

'New Turn' Twists Back Again

by Herbert Zam

A new resolution has just been published by the Central Committee of the Communist Party for the coming plenum (see April, 1932 **Communist**). To those who have been following the Party documents and the development of Party policy, this resolution will undoubtedly appear as one of the worst, politically incorrect and harmful documents that the "new line" has yet produced, in spite of seeming frankness in listing shortcomings. While the shortcomings are undoubtedly not overestimated by the resolution, the proposals which it makes for overcoming them will certainly have exactly the opposite effect. The admitted isolation of the Party from the masses will grow greater if the directives of this resolution are carried out. The 100% turn-over will become an exodus from the Party, and the drop in circulation of the **Daily Worker** will become an abandonment of it by those workers who still read it.

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The Mania of "Social-Fascism"

The central feature of the resolution is the role of the "social-fascists" and, particularly, of the "left social-fascists", the "Mute wing of social fascism, which also includes the various renegades, Salutsky, Lore, Cannon, Lovestone." These "left social-fascists" are responsible not only for policies of the capitalist class, but also for the failures of the Communist Party! It is they who have prevented a serious movement of the unemployed, who are preparing the imperialist attack against the Soviet Union "under the guise of support for the Soviet Union"; they are responsible for the isolation of the Party from the masses and for its failure to win influence in the trade unions. The bourgeoisie is turning more and more to these "social-fascists" as the last resort for the maintenance of their rule! Consequently, all the tasks of the Party, the struggle against unemployment, against war, for the Soviet Union, against the bourgeois parties, against the government, become concentrated in the struggle against the "social-fascists." Defeat the "social-fascists" and the revolution is here!

On this program, a mass Communist Party is to be built! This is the appeal which will be made to the American workers as an inducement to accept Communism! The amount of success it will have need not even be speculated on.

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Vague Phrases For Real Action

The resolution, of course, does not fail to repeat the usual pious phrases about "mass work", "roots in the factories", "participation in the everyday struggle of the masses", etc. But it is admirably vague regarding the specific application of these ideas. In fact, it can safely be said, that only in its falseness is the resolution clear and decisive, as we shall see. It speaks continually of a "revolutionary way out of the crisis". Does this mean the proletarian revolution? Does this mean a revolutionary way out of the crisis within the capitalist system? Only two suggestions

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TORIES TO BREAK SOVIET PACT

LONDON.—A threat on the part of the MacDonald-Tory government of Great Britain to break off the existing trade relations with the Soviet Union was made in the course of an official statement by Walter Runciman, president of the Board of Trade, in the House of Commons on April 26. The huge preponderance of British imports from the U.S.S.R. over exports to the U.S.S.R. was made the pretext for this move.

The cancellation of the existing trade agreement, which was formed on April 16, 1930, has been one of the objectives of the reactionary Conservatives for the last two years. Today this part of their program is about ready to be carried thru. And characteristically, it is MacDonald, the former Laborite, who has become the instrument in this attack upon the Soviet Union!

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are made for this "revolutionary way out of the crisis." "The revolutionary way out of the crisis must be widely popularized, including a systematic and thoro exposure of the mere phrases about 'socialism' used by the Socialists." This is one point. And here is the other: "The revolutionary way out of the crisis must be concretized by showing the masses how a revolutionary workers government . . .", etc. But does not this represent precisely mere "phrases about Socialism"? Has not Lenin time after time warned us against substituting promises of good things after the revolution in place of concrete struggles for the needs of the masses today? Have the Party leaders learned nothing from the German fiasco, where the Communist Party made "solemn promises" regarding what a workers government would do, but failed to mobilize the masses for their immediate needs, and in this way played into the hands of the Fascists?

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Shortcomings and the Way Out

The resolution lists a whole series of weaknesses and shortcomings of the Party, but the explanations as to the causes is either entirely absent or else entirely false. The usual explanation is "insufficient struggle against social-fascism", or "failure to carry out the directives" of this or that resolution; that is, insufficiently vigorous application of the false line is made the explanation, instead of the false line itself. In this connection, an examination of the condition of the Party is important. In spite of many membership drives, the membership of the Party, we are told, has not grown. (It has actually declined!) There is a 100% turn-over, that is, for every worker who joins the Party, one leaves! There is no life in the units. There is a top-heavy bureaucracy, with "an excessive number of paid functionaries". There is a great dearth of trained cadres. The Party is permeated with "bureaucratic methods of work." All these weaknesses are admitted, but the sole remedy proposed is: **the reduction of the number of paid functionaries!**

How can there be trained cadres in the Party when the independent thinking comrades are either expelled, as was the Opposition containing the best developed cadres in the Party, or else driven out of the Party by the bureaucratic regime and false line? According to an article by Smith, in a previous issue of the **Communist**, approximately 10,000 workers who were members of the Party in 1928-29 left the Party or were expelled. Only **one-third** of the members are in the Party more than two years. It is the entire condition in the Party which brings this about. Here is a description of this condition:

"The leading group (of the Party) endeavored to establish its authority by removing from collaboration and expelling all comrades who held views different from its own. A regular heresy-hunting set in and the gross tactlessness of the upper stratum was repeated in an exaggerated form in the districts . . . With-

in the Party it created an atmosphere of intolerance to any other shade of opinion than that represented by this leading group, and the entire authority of the C. C. rested on the dictatorship of a few comrades. Mutual distrust, incapable people in responsible posts, a sham-radical phraseology, complete passivity and Party inertia, such were the inevitable consequences of this policy within the Party. This leading group lacked all the attributes which could endow the leadership of the revolutionary Party with the capacity to attract the masses to the Communist Party and to arouse in them the will to fight.

"The atmosphere which prevailed in the Party could not but have its effect also outside the Party, paralyzing the recruiting power of the latter."

This analysis of the condition in the Party leaves nothing to be added. It was written, not by the "Love-stoneites", but by Wilhelm Pieck, one of the present leaders of the German Party, against the Ruth Fischer system. The conditions here described were then changed by a campaign of the Comintern against the Ruth Fischer leadership and system, but today it is the Comintern leadership which is maintaining and perpetuating this system within all the Communist Parties. Therefore, the struggle, which at that time was carried on by the leadership of the Comintern, must today be carried on against this leadership by the expelled Communist Opposition. It is a struggle for the restoration of internal Party democracy, the cornerstone of Bolshevik organization. Without internal Party democracy, democratic centralization becomes bureaucratic centralization. The dangerous condition of the Party can be changed not by petty measures but by a radical operation, at least as radical as was performed by the Comintern on the German Party in 1925.

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And The Party Trade Union Policy

The isolation of the Party from the masses is nowhere so evident as in the trade unions. Finally the Party leaders are beginning to realize it. They now see "the ruinous results of our isolation from the workers in reformist unions." They are ready to admit that there exists a "possibility for developing mass influence in the reformist unions if we really start work." This is "self-criticism". After three years of condemning the Opposition as "renegades" for saying precisely these things, they are now making new "Leninist" discoveries. But all these "discoveries" will be absolutely of no effect in changing the position of the Party. What about the dual-union policy? Will the Red unions be maintained? Is the A. F. of L. to be considered as "fascist" or "social-fascist"? Are the Party members to be sent into the reformist unions or will they remain in the pure "Red unions"? And what are they to do in the reformist unions—build them or smash them? Comrade Smith's article showed that only 10% of the Party members were in reactionary trade unions. For every one member in a reactionary union, there were almost three in the "Red" unions. So long as this condition continues, there is no use even talking of work in the reactionary trade unions. Let the Party frankly say

the party for existence . . . But behind the empty phrase hides a very real social animus. It is not for nothing that "social Darwinism" (which neither Darwin himself nor his great follower, Huxley, really shared), with its convenient elevation of the competition and ruthless anarchy of capitalism into natural law, became the chosen champion against the "Red hydra" of revolutionary Socialism!

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Evolution and Dialectics

Evolutionism as a philosophy, i.e., as an all embracing world-view, is essentially the philosophical reflection of fundamental dogma of bourgeois society: History has been, but shall be no longer! The past has indeed been a flux of uninterrupted developmental change (and that is why our struggle against feudalism was *natural*!) but happily the ultimate aims of nature in this long process of evolution are now approaching realization in the present conditions (and that is why your struggle against capitalism is *unnatural*!): this is that essential axiom (openly avowed by Spencer, for example, tacitly assumed by the others) of all classical evolutionism as a philosophical system. The absurdity of attempting to reduce the dialectical method of Marxism to some form of evolutionism should be self-evident; such an attempt is essentially a bourgeois vulgarization of Marxism. Between evolutionism and dialectics there are three fundamental differences and these differences point to the profound inadequacy of the former in the role it claims for itself as the world-view of the modern man. In the first place, evolutionism is *absolutistic*: to all intents and purposes (social) evolution is to cease with the capitalist system, in all of its implications, as the ultimate and the natural. Secondly, evolutionism is *thoroughly undialectical*. Not only is it *gradualistic* and unable to explain the countless cases of "jumps" in nature and society, the innumerable transformations of quantity into quality, but it narrowly conceives of development as proceeding *evenly forward in a straight line* instead of thru inner contradictions, in the form of a spiral, one might say. Finally, evolutionism is hopelessly *unilateral*.

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that the time has come to dissolve the "Red" unions and send the revolutionary workers back to the reformist unions. There is no disgrace in this. It has been done many times before by sections of the Comintern. (It is being done secretly and haltingly today by the Party). At its Fifth Congress (1924), the Comintern was confronted with the existence of a dual-union and anti-union movement in Germany. And here is the concise and courageous manner in which the Congress acted:

If the Party today wishes to re-
"The Fifth Congress condemns as harmful to the revolution such a position and activity which leads to abandoning the trade unions and which demands the splitting up of the trade union movement in Germany. The Fifth Congress calls upon all those who have left the unions to return, and generally calls upon workers to join unions. The Fifth Congress asserts that the trade unions are the rallying ground of all the exploited in which Communists must conduct their educational and propagandist activity. The abandonment of the trade unions implies desertion from the revolution and cooperation with the enemies of the proletariat."

store its influence in the trade unions and upon the masses generally, it must act in accordance with the directives of the above resolution.

(Concluded in the next issue)