In this tactical approach lies the strength of the working class.

However, the demoralized state of the labor movement in general and the split in Communist ranks in particular, greatly injure the possibilities for such a broad appeal. As a result, we find springing up here and there isolated attempts at united front action, which are, at best, very much limited in scope, attracting not a cross section of the American labor movement, which it must do in order to be effective, but directing its appeal to one section of the working class or another, each acting by itself rather than displaying one united effort in the struggle against Fascism.

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The Nature Of The Conference

With this in mind we approach the recent united front conference against Fascism which was sponsored by the Rand School Students Association. This conference started out primarily as a Workers Schools Conference. The delegation of the New Workers School expressed itself for broadening out this conference to include all youth organizations regardless of political affiliations and for this youth conference to approach the leading bodies of the political parties of the working class, the various tendencies in the labor movement, the American Federation of Labor, etc. that they take the initiative in the calling of a broad united front to appeal and to embrace all sections of the working class, of which the youth movement must and should be an integral part. This opinion prevailed and along these lines we proceeded to work for the broad conference scheduled for March 24 and the demonstration to follow on April 1.

Many forces came into play in the provisional committee set up. It must be recognized that the Rand School Students Association issued this call for united front in all

by Eva Stone

sincerity, that, since this was not in line with the official position of the Young Peoples Socialist League but rather an expression of the "militants" in the Y. P. S. L., much pressure was brought to bear upon the delegation of the Rand School to break with the conference, which break took place the night before the April demonstration. The Rand School delegates worked with the provisional committee in an effort to swing the Young Peoples Socialist League into this united front. These efforts were of no avail. The Y. P. S. L. did not participate in this united front and influenced the Young Circle League, etc., to stay out and not participate in the conference and demonstration.

The provisional committee took great pains to make the March 24 conference a genuine united front in which all elements would have adequate expression—the apportionment of delegates, the guarantee that every political tendency and every type organization would have its place in the conference committees and permanent body to be elected by the conference, etc.

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But The Past Weighs Heavy

The March 24 conference was looked forward to as the first genuine united front with Y. C. L. participation since the crisis in the Communist movement. There was every expectation that the Young

Communist League would break with its "united front from below" craze which spelled sectarianism, disunity rather than unity in every united front attempt. It was expected that the report of the provisional committee would determine the course of the conference. It is to be regretted, however, that the reporter, a delegate of the Workers School (also a member of the Y. C. L.), pursued the same old line in his report as has been followed by the official Communist Party and the Y. C. L. for the last four years. This speech called forth bitter resentment on the part of the League membership who wanted to carry out seriously the new turn of the Communist International.

This report dealt a serious blow to the conference. Instead of reporting in line with the spirit of the provisional committee, the entire report was devoted to an attack on the Rand School and the Young People's Socialist League instead of focusing the attention of the conference on the struggle against Fascism, splitting tactics were employed, leaving us less able to combat the common enemy.

Those delegates who were present saw for themselves the dangers of a wrong tactical line. The damage was done. The Y. C. L. delegation was forced to come into the second session of the conference on Saturday and apologize for its position of the night before; the statement charged that both the Rand School delegate who opened the conference and the reporter for the provisional committee (Y. C. L. member) were responsible for creating confusion rather than clarity at a time when clarity and unity are most needed.

The role of the Trotskyites was of particular interest. They trailed behind the Young Communist League and wherever the Y. C. L. delegates made an effort to approach and work in the united front in a new spirit it was none other than the Trotskyites who revived the old line and tactical approach.

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The Role Of The Y.P.S.L.

The role of the Young Peoples Socialist League was decidedly against this united front. True, there are differences in the leading committees and in the ranks of the Socialists on this question,

In other words, Stalin invented class struggle!

An extract from the same speech was published in the "Communist" for January 1933. It bristles with such phrases as "firm and tried leadership", "true comrade-in-arms" and "best disciple", "Leninist firmness and flexibility, 'steel-like determination,'" etc. But far more serious is the series of historical parallels:

"Marx and Engels gave to the international proletariat the theory of scientific socialism. . . . The great name of Lenin is linked with Leninism as the Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution. . . . In the minds of the toilers of our country and of the international proletariat, the whole period of socialist construction and its victory in the U. S. S. R. is linked with the name of Comrade Stalin. . . . In his reports, speeches and articles he developed the teachings of Marx and Lenin and adapted them to the first phase of communism (socialism). Stalin's articles, such as 'The Year of Great Change', his speeches, as the one delivered at the conference of Marxist agronomists, or the one delivered at the conference of business managers on the mastery of technique, Stalin's six points, are not only directives for our party, not only historical landmarks of our achievements and victories they are documents of tremendous theoretical importance for the whole Comintern, documents whose significance is not confined to our country or to our times. . . ."

Thus does a leader of International, reporting to its twelfth plenum, lay the basis for the birth of a new "ism". The significance and contents of this "ism" we will consider in a later issue.

but the official action in abstaining from conference and demonstration still remains a criminal one. Lip-service is far from adequate. Both the Socialist and Communist Internationals have declared in favor of a united front against growing reaction. This must not remain a theoretical expression. The members of the Young Peoples Socialist League must not rest quiet at this time. This question must be discussed in the circles of the Y. P. S. L., a decision reached that would sweep the entire Y. P. S. L. organization into this united front movement.

Thru the efforts of the Communist Youth Opposition and the New Workers School, the conference preserved its unity in spite of the actions of the Y. C. L. We do not stop here. The permanent committee elected must proceed along the line of the resolutions adopted by the conference, exert pressure upon the organizations mentioned so that we might lay the basis for a united front that will be all-embracing, that will strike blows at the very heart of our own imperialist power and, in that way, give direct support to the revolutionary forces of the proletariat in Germany. Along this line we must work unhesitatingly, preparing the masses of the country for active resistance against the American bourgeoisie.

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