

STALIN

The «Second Lenin's» 50th Year

“Every social epoch,” said Marx, invoking the words of Helvetius, “demands its great men; when they do not exist, it invents them.” Well, Stalin is the great man “invented” by the period of the reaction against October.

—L. D. TROTSKY

The entire Stalinist press, obedient to the wishes of its master, is now engaged in publishing columns of praise for Joseph Stalin on his fiftieth anniversary. He is hailed as a “second Lenin”! His “bolshhevik” past is lavishly described. His “great” contributions to the Communist Party and the October Revolution are recounted in detail. His alleged sagacity, his theoretical profundity, his practical ability, his fine personal qualities are invented or exaggerated and spread from Moscow to New York and back again. In order that the militants may see through the false glamor with which Stalin has had himself surrounded, and know the real Stalin, we will briefly note some of the high spots—few as they were—in his career in the revolutionary movement. We condense them from a brilliant study by comrade Trotsky.

One of Stalin's first appearances in the Russian Party was in 1911. At that time Lenin had formed a bloc with Plechanov for the struggle against the liquidators and conciliators. Stalin's theoretical contribution to this struggle was a gesture of contempt. He called it a “foreign tempest in a glass of water.” In his letter of January 24, 1911, published in a Tiflis Party paper in 1925, he continued: “In gener-

“From the age of 19, Stalin was set like steel to 100 percent Bolshevism, from which he never deviated a hair's breadth.”

—Comrade Walter Duranty, in the New York Times anniversary article on Stalin, 12-22-1929.

al, the workers are beginning to look upon the foreign groups (i. e., upon the group around Lenin) with disdain; let them get into a rage to their heart's content; we, however, think that he who really has the interests of the movement at heart, works—the rest (i. e., the struggle against liquidationism!) passes on.”

Semi-Social Patriotism

During the whole time of the preparation of the revolutionary forces, Stalin, of course, played the minor role to which his nationally-minded “talents” were fitted. In the period after the Kerensky revolution which overthrew the czar, Stalin adopted a semi-social patriotic viewpoint and wrote articles in Pravda—while Lenin was still in Switzerland—for the “defense of the fatherland,” that is, for the bourgeois government of Kerensky. In fact, his viewpoint was that the Bolsheviks should unite with Tseretelli, the outspoken social patriot. In the minutes of the May 1917 Bolshevik Party conference, one can read:

“Order of business: Tseretelli's proposal for unity.

“Stalin: We must accept. We must define our proposals to realize unity. A unification is possible on the basis of Zimmerwald-Kienthal. . . Differences should neither be anticipated nor warned against. Without differences there is no Party life (so!). Once inside the Party we will liquidate the little differences.”

In the uprising of the Bolsheviks themselves, on November 7, Stalin played no particularly prominent role. But for that he has been attempting for years to minimize if not entirely eliminate the dominant role played by comrade Trotsky. Unfortunately for all his later “discoveries,” he had written in Pravda on November 6, 1918: “All the practical work of organizing the insurrection took place under the immediate direction of Trotsky, chairman of the Petrograd Soviet. It may be said with certainty that with regard to the rapid passing of the garrison to the side of the Soviet and the organization of the work of the revolutionary war committee, the Party owes it primarily and above all to comrade Trotsky.”

Conflicts with Lenin

The first six years of the Russian revolution passed by without Stalin's name being heard of outside a narrow circle of Russian Party workers. And this, not because of any modesty on his part, but merely because of his lack of interest in

international affairs and his complete alienation from all work in the Comintern. And inside the Russian republic itself, his role was a highly colorless one. Where he did attempt to come forth with some “original” idea of his own, it was invariably in conflict with Lenin's viewpoint and earned the latter's immediate condemnation.

So it was with the differences on the national question, in connection with the Georgian Soviet republic. So far did Stalin go from Lenin's standpoint, and so brutally did he conduct himself towards the Georgian comrades, that Lenin was obliged to address a series of letters to Kamenev, Trotsky, Mdivani, Macharadze and others urging them to take up the fight for him at the Party session against Stalin. Lenin de-

“Lenin trusted Stalin beyond any other, save perhaps Dzerzhinsky.”

—Comrade Walter Duranty, in the New York Times anniversary article on Stalin, 12-22-1929.

nounced Stalin for his “veritably Russian nationalism,” informed Trotsky that he “could not rely upon his impartiality,” and that he was “revolted by the brutality of Ordjonikidze and the tolerance of Stalin and Dzerzhinsky.” The hundred percent defenders of Stalin's modernized version of “Leninism” have never published Lenin's letters on the national question; on the contrary, their circulation in Russia is a “counter-revolutionary” offense.

Lenin's Bomb Against Stalin

From statements made by Lenin's private secretary and by his wife, it has since become established that “Lenin was preparing a bomb against Stalin” at the Thirteenth Party Congress. In his article on bureaucracy, Lenin directed his attacks essentially against Stalin. And finally, according to the statement made by Zinoviev in July 1926, Lenin sent a letter to Stalin in which he announced “the rupture of all comradely relations” with the latter.

Were this not sufficient to stamp this “faithful disciple of Lenin,” there is the deadly characterization made of him in Lenin's Testament. In clear and unmistakable language, Lenin takes the measure of Stalin and proposes that the Party rid itself of him! In this letter, now known as his “Testament,” he writes:

“Comrade Stalin, having become general secretary, has concentrated an enormous power in his hands; and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution. On the other hand, comrade Trotsky, as was proved by his struggle against the Central Committee in connection with the question of the People's Commissariat of Ways of Communication, is distinguished not only by his exceptional abilities—personally he is, to be sure, the most able man in the present Central Committee; but also by his too far-reaching self-confidence and a disposition to be attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs. . . .

“Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us Communists, becomes insupportable in the office of general secretary. Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and ap-

How Many Times Can a Dead «ism» Die?

After having been assured for the three thousandth time by the Daily Worker and its associated assurers that Trotskyism was dead and disintegrated, we turned, purely by accident, to the current number of the Inprecorr, No. 64, which contains a report on the internal situation in the Russian Communist Party by one of the leading Stalinists, S. Kossior (not to be confused with the Oppositionist Kossior). He informs us:

“In connection with our growing differences of opinion with the Right Bucharin group (they disappeared since then!—Ed.), we must also take into account the small ‘Left’ group existing among the youth. I refer to the actions of comrades Schatzkin and Stan and their followers. Great difficulties and changes in our life are always accompanied by great vacillations in our ranks. And if we are able to observe the actions of the Right opposition, on the other hand, it is a matter of course that there also are with us representatives of Trotskyist tendencies.

“It is not by chance that the Party has to fight on two fronts: against the Right and against the Left’, against the Trotsky-

ist point to it another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority—namely, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstance may seem an insignificant trifle, but I think that from the point of view of preventing a split and from the point of view of the relations between Stalin and Trotsky which I discussed above, it is not a trifle, or it is such a trifle as may acquire a decisive significance.” (January 4, 1923).

Pravda has printed scores of articles on Stalin's anniversary. Bubnov, Molotov, Voroschilov and many other satellites of the regime have had their say on the “second Lenin”. Why did Pravda omit to print what the “first” Lenin had to say about Stalin? Why has the Daily Worker failed to give its readers the faintest inkling of what Lenin thought of Stalin? Because to do this would destroy the whole monstrous myth that has been built up around the man.

The Hero of the Period of Reaction

Stalin's “achievements” after Lenin's death are too well known to require extensive comment. His work was essentially distinguished by the base, reactionary, disloyal campaign lasting six years and still under way against Trotsky and “Trotskyism”. That he virtually split the Bolshevik party in the process, worried him not in the least and only bore out the keen-sighted predictions of Lenin in 1923. It is Stalin who is one of the authors of the national-reformist theory of “socialism in one country.” He is the chief defender of the “bloc of four classes” in China, of tying the Chinese proletariat and Communist Party to the triumphant chariot of the Chinese executioners, Chiang Kai-Shek and Wang Chin Wei. He is the spokesman of the policy which subjected the interests of the Russian and British working class to a bloc with the traitors of the British

“Stalin represents not only Leninism but the desire and aims of the strongest, youngest and boldest section of modern Russia.”

Comrade Walter Duranty, in the New York Times anniversary article on Stalin, 12-22-1929.

General Council of Trade Unions after and during the General Strike. He together with Bucharin, is the representative of the period of reaction in which the Soviet Union leaned towards the Kulak, the Nepman and bureaucrat and away from the workers and poor peasants.

The “second Lenin” rose to power by trampling Leninism under foot. The “second Lenin” makes a mockery of the man whose name he has taken with shameless vanity. The real heritage of Lenin and Leninism is embodied in the places of exile and banishment to which Stalin has sent the fighters of the Opposition. The victory of Leninism will be achieved when they are returned to the rightful places they occupied at the helm of the Soviet state and the Communist International, and when the prophetic advice given by Lenin on Stalin—so crudely and cynically suppressed by the international Stalinist press—is carried out into real life.

ists and all sorts of Trotskyist and semi-Trotskyist tendencies. . . It is here a question of minor errors which, however, in their further development can lead to a break with the Party and to a going over into Trotskyist paths.”

But why in the name of common sense, or any other kind of sense, should the Russian Party carry on a fight against Trotskyism? Why should it tilt at non-existing windmills? Why should it throw stones at a mirage? Haven't we been told that Trotskyism is dead? that it has disintegrated completely? that it is finally liquidated? In our own dull way, we can even understand the necessity of a fight against the Right front. But why a fight on two fronts? Is there a Trotskyist danger? But we thought it was all over and done with. Stalin is playing us a shabby trick. Either he has been fibbing all the while (which is practically incredible. . .) or else he is disturbing a political graveyard by playing the ghoul. And we think that even a Stalinist ought to have some regard for the “dead”!

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Read and Subscribe to the Militant

BROWDER

The New Defender of Stalinism

Since the taking over of the Party apparatus by “Win the War” Foster and his new bureaucrats, the job of defending Stalinism (by hook and crook) has fallen, as everyone knows, to Earl Browder. To those who know Browder this is very amusing. Browder's chief claim to distinction, as already been pointed out in the Militant, rests mainly on his frequent mistakes and his passionate love for liberal bourgeois sociology. But, apparently at least, Browder is sitting on top of the world. He has realized his secret ambition.

The Party's Don Quixote

True enough, the victory is a bit hollow. Patch it as you will, its artificial character shows through. No one, not even Earl's brother, Bill, who was always too ready to admit that Earl was a genius, is convinced of its genuineness. All the “merciless logic” of Earl Browder and his mania for lumping things together cannot hide the fact that Browder and the other latter-day saints were lifted into power on the wings of circumstance, by grace of the Stalin regime. To tell the plain truth, if you examine the facts at all, Browder's new glory bears a striking resemblance to that of the other great knight-errant, Don Quixote. However, Browder, if somewhat uncomfortable, for the moment seems content with his new job.

When I read the puny drivel of Browder's in the Daily Worker, I am reminded of Browder as I knew him before the war. His evolution is a strange one. He always had a distaste for plain workers. He did not like to have what he considered rough-neck elements coming into meetings where he was present. They occasionally wore overalls to meetings and their trousers were seldom properly pressed. Moreover, and this was the worst crime of all, they were unfamiliar with the works of Emily Post.

He tolerated them at meetings as a sort of necessary evil. He limited himself to indirect scoldings for the rough-necks, much to the discomfiture of Earl, did not hesitate to reply in kind. But after the meetings, in little tea rooms among his close friends, he would take little underhanded digs at them for their uncouthness, their unstylish clothing and their neglect of Emily Post. He lumped society into groups—the well-behaved fellows and great unwashed.

It is something of a changed Browder who today, in his safe retreat behind the columns of the Daily Worker, clumsily and apishly hurls brickbats at the Communist Opposition. He does not dare to sally forth on the platform with even the humblest Opposition supporter to defend his drivel. He is content to confine himself to the columns of the Daily Worker and sneak around occasionally and browbeat (with all the arguments of popery) some Opposition supporters and threaten them with all the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition. But he does not dare to disclose even to his closest friends how badly he was beaten, how the floor was mopped with his arguments by comrade Shorty Buehler in Kansas City.

As a sample of his ability as an observer, I am reminded of the time just before the Coolidge election when he came to Kansas City and predicted that the democrats would win by an overwhelming majority. Even a school-boy could see that it was the other way around. We party members generously refrained from laugh in his presence. We concluded that, all, perhaps he was doing the best he could. But after he left we all had a good giggle.

Fifteen Well-Spent Years

It took him fifteen years of in reading of Lester Ward and other bourgeois sociologists to discover what workers knew instinctively almost the day it came into the movement: that the and progressive leaders would betray workers in a crisis. He seemed to be lying under the impression that they would be won over to the party in great droves.

This is the new defender of the regime. It is one of the (slightly humorous) tragedies of Stalinism. The unfortunate readers of the Daily Worker have to hope for in the way of enlightenment from the pen of Earl Browder. They have to turn to the columns of where Browder's many past lies. His more recent ones have been exposed. We are sure that his brand of liberal bourgeois pseudo-will be thoroughly exposed by the in the future.

—MIL.