

Confusion Marks Stalinist Policy on Fight Against War

Student Conference Compromises Communism in Chicago Edition of Amsterdam; Yield Principled Positions

The Student Congress held in Mandel Hall, University of Chicago, on December 26th and 27th, gave further testimony to the political revision invoked upon the Communist movement by Stalinism. The congress signified that the struggle against imperialist war and militarism was the task not of the Communists and revolutionary workers, but of the students. The progenitor of this gathering was the Amsterdam Congress held in Brussels in the summer of 1932. For that occasion, the International Left Opposition presented an extremely sharp criticism of the present regime in the Communist International, because it turned the struggle against war over to an arbitrarily appointed group of pacifists, liberals, poets, musicians, artists, actors and what not, removing this decisive activity from the hands of the Communist International, and its sections.

Over the question of the war the working class movements during the war-years split. The culmination of years of political and theoretical struggle in the 2nd International came at the outbreak of the war when the leading party in the 2nd International, the German Social Democratic Party, voted for war credits. That action was a signal for the other Socialist Parties to follow suit. With each section of the Socialist International supporting its own fatherland, the doom of Social Democracy as the leader of the revolutionary proletariat was sealed. Out of the background of this collapse, rose the international Left wing which was later to form the Communist International. The attitude toward the war in particular, and militarism in general, was the burning question in those trying days, and upon which the attitude, the political fate of the movement depended.

Upon the experiences of the world war, the Communist International in its early years set for itself the task of clarifying the great confusion of that and made clear to the revolutionary movement that the struggle against war is one of the chief tasks of the Communists. It must at all times carry out a systematic agitation and propaganda against war. The ranks of the army must be penetrated by the Communists. In the event of war the aim of the Communists must be set upon transforming the imperialist war into a civil war. Upon concrete issues the Communists must initiate united front movements of the working class and its organizations against war and militarism. But above all do not entrust the struggle against war, to pacifists, to liberals, to the socialists, the petty-bourgeoisie or other such groupings. Unless the Communists direct the struggle against war, that struggle will in the end result in betrayal. Wasn't that the lesson of experience? Certainly! International pacifism, international social-democracy, international liberalism, betrayed the masses and came to the support of the imperialist conflicts. That is why it is all-important that in organizing united front movements against war, political policy must be absolutely correct. It is impossible to unite on the basis of an "agreement" on program with other political groupings. The basis for united front action is the concrete situation—but the Communists at no time surrender their political aims, modify them or alter them in the interests of forming united front action. That is why the Fourth Congress of the Young Communist International found it necessary to declare:

"The Young Communist International and the Young Communist Leagues, in close connection with the Party and paralleled with the struggle against bourgeois militarism and the danger of new imperialist wars must carry on a SPECIAL AGITATION, PROPAGANDA AND EDUCATION FOR THE INEVITABILITY OF THE CIVIL WAR, THE NECESSITY FOR MILITARY PREPARATION AND THE ARMING OF THE PROLETARIAT AND THE RIGHT TO DEFEND THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION BY FORCE OF ARMS, THAT IS TO SAY THE CREATION OF THE ARMED PROLETARIAN POWER, THE RED ARMY."

Not any artificially created organizations have the task of carrying on the general struggle against war, not the pacifists, or the liberals, but the Communists. Isn't that clear? The Communists do not conceive of war as an abstract issue but understand it as a product of the economic order of capitalism. The elimination of war and militarism will come about with the abolition of capitalism. Thus the struggle against war as an integral part of capitalism must be unified with the general social system and its replacement with Communism.

The Amsterdam Congress marked a departure from Communist principles. The Communist International, instead of organizing and leading the struggle against war, turned this task over to Barbusse, Rolland, Patel and others. Officially the Communist International was represented at the Congress. But the actual organization, of the Congress, its political program, its direction, was in the hands of an arbitrarily selected group who in reality represented nobody. Is it any wonder that the ripples created by Amsterdam have now settled to a dead calm? Confusion marked the program of that Congress. Genuine issues making necessary the existence of such a congress were not fully blossomed. The Congress in Amsterdam only succeeded in creating confusion on the question of the struggle against war. The Communists hid behind the veil of the congress.

How does the further confusion of

Amsterdam take place? It took place in the form of the organization of the American Committee against War, another arbitrarily selected committee of elements akin to those who organized the Amsterdam Congress. And just as the Amsterdam Congress not only formally but actually replaces the C. I. and YCL, as the organization to lead the struggle against war and militarism, so the American Committee against War, accomplishes the same end nationally. It was also, on the basis of a cable from the Amsterdam Congress, that the National Students League initiated the movement for the Student Congress Against War. Building upon the experience of Amsterdam and the American Committee Against War, the NSL arbitrarily organized a National Committee for the Student Congress Against War composed of a variety of elements representing numerous political views ranging from pacifism to Communism, but actually representing no organizations or members. It was this committee that organized and directed the congress. Behind this committee, as behind Amsterdam and the American Committee, stood the Communist party and the Young Communist League. Official Communism hid once more behind the cloak of a "National Committee". And so we witnessed again the spectacle of the Communists turning over the struggle against war to semi-Communists, pacifists, liberals, and anti-Communists. But what is outstanding in relation to this affair, is that for the first time since the organization of the C. I. and YCL, we are made to understand that the struggle against war and militarism is to be carried out this by the students, divorced from the working class and the class struggle.

Paying lip-service to the contrary, means nothing. The fact is that the first organized attempt to build an anti-war movement was turned over to the students. It is necessary to analyze this further. But before that, one other observation is necessary. Stalinism, which rejects the united front tactic as originated at the third and fourth congresses of the Comintern, and so much insisted upon by the Left Opposition, on the basis that they could not "unite with leaders", "but only from below", betrays itself on the question of war. Here of all places, the "united front from below" is completely forgotten and what does take place is a united front purely from the top, with individual and isolated leaders of various movements, without contact or control by the workers. It is but another instant of Stalinist zig-zags.

The advanced student in capitalist countries represents socially and ideologically the ruling class. The percentage of proletarian students is extremely small. Students do not play an independent role in the class struggle and for the most part they support capitalism and become its intellectual leaders. As a mass the students are reactionary. Only small sections of the students can be won to Communism or to the support of the proletariat. But under no circumstances can the students independently engage in struggle let alone lead any struggle against capitalism. That is the view that dominated the Young Communist International, at its inception. (At a future date the writer will present for discussion an article on the role of the student and National Student League). It is the task of the Communists to win support of the small minority of proletarian students and draw them into the struggle. That activity belongs to the Young Communist League. But what happened is that the student movement initiated the anti-war movement, gave it its leadership and only succeeded in realizing what Amsterdam has: confusion.

If our analysis of the student is correct (that analysis coincides with the resolution of the Young Communist International adopted at its 2nd congress) then it was utterly false to transfer the anti-war work into the hands of the students. Actually in relation to the youth, this task is one of the chief activities of the Young Communist League, which embodies in itself the glorious traditions of the world youth movement during the war days. But here again, following the logic of Amsterdam, the YCL, which should have initiated the movement was nowhere to be seen. It was not even represented at the congress. It was afraid to taint the congress with Communism. "Keep it pure" was the slogan, because the aim is to win the pacifists and liberals! That is how the pre-congress period looked. The stu-

AN APOLOGY

The burning importance of the New York United Conference on Unemployment made it necessary for us to carry over to next week the material we had planned to run in this issue on Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg.

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dents were organizing the movement against war and militarism!

Let us examine briefly the pre-congress period. First of all, a burning concrete issue was absent. Therefore the congress took on the character of a united front (among students!) for the drawing up of a program in the struggle against war. When it is understood that the whole affair was initiated by the Communists, the criminal nature of the understanding becomes clear. The working youth was not invited to the congress thereby cutting off all relations between the students and the workers. That was criminal act number two. In an effort to win the pacifists and liberals the call for the congress was addressed in the vaguest terms. What is more the congress call was false. It raised the cry for a struggle against war without specifying what kind of war. In popularizing the congress, the Soviet Union and its defense was not even mentioned. So close a sympathizer to the Communist movement as Carl Haessler, in speaking for the congress at one of the colleges in Chicago, did not mention the Soviet Union and its defense. When confronted with objections by members of the Spartacus Youth Club, he replied that if he were to do that it would drive the non-Communists away from the congress. Such and more marked all the activities of the NSL. The Young Communist League remained ignominiously silent during this whole period.

It was on of the above mentioned situation that the Spartacus Youth Club in Chicago issued two statements, one addressed to the National Students League and the other to the YCL, outlining our criticisms of the congress preparative and proposing the necessary changes. These statements were well received by the rank and file. The leadership, however, attempted to edge out from under the criticism with charges of "Leftism" and "sectarianism". The proposal to invite working class youth organizations to the congress, made by a member of the Spartacus Youth Club at a meeting of the high school division of the NSL, was defeated by the vote of members of the YCL. It was to be a

Daily Worker Decries Promoter of the Amsterdam Congress

Out of the clear blue sky, we read the following comment under the "International Notes" written by "Robert Hamilton" in the Daily Worker of January 23, 1933: "H. G. Wells, noted British novelist, has been engaged in a war of words with the London Morning Post, in which he endeavors to play the honest pacifist... Strange words, indeed, for the author of the Outline of History! We recall this to warn workers of the two-faced pacifists such as H. G. Wells, who ten years after the World War shrieks his anti-war attitudes to the four winds, but keeps his mouth shut about the bombing of Iraq tribesmen and Hindu revolutionists, and who will whop it up for murder again when the next imperialist conflict breaks out".

It would not be imagined from the violent tone of the Daily Worker that this is the first time that Wells has been endeavoring "to play the honest pacifist". Were "Robert Hamilton" to give the full story, it would prove to be an inconvenient revelation of the fact that only a few months ago, the whole international Stalinist press was not only engaged in a big publicity campaign for H. G. Wells and his kidney, presenting him to the militant workers as "honest pacifists" but also in helping the "two-faced pacifists" such as H. G. Wells to "shriek his anti-war attitudes to the four winds" through every megaphone the Comintern could put to his lips.

For Wells is one of the original signers of the Barbusse-Rolland-Stalin call for the notorious Amsterdam Congress which addressed itself to "all men and women of good will". While the Bolshevik-Levinists of the Left Opposition were virtually driven from the tribunes of the international and national "anti-war" conferences, the Wellises of every country were hailed by the Comintern apparatus and press as "honest pacifists", "sincere fighters against war", "reliable friends of the Soviet Union".

The Comintern abused the Opposition for demanding that an open call be addressed to the social democratic and reformist trade union organizations for a united front against the war danger. "We will not unite with the treacherous leaders." But the "honest pacifist fighters"—with them they not only united in pathetic harmony, but they deluded—and continue to delude—the class conscious workers with the idea that the miserable masquerade of Amsterdam was a powerful weapon of struggle against imperialist war. We of the Left Opposition, even under the hail of calumny, warned that the petty bourgeois literateurs, doctors, dentists, pacifists and generals without armies—represented nobody in particular and would add to the movement only deception and confusion. Wells is the first concrete example that the Stalinists themselves have been compelled to recognize—long after the fact and without any explanation. As a matter of fact, they "wisely" refrain from referring to Wells' co-initiation of the Amsterdam Congress. It would be a little... embarrassing.

If Wells is the first, there is no reason to think that he will be the last. The pamphlet recently issued on the Congress by the "American Committee", announces that among the delegates "two were French socialist members of the Chamber of Deputies, Hamon and

pure student gathering and the organizers made sure in advance that it would be tainted by delegates representing workers organizations.

The nature of the congress becomes clear. Its composition was woeful. There gathered some five or six hundred students. A majority represented the NSL, some socialists and pacifists, and a great number individual students. The agenda of the Congress was an un-serious one. For a Congress that was to take up the question of how the students should struggle against war, to work up a program and resolutions, one day was allotted to speeches by Communists, pacifists, and socialists. The various speeches did not help to clarify those gathered. At best confusion became more confounded. On the evening of the first day, study classes were held on various questions relating to war and militarism, directed by Communists, pacifists and socialists. And mind you, this was a congress. On the second day the practical questions of how to struggle against war, the resolutions, the election of the executive was to take place. Quite understandably, the proceedings the second day were rushed through with such speed that it was impossible for the delegates to actually assimilate its deliberations.

On the opening day of the congress the Spartacus Youth Club distributed a statement expressing the views of the Opposition youth on the congress and making concrete proposals to it. In addition to this statement the declaration of the International Left Opposition to the Amsterdam Congress was distributed. The Opposition pointed out in the statement the false nature of the congress, its failure to unite with the working youth, confusion in program, the need to adopt a revolutionary position in the struggle against war, the error in attempting to organize a permanent anti-war organizations and called upon the Young Communist League to issue an invitation for a broad united front conference of working class organizations to struggle on concrete issues against war.

(To be continued)
—ALBERT GLOTZER.

Poupy: another was Nicole, editor of Travail, a Swiss socialist paper. These socialists as a group passed a resolution in which they stated: "We decided to work zealously within our respective organizations to win them over for a united front against war, and for the defense of the Russian revolution...". Hamon and Poupy are still deputies; Poupy is even a member of the Permanent International Committee. As every two-year old child knows, France is the principal backer of Japan in its Manchurian adventure, and that in the most direct sense. What have Messrs. Hamon and Poupy said in the Chamber of Deputies—to say nothing about what they have done among the masses outside the Chamber—concerning the piratical war Japan is conducting in Manchuria, and the role of French imperialism in it? To our knowledge—nothing!

And the Amsterdam Committee itself, what is it doing about the erupting volcano in Manchuria which threatens to engulf the East in a new world war? It is doing the maximum it is capable of doing: nothing! The movement which was conceived as a joint substitute for the Communist struggle against imperialist war and the united front of all the workers for action against the war danger—proves to be impotent and passive when confronted by the first situation that calls for action. The Amsterdam Committee does not act—it cannot. It does not even speak. And what could it say about so acute and unambiguous a situation as the Manchurian conflict, what proposals could it make that would harmonize with the views of the Communists on the one hand, and the H. G. Wellises, Henri Barbusse, General von Schoenaichs and Ala Nazimovas on the other?

What the Opposition once said about the Anglo-Russian Committee, holds good for the Amsterdam Committee: At the moment of real crisis (when deeds are required and not merely words), as the danger of war and attack upon the Soviet Union becomes more acute, this Committee will reveal either its silent impotence or—its treachery of the illusions it aroused, or more accurately, of the illusions which the Stalinists aroused in its name.

Before the Communists are presented with new shocks in the form of the sudden discovery of new "Jingo H. G. Wells" (as the Daily Worker now calls him), this whole monstrosity of Amsterdam must be removed from the scene. Before the road can be clear, the obstacles must be cast aside. The Amsterdam masquerade is such an obstacle. The Communists must start from the beginning again. At the very outset, the party must renounce the opportunistic idea of forming a permanent organization with non-Communist elements for the "leadership" in the movement to educate the workers about the struggle against its oppressors. That is the function of the party alone. But the party must take the initiative in the formation of a united front of all workers' organizations, the socialist parties and the trade unions included, for a joint struggle based upon a minimum program of action, concrete and clearly defined, and not going (i. e., attempting to go) beyond the strict limits within which such a united front is inevitably circumscribed.

JAPAN Its Rise from Feudalism to Capitalist Imperialism and the Development of the Proletariat

By Jack Weber

Can there be any greater irony than that the Comintern, founded by Lenin and Trotsky, should urge the Japanese Communists to gain "legality" at any price, including the yielding of its own platform and program? What better object lesson is required of the extreme importance of maintaining unity of action through clarity of policy and unity of point of view—that is, through restriction of the membership of the Party to those advanced workers only, who accept Marxism and the Leninist concept of discipline—than the rich history of the Russian Bolshevik Party? And under what striking similarity of conditions! Yet history presented that irony in Japan as elsewhere. Fortunately the adventure proved in vain.

It is the function of the Party to utilize every vital activity of the proletariat to lead and direct the class along the road to power. In the light of its ultimate "illegal" revolutionary goal—the dictatorship of the proletariat—the Party demands democracy not for its own sake but for the political education of the masses, for their disillusioning with all reformist methods and objectives. The Party demands the "right" to propagate its own revolutionary platform and if this right jeopardizes democracy, so much the worse for democracy. The workers must fight for democracy, for legality of the Party, for reforms,—but this struggle must never leave the masses in doubt as to the position of the Communists who, taking the objective conditions of the moment and their future trend into account, advance the interests of the working-class as a whole so as to strengthen the class for further struggle along the road to power. Even those Communist parties that have achieved legality never forget for a single instant that they may, under changing circumstances, be forced underground.

Universal suffrage was granted to the Japanese workers under the strong pressure of the masses. But it bore also a different character. It was used as a pawn by the bourgeois capitalists in an attempt to win over the workers and the petty bourgeoisie for a struggle against the militarists. The capitalists would prefer, if possible, peaceful penetration to outright conquest in China. But the struggle proved abortive, the capitalists were tied hand and foot to the war machine. Furthermore the internal crisis resolved the problem for the capitalist imperialists by its urgent demand for the most desperate remedies. Not in vain are the changes in the mode of production and in the productive forces the "shock factors" of historic development!

The moment universal suffrage was promised, in 1925, the militarists prepared carefully for any untoward eventualities. Baron Tanaka—the author of the Tanaka document—immediately resigned from the Army and became president of the Seijukai Party. In the eyes of the military clique the situation called

ed for a "strong" man, a Bonaparte. And Tanaka was groomed for the task at precisely the same moment and in precisely the same fashion as Marshal von Hindenburg (as President) in Germany. Tanaka became premier in the first elections held under universal suffrage, elections so tainted by fraud and corruption, so strongly controlled by acts of autocracy that to stifle the angry criticism of the masses a thousand workers and intellectuals were arrested under the frame-up of a nation-wide Communist plot. The Tanaka regime ended in scandals strikingly like those of the Harding administration in America.

The wily Japanese capitalists have made every effort to establish the two-party system in Japanese politics. The Seijukai may be compared with the English Tory party the Minseitō with the Whigs. Both parties are under complete boss control. The party platforms mean nothing, are much alike, in fact do not vary from election to election. The government connection with big business, plain enough in America, is far more open in Japan. The party leaders become directors of the South Manchuria Railroad, of steamship companies, etc. These leaders cannot reward their followers with government jobs as these are reserved for the bureaucracy under the military clique. Hence, the parties resort to a more open cash system. The cost of elections is far greater, owing to greater corruption, than in other countries, and elections are more frequent. Before the War it took more than 20,000 yen to elect a man to the Diet. Now it costs more. Each candidate pays one-half the requisite sum—the party the rest. Since four hundred are elected each time, party expenses are enormous, control falling naturally into the hands of the rich (as elsewhere). The pay in the Diet is small but bribery for concessions and purchases provide rich plums.

The workers have no illusions concerning the bourgeois parties whose history has been all too short to permit the use of those refined niceties of technique of the Western countries. The masses pin little faith in types like the first great "commoner", premier, Hara, who came to power after the Rice-Riots. This lawyer in the pay of the copper king, Furukawa, this liberal whose doctrines were expressed in his remark: "My platform is a blank sheet of paper. I can write upon it what I will", was the willing tool of the military in the Siberian adventure. It was Hara and his minister for Home Affairs, Tokonamu (one of the worst suppressors of free speech and the press), who organized one of the largest of the thirty reactionary societies ready at all times to attack the workers. Despite his personal bodyguard, despite his great services in the interests of the ruling class, Hara was assassinated for the slight difference that existed between the interests of finance capital and those of the military clique the situation called

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