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# The CRISIS

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IN THE

COMMUNIST PARTY, U. S. A.

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*Statement of Principles  
of the Communist Party  
(Majority Group)*

Published by  
**REVOLUTIONARY ACTION**  
37 E. 28 St. New York

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## CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I — <i>The Crisis in the Comintern</i> .....	3
II —“ <i>Exceptionalism</i> ”— <i>Imperialism</i> .....	13
III — <i>Stabilization</i> — <i>American Imperialism</i> .....	26
IV — <i>Radicalization</i> — <i>Rationalization</i> .....	32
V — <i>Social Reformism</i> — <i>Trade Union Questions</i> .....	39
VI — <i>The Right Danger</i> — <i>Trotskyism</i> .....	45
VII — <i>The Effects of the New Course</i> .....	52
VIII— <i>The Effects of the New Course (cont.)</i> .....	64
IX — <i>Discipline</i> — <i>Perspectives</i> — <i>International Aspects</i> .....	69

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE CRISIS IN THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

ON the tenth anniversary of its foundation the Communist Party of the United States of America finds itself in the most severe crisis of its history. Instead of ushering in a new period of constructive growth, the conclusion of the tenth year of its development brings the Party face to face with general political chaos, pronounced organizational decline, and rapidly increasing isolation. The Party—the whole Communist movement in this country—is in a deep crisis.

The crisis in which our movement finds itself today stands out in startling contrast to the splendid achievements made by our Party between the IV (1925) and the VI (1929) Conventions, but especially in the years 1927-29. From a propagandist organization, uniting chiefly immigrants and having an insignificant influence among the workers, our Party was beginning to develop into a mass Party of revolutionary action, guiding the economic and political activities of the most advanced and the most militant sections of the American proletariat. With ever increasing frequency our Party was acting as the leader of great class struggles of the American proletariat, thus achieving recognition as “the stalwart leader of the workers in fierce class battles.” Along with its influence among the workers its membership was growing steadily; its proletarian composition kept on improving and its roots in the factories were becoming more firmly fixed. Thru long years of struggle strong leading cadres began to crystallize and the historically-developed leadership of our Party won the almost unanimous support of the membership.

Now, in less than six months, more than one-third of the members of the Central Committee, comprising essentially the entire former leadership of the Party, have been expelled. At the same time several hundred of the leading functionaries in the

Party and in the mass organizations, have also been driven out. The Leninist policies, which our Party had developed thru years of successful work and struggle have been completely replaced by the worst sort of opportunist sectarianism, based upon a thoroughgoing revision of the basic strategy of Marxism and Leninism and of the traditional line of the Communist International. Our Party organization is fast being reduced to a mere shell: the membership is falling everywhere, shop nuclei and shop papers are disappearing, the functionaries' cadres are crumbling away. Political life has disappeared from the Party units, replaced by the bureaucratic terrorism of the "enlightenment campaign". A deep spirit of pessimism and its inevitable accompaniment, political cynicism and unprincipledness, are making themselves felt among ever-larger sections of the Party membership. The influence of the Party, the prestige of the whole Communist movement, is being rapidly undermined while the mass organizations and institutions under Communist leadership find themselves in a very precarious position. A creeping paralysis—political, ideological, and organizational—is systematically seizing hold of the Communist movement. Such is the very dangerous situation which the Communist movement in this country faces today.

These conditions are not peculiar to this country alone. On the contrary, they are part of the chaos, confusion and demoralization that has been making steady headway in the international Communist movement since the VI World Congress (July-Aug. 1928). There is not now one Party in the Comintern to which the last year has not brought weakening and defeat, loss of membership and influence, growing isolation from the masses. There is not now one Party in the Comintern in which recent months have not witnessed the imposition of a most destructive Party regime, accompanied by thousands of mechanical actions, removals, and expulsions, by terror, disorganization and demoralization. The whole Comintern—our Party included—is now in the most acute crisis of its history.

The *central leadership* of the Comintern has undergone a

most profound transformation in the year since the VI World Congress (July 1928). The outstanding representative of the Comintern, Comrade Bukharin, the main reporter at the VI Congress and its officially recognized political leader has been branded as a "right winger," has been accused of "class collaboration," "leaning towards Milyukovism" (!), and even worse, and has been removed from the *EccI*. With him have gone, thru expulsion or removal, the oldest and most experienced revolutionary forces in the Comintern, the best known international figures: Zetkin, Serra, Ewert, Lovestone, Gitlow, Humbert-Droz, Roy, Jilek, etc. They have been replaced by a "new leadership" (Molotov, Garlandi, Minor, Neumann, Thalmann, Gottwald, Kun), utterly incapable of leading a world Communist movement, unknown and without prestige among the proletarian masses. In effect the leadership of the Comintern—which, as Lenin insisted, had to be ever broadened and shared in by the various Parties—has now been narrowed down to a small clique, among whom Stalin alone is of any significance.

The *German Communist Party*, at one time the pride of the Comintern in Western Europe, the Party that was able to mobilize fourteen millions of toilers in support of its campaign for the expropriation of the princes (1926), the Party whose rapidly mounting mass influence in the trade unions and the factories became a serious challenge to the Social-democrats and trade union bureaucrats, this Party has now been reduced to a condition of inner collapse and sectarian isolation that can only be compared with the dark days of the Fischer-Maslov regime of 1924-25. The losses in membership thru the mass expulsion of the oldest revolutionary cadres, thru incapacity to attract and to hold members, thru the melting away of thousands of dispirited and demoralized workers, have been terrific and can only be partly covered up in the official figures. The "leadership" that has been installed, politically incompetent, ideologically corrupt, without standing or prestige is already torn apart by unprincipled inner clique struggles for power.

Within two years the *Communist Party of France* has lost over 11,000 members—8,000 in the last year alone. Its connections with the working class and its influence over the masses of the poor peasantry are very rapidly diminishing, as was demonstrated partly in the latest elections and especially in the recent economic struggles. The crisis has broken out in full force in Alsace where the whole Party organization has been expelled in the most bureaucratic manner because it refused to endanger the very existence of the Alsatian revolutionary movement by following the anti-Leninist sectarian line of the Party "leadership" on the national question. But this was only the beginning. It was quickly followed by the sudden removal of Semard as general secretary of the Party and of Vaillant-Couturier as editor-in-chief of the *Humanite* and by the expulsions of the mayors and almost the entire body of Communist councillors of the great industrial "Red boroughs" of Paris (the "Red Belt"—Clichy, Saint Denis, Pierrefitte, etc.) and of some of the leading trade union functionaries of the French Party and of the C. G. T. U.

In the *Czechoslovakian Party* the crisis has already reached an advanced stage. According to official figures the 150,000 members in July 1928 were reduced to 91,000 towards the end of the same year and fell still further to 81,000 at about July 1929. The report of the secretariat of the Party shows that the Party has no more than 25,000 dues-paying members! And this was the biggest Party of the workers in Czechoslovakia, the second biggest political party in the country! Not only has the Party been split by the expulsion of tens of thousands but the split has penetrated the Red Unions and the whole working class movement. The "new leadership", consisting partly of inexperienced newcomers (Gottwald, Guttman) and partly of the inveterate right wingers (Zapotocky, Smeral, Kreibich) has already shown what it can do. It is itself compelled to admit that a "mood of pessimism" and "passivity" has taken hold of the membership. It is itself compelled to report its miserable fiasco on August First (International Red Day) on which the Party proved un-

able to organize demonstrations of any sort in Prague, the capital city, and in Kladno, the old fortress of the revolutionary movement. The recent elections reflecting the pronounced leftward drift of the masses of which the Party proved absolutely unable to take any advantage—the CPCz lost 10 seats and nearly 200,000 votes in contrast to the big gains of the Social-democrats—show how far the wrecking of the Communist movement in Czechoslovakia has proceeded.

The *Young Communist League of Czechoslovakia* is practically in a state of dissolution. Officially there is admitted a fall from 13,000 to 5,000 in the last year.

The *Communist Party of Great Britain* is probably in the most desperate situation. Under conditions of relatively rapid capitalist decline, of the most bitter attacks against the workers, and the most shameless betrayals on the part of the Labor Party and trade union bureaucracies, the Party is compelled to record a steady decline (from 12,000 members to less than 2,500), accompanied by a tremendous reduction of its mass influence. The results of the last elections show very clearly the degree of isolation to which the CPGB has been reduced. The *Young Communist League of Great Britain*, having had the advantage of the "new course" for a longer time, is in an even worse state of affairs. Within the last year it has been reduced, according to official figures, from 1,500 to 900 members! As a political factor it has already disappeared.

The *Chinese Communist Party*, which during the years of 1925-27 embodied in itself hundreds of thousands of the best workers and peasants in China and openly led 2½ million organized workers and 9 million organized peasants, now finds itself in a state of virtual liquidation, both organizationally and in its political influence. Whereas in the summer of 1927 over 60% of its members were workers in the large factories, at the present time the proletarian "core" of the Party is no more than 5%. In the most important industrial cities there is not a single Party member. The disappearance of the Red Unions is an officially recognized fact.\*

\*These are official facts taken from the report of Tsiu Chu-pao in the *Inprekorr* (German edition), No. 57, July 2, 1929).

The *Communist Party of Sweden*, one of the very few parties that actually grew in membership and in mass influence within the last few years (membership increase from 7,000 to 18,000 in about two years), has been thrown into confusion and crisis by the recent Open Letter of the Eccii imposing a radical change of line and leadership. Already the expulsions have begun. Fortunately it has proved possible to mobilize the masses of the Swedish Party for the maintenance of unity and growth of the movement.

Every other Party in the Comintern shows the same picture of profound crisis. The situation in the illegal Parties (Italy, Balkans, Poland, etc.) is probably even worse. There can surely be no question that the critical situation in which our Party finds itself is essentially an organic part of the deep crisis that has set in in the Comintern as a whole.

The crisis is international. No section of the Comintern is exempt from it. Its severity is brought out in especially tragic relief by the fact that it occurs in a period of increasingly favorable conditions for revolutionary activity and for the growth of the Communist Party, in a period of leftward movement and rising struggles. What is the source of the crisis? There are some who trace it to the "bad methods" in the Comintern and in its various sections, to the narrow and destructive inner line. But it should be clear that a deep international crisis cannot be traced to such secondary factors. The sources must be sought for deeper.

The basic cause of the crisis in the Comintern lies in the *objective world situation*. The fundamental reason for the present severe—tho temporary—crisis is to be found in *the gap that has developed between the victorious proletarian revolution and the rapid construction of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. and "the slow development of the proletarian revolution in West Europe" (Lenin) and in the U. S. A.*

The difficulties and hardships confronting the Russian proletariat and its Party in the construction of Socialism form one consequence of this "gap". The other is the crisis in the Comintern.

To the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Party of Lenin, the Party of the first victorious proletarian revolution, naturally falls the position of the *leading Party* in the Comintern; therefore the developments within the C. P. S. U. have always been of great importance in the life of the Comintern. Since the death of Comrade Lenin the course of inner-Party struggles in the C. P. S. U. has been accompanied by a systematic thinning out of the leadership that the C.P.S.U. has been able to give the Communist International, our world Party.

These two factors—first, the growing gap between the upward march of Socialist construction in the U. S. S. R. and the slow development of the revolution in the capitalist world and secondly, the narrowing of the leadership within the C. P. S. U. and therefore of the leadership of the C. P. S. U. in the Comintern—have led to the *failure of the present leadership of the C.I. to draw the direct conclusions from the law of uneven development and to lay down for the various countries a line of struggle upon a realistic Leninist estimate of the objective situation*. Merely to suggest that this should be done has become a gross "opportunist" error—"exceptionalism"!

This condition has been aggravated by some other factors: the distortion of the leading role of the C. P. S. U. in the Comintern, the failure to develop a collective leadership in the Comintern and the initiative and self-reliance of the sections. Political leadership is one thing but mechanical clique domination is another. The first was exemplified by the role of the Russian Party in the Comintern under Lenin—the other by this present role of the Stalin-Molotov leadership today. Under the conditions of the present narrow factional regime it is out of the question to expect the real Leninist organic relationship between the leadership of the Soviet Party and the leaderships of the other Parties, which alone makes possible the realization of the leading role of the C. P. S. U. Every attempt at independent activity and thought is suppressed,

every venture at self-initiative is frowned upon and Party leaderships are openly conceived as "rubber stamps" and organs of factional support to the ruling (Stalin) group in the leading Party.

The present unhealthy relation between the C. P. S. U. and other Parties in the Comintern is not a sudden manifestation. It has been growing for some time but it now expresses itself in an acute form. All of us, at one time or another have participated in various phases of this non-Leninist activity. The campaign against Trotskyism, for example, suffered from these anti-Leninist methods, especially in its last phases. Had such methods been avoided the *ideological* struggle against the errors of Trotskyism would have been far more effective and Trotskyism *ideologically* would not have become so strong as it did in the C. P. S. U. and in the Comintern. Moreover, had such methods been avoided there would not have been driven into Trotskyism and thus removed from effectiveness in the C. P. S. U. and the Comintern such valuable and highly capable comrades as Zinoviev, Kamenev, etc. It is only after such methods were permitted to develop that the struggle against opportunism and right deviations could be transformed into a destructive factional instrument to overturn leaderships and destroy parties.

Nor is the problem of developing in the Comintern a *broad collective international leadership* a new one. Lenin more than once emphasized this task and pointed to it as one means of overcoming the "gap" caused by the slowing down of the revolution in the capitalist world. This problem was always linked up with the necessity of developing the initiative and self-reliance of the leaderships of the individual sections.

But all this has now changed. Today instability, lack of political character, servility and unprincipledness are more and more becoming the prerequisites for "leadership" in the Comintern—from the EccI down.

*All of these factors have manifested themselves politically in a revision of some of the most fundamental principles of*

*Leninism, especially on questions of strategy and tactics, and in a thoroly un-Leninist estimation of the present objective situation and the course of development of the struggle.* This is the source of the crisis in the Comintern.

All over the world the signs are the same. Considered most generally, the international crisis manifests itself mainly in the following ways: A serious revision of some of the basic principles of Leninism, especially in strategy and tactics, in the direction of ultra-left sectarianism, leading to an increasing loss of influence among the proletarian masses and to growing isolation. These are bound up with a most ruinous and destructive inner Party course, and they all show themselves in a dangerous depletion of the best leading forces, the destruction of every sign of Party democracy, a huge loss in membership thru wholesale expulsions and demoralization, a sharp decline in the quality and social composition of the membership, and a process of disintegration of the mass organizations and of the revolutionary forces within them.

The present crisis in the Comintern comes only as the climax of the cumulative effects of years. It appears in an especially acute form today because we are now at a turning point in the development of the post-war revolutionary movement. In the U. S. A. too the crisis broke out at a turn of the road, just as our Party was first beginning to develop into a mass Communist Party.

In the U. S. A. the revisionist line was first introduced in an open official form in the Address of the EccI which reached this country towards the end of May 1929. This Address precipitated an immediate crisis. On its basis there arose the "new leadership" with its "new course." Since then, every policy proposed, every document written, every step taken by the "new leadership"—and everything was done under the direct guidance of the EccI—has carried the revision of Leninism still further, has dragged the Party more deeply into the political morass in which it now finds itself.

To understand the crisis—in our Party and in the Comin-

tern—we must understand its source; we must understand the nature of the new anti-Leninist line that is being developed by the present leadership of the EccI and imposed upon the Comintern. We must therefore examine the main points of the revisionist system introduced here by the Address which has since served as the political basis for the entire activity of the Party.

## CHAPTER II.

### “EXCEPTIONALISM” — QUESTIONS OF IMPERIALISM

#### 1. “Exceptionalism” and Leninist Strategy

THE Address of the EccI traces the alleged “opportunist” line of the former leadership of our Party to the so-called “theory of exceptionalism”. It declares:

*“The ideological lever of the right errors in the American Communist Party was the so-called theory of ‘exceptionalism’, which found its clearest exponents in the persons of Comrades Pepper and Lovestone whose conception was as follows: a crisis of capitalism, but not of American capitalism; a swing of the masses to the left, but not in America; the necessity of accentuating the struggle against reformism, but not in America; a necessity of struggling against the right danger but not in the American Communist Party.”*

The theoreticians of the “new leadership” have been quick to follow up this line of attack and they have built up such a monstrous and self-contradictory structure of imputed “exceptionalism” that it falls of its own weight. It has been “discovered” that we maintain that “American imperialism is fundamentally different from any other imperialism”, that “American capitalism is exempt from the laws of capitalist development,” that “the American Party must have an exceptional relation to the Comintern”, and the like.

Of course all these are mere imputations without any basis, charges consciously drawn out of the thin air. In our section devoted to the analysis of American imperialism we will show that American capitalism is not “excepted” from the general laws of capitalist development as laid down by Marx and Lenin, and that American imperialism is an organic part of the world system of imperialism and is subject to all of its laws, com-



plications, contradictions and antagonisms. No one—certainly not we—have ever maintained anything to the contrary. In fact we have always emphasized that nowhere in the world are the fundamental laws of capitalism as expounded by Marx and Lenin so clearly visible in their operation as in the United States. But in its “refutation” of its own straw-man “theory of exceptionalism” the “new leadership of the EccI and of our Party construct a doctrine of the development of imperialism and of the application of the general line of the Communist International that constitutes a complete rejection of every idea of Leninism and a positive relapse into the Trotskyist conception of “permanent revolution.”

In its reply to the Appeal of the Convention Delegation the Polcom of our Party declared:

*“Lovestone attempts to justify his exceptionalism with Lenin’s theory of the uneven development of capitalism. To make this Leninist theory serve his purpose, he distorts it by implying that it proves that capitalism can very well be fundamentally healthy in one part of the world and fundamentally unhealthy in another.”*

It is immediately clear that this statement, which characterizes the whole line of the “new leadership”, directly contradicts the Leninist theory of the uneven development of capitalism. If by “fundamentally healthy” the theoreticians of the Polburo mean “free from inherent contradictions”, then capitalism has certainly never been “healthy”—it was born “unhealthy”. But if by “healthy” is meant “still on the upgrade” and by “unhealthy”, “on the decline”, then not only is it possible but it is an obvious fact that at any particular period some national sectors of world capitalism may be on the upgrade while others may be on the decline, while the rate of development of each may be different and continually changing. For instance, in the Soviet Union capitalism has received its mortal blow; in Great Britain it is in steady decline; while in the U. S. A. it is still on the upgrade. That

is what Lenin meant by the “uneven development of capitalism”:

*“Irregularity in economic and political development is an invariable law of capitalism. This unevenness is still more pronounced in the epoch of imperialism. Hence it follows that the proletarian revolution cannot be conceived as a single event occurring simultaneously all over the world.”*

The contrast between the line of Leninism and the new revisionist line of our Party and of the EccI can not be brought out more forcefully than by quoting side by side the following two formulations:

*“The character of the crisis (of world capitalism) is not modified for any section of world capitalism.” (Answer of the Polburo to the Appeal of the Convention Delegation).*

*“The development of the revolution in different countries proceeds along varying paths with varying rapidities” —(Lenin:Letter to the American Working Class).*

If, as the Polburo maintains, “the character of the crisis (of world capitalism) is not modified for any section of world capitalism”, then it is clear that when a revolutionary situation develops in one country, it must be simultaneously accompanied by an *equal* (“unmodified”) development of the revolutionary situation in all other countries; in other words, the revolution takes place “as a single event occurring simultaneously all over the world.” This is the anti-Leninist theory of “permanent revolution” in full flower.

The whole anti-Leninist conception is naturally carried over to the question of the application of the line of the Comintern in the various countries. Here it takes the form of the dangerous theory of “mechanical uniformity”. If, as the EccI and the Polcom maintain, “the character of the crisis is *not modified* for any section of world capitalism” then it is absolutely unnecessary, and in fact wrong, to attempt to apply the general line the Comintern to the concrete situation in any particular country. To attempt to do so is—“exceptional-

ism"! Thus, the following, almost self-evident statement from an article by Comrade Wolfe has been branded as the very essence of "exceptionalism" and "opportunism":

*"The policies of the Comintern at every stage are based upon an analysis of the world situation (which tends to give a certain correspondence in the tactics of each Party) and upon an analysis of the concrete conditions of each country (which tends to give concrete differences in the tactics of each Party)".*

If this is "exceptionalism" and "opportunism" then certainly Lenin was an "exceptionalist" of the first water and the Leninist line of the Comintern has for years been a line of extreme "opportunism". For, as it happens, the problem of the application of the principles of Leninism and of the general strategy of the world revolution is one of the central questions of Marxism-Leninism. In his epoch-making political pamphlet *The Infantile Sickness of "Leftism" in Communism* Lenin takes up precisely this problem and answers it in an unmistakable form:

*"But while it (the working class) everywhere goes thru substantially the same training school for victory over the bourgeoisie, the labor movement of each country affects this development after its own manner..."*

*"The main thing now is that the Communists of each country should, in full consciousness, study both the fundamental problems of the struggle with opportunism and 'left' doctrinairism, and the specific peculiarities which this struggle inevitably assumes in each separate country according to the peculiarities of its politics, economics, culture, national composition, its colonies, religious divisions, etc... One must clearly realize that such a leading centre (the Communist International) can, under no circumstances, be built after a single model, by a mechanical adjustment and equalization of the tactical rules of the struggle. The national and state differences now existing between peoples and countries will continue to exist for a very long time, even after the realization of the pro-*

*letarian dictatorship on a world scale. Unity of international tactics in the Communist labor movement everywhere demands, not the elimination of variety, not the abolition of the national peculiarities (this at the present moment is a foolish dream), but such an application of the fundamental principles of communism—Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat—as will admit of the correct modification of these principles in their adaptation and application to national and national-state differences. The main problem of the historical moment in which all advanced (and not only the advanced) countries now find themselves lies here: the specific national features must be studied, ascertained and grasped before concrete attempts are made in any country to solve the aspects of the single international problem, to overcome opportunism and 'Left' doctrinairism within the working class movement, to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to institute a Soviet Republic and the proletarian dictatorship...*

In another part of the same work we find:

*"It is beyond question that the problem here, as everywhere else, consists in the ability to apply the general and fundamental principles of Communism to the specific relations between classes and parties—to the specific conditions in the objective development towards Communism—the conditions which are peculiar to each country and which one must be able to study, understand and point out."*

How important this question of the application of the basic principles of Communism in the actual revolutionary struggle really is, can be seen from the fact that it has been the central question thruout all stages of the international revolutionary movement. In September 1887 Friedrich Engels wrote to Sorge:

*"In spite of all, the masses can only be set into motion in a way suitable to the respective countries and adapted to the prevailing conditions."*

The same thought was repeated in the famous pamphlet

that played such a role in the Russian revolutionary movement, the pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* by Lenin:

*"It means that a movement which is beginning in a young country can only be successful on condition that it assimilates the experiences of other countries. In order to assimilate this experience it is not sufficient merely to be acquainted with it, merely to translate the latest resolutions. It is necessary to be able to adopt a critical attitude towards this experience and submit it to independent tests."*

That the course of the revolution does not run along identically the same lines in every country, is made clear in two of the most authoritative documents of the international revolutionary movement, the old Bolshevik program and the newly adopted program of the Communist International. The former declares:

*"On their road toward their final common goal which is conditioned by the prevalence of the capitalist system of production thruout the civilized world, the social-democrats (today: the Communists) of different countries must need to devote themselves to different immediate tasks: first, because the capitalist system is not everywhere developed to the same degree: secondly, because in different countries its development takes place in a different socio-economic setting."*

The Program of the Comintern, written nearly three decades later, repeats the same fundamental thought:

*"In determining its line of tactics each Communist Party must take into account the concrete internal and external situation, the correlation of class forces, the degree of stability and strength of the bourgeoisie, the degree of preparedness of the proletariat, the position taken up by the various intermediate strata in the country, etc. The Party determines its slogans and methods of struggle in accordance with these circumstances with a view towards organizing and mobilizing the masses on the broadest possible scale and on the highest possible level."*

The contrast between the fundamentally wrong theory of "mechanical uniformity" advanced by the Ecce and the new Party "leadership" on the one hand, and the cardinal principle of Leninist strategy, the flexible and concrete application of general principles to the objective conditions, could not be clearer. The revisionist anti-Leninist theory of the present leadership of the Comintern which replaces a Marxist analysis and critical application by mere empty "translation of the latest resolutions" can lead only to political sterility—as, indeed, it already has in every part of the world. We take our stand today—as we have always done—upon the tested Leninist line of the theory of the irregularity in the development of capitalism and the necessity for a concrete application and adaptation of the general line of the Comintern to the "irregular", concrete conditions in each country.

## 2. *The Theory of Imperialism and the Question of Inner and Outer Contradictions.*

A very serious phase of the false line of the present leadership of the Ecce is the revision of some important phases of the Leninist theory of imperialism. False views on imperialism inevitably leads to a false line on important questions of economics and politics.

There was at one time put forward (by Luxemburg and others) a view that regarded imperialism as due to the exhaustion of the domestic markets and as determined by the movement of these domestic markets. Always the Russian Marxists (Lenin, Bukharin) carried on a polemic against this theory, showing it to be economically incorrect and practically a capitulation, in an indirect way, to social-reformism (Kautsky). They pointed out, for example, that imperialism had set in *as a new period in capitalist development* in countries whose inner markets were not yet by any means "exhausted" (the pre-war Russian Empire, France, etc.). It was shown that such a theory must reject the conception of imperialism as *the final stage* of capitalism, since the internal

markets of various big capitalist powers are far from a state of exhaustion. Finally, it was made clear, that upon such a theory, the actual overthrow of capitalism and the proletarian revolution would have to be projected into a dim and distant future when *all inner markets* will be "exhausted" and the whole world will be completely "industrialized." It leads directly to the social-democratic conception that the proletarian revolution must necessarily come first in the most highly developed industrial country, a conception in contradiction to the fundamentals of Marxism and belied by the great fact of the Russian Revolution.

The Leninist theory of imperialism is quite different. "Imperialism is the era of *finance capital*"; in this era "free competition rapidly gives way to monopoly," finance capital plays the dominant role, the export of capital takes on gigantic proportions, and the struggle for the already divided-up world markets reaches an acute stage (wars, etc.). The accumulation of mobile capital for export may be produced in each country in a particular way: by being the "workshop of the world" (as England once was), on the basis of a huge domestic internal market (the U.S.A.), thru a monopoly of certain raw materials or certain commodities (Holland, etc.), and so on. In the imperialist epoch the various capitalist countries form sectors of *one world economy*; as Lenin said, they form the "links of one huge capitalist chain." In the period of revolutionary crisis this chain is "broken"—that is, capitalism is overthrown—at "its weakest link" (for example, Czarist Russia in 1917), which does not necessarily have to be the most advanced industrial country. The revolutionary perspectives of the period of imperialism are given in the "truly worldwide scale of the contradictions of capitalism...in the epoch of imperialism", in its "spasmodic and conflicting" course of development.

The concept of imperialism that has been forced upon our Party by the new leadership of the EccI and even vulgarized by the American Polburo is, as we have said, a distinct revision away from the concepts of Leninism on this question.

Already at the VI World Congress the Foster group (then an insignificant minority, now the leadership of our Party) put forward a view on the nature of imperialism, and especially of American imperialism, that Comrade Bukharin, in his summary remarks, was compelled to brand as "wrong both in theory and principle; it is the Luxemburg theory."

In its struggle against us, the new "leadership" of our Party, under the inspiration of the present theoreticians of the EccI, has adopted a position that is essentially a vulgarization of the Luxemburg theory in some of its most important aspects. It sees the whole basis for imperialist aggression in "the contraction of the home markets" (see Polcom Answer to the Convention Delegation) and even goes as far as to say, in speaking of American imperialism, that:

*"In the past American imperialism developed mainly on the basis of the internal market... This period has now passed away with the march of the imperialist epoch."*

Thus the U.S.A. was *not* an imperialist country until its home markets became "exhausted"—which, our revisionist theoreticians declare, has just happened. From their own viewpoint, therefore, the USA was not an imperialist power in the last decade of the 19th and in the first decade of the 20th centuries, when it seized Cuba, the Philippines, etc. and made its violent aggressive moves in Latin America! On the basis of facts, moreover, if a country becomes an imperialist power only thru the exhaustion of its inner markets, the USA is still far from being an imperialist power, for the inner markets of the USA are still far from exhaustion. This is to what the semi-Kautskyan theory of the present leadership of our Party leads.

As a matter of fact, American imperialism developed precisely on the basis of its tremendous and expanding home market. Without an understanding of this basic fact, it is mere empty words to speak of a struggle against American imperialism. The present officially recognized viewpoint of the CI and of our Party is well characterized in the following words of Comrade Bukharin:

*"(This theory) predicates imperialism upon an exhaus-*

*tion of the internal possibilities of the national economy of the advanced industrial countries; this is fundamentally wrong and leads directly to Kautskyanism."*

The serious abandonment of the Leninist conception of imperialism by the present leaders of our Party and of the EccI is very clearly shown in their absolutely false treatment of the question of *inner and outer contradictions*.

It is sometimes ludicrous to see the surprise which such internationally renowned Marxists as Foster and Stachel manifest at the fact that there are contradictions within capitalism at all; indeed, they act as if they themselves have just discovered this novel fact! Their treatment of the question of the contradictions of capitalism manifests all the proprietary awkwardness of the newly rich displaying their recently-won possessions. Inevitably the conceptions that these "Marxists" develop are anti-Marxian and anti-Leninist.

On the basis of the Marxian analysis we begin with the fundamental idea that capitalism—as a social system—bears certain inherent contradictions which are *unsolvable* within the framework of the capitalist economy, and which make for its destruction. These inherent contradictions manifest themselves in every country where the capitalist system of production prevails. As capitalism develops and the new historical period of imperialism is reached, as the various national economies become increasingly knit together into a world economy,\* the basic contradictions of capitalism themselves deepen and expand and assume a "truly world wide scale" (Program of CI). It is the contradictions of the *world economy*, the so-called "external contradictions," it is these contradictions that assume primacy in the dynamics of world economics and politics. In the imperialist epoch (and particularly in the third period of post-war capitalism) one cannot estimate properly either world capitalism or even the capitalism of any specific country from the viewpoint of the momentary condition of capitalism in any one country. *Capitalist economy is becoming*

\*"Imperialism... has transformed the separate economies of national areas into parts of a unified system known as 'world economy'"—(Stalin—The Foundations of Leninism).

*more and more international and so are its contradictions.* No development of present-day capitalism or of the international proletarian movement can be understood unless it is examined *first of all* from the viewpoint of the inherent contradictions of capitalism already developed on a world scale—hence the primacy of the outer contradictions.

This conception follows directly from the Leninist theory of imperialism. It was Lenin himself who placed the matter in the clearest possible manner:

*"The basic historical significance of imperialism is just this: that it transforms the contradictions of the national economy into the contradictions of the world economy; it raises them to the new level of international contradictions and thus sharpens them infinitely."*

At the VI World Congress the same question arose in a sharp form for the leaders of the revisionist caucus (the "corridor congress"), especially Bittleman and Lominadze, raised and defended the non-Leninist theory of the primacy of the inner contradictions. In the name of the Congress Comrade Bukharin devoted a whole section of his concluding remarks (section IV) to proving that "world economic contradictions . . . must be our starting point, our function point."

Since its point of departure is an essentially false view of imperialism, the present leadership of the EccI and of our Party inevitably fall into an equally un-Leninist conception of the relation of the outer and inner contradictions. The chief "opportunist crime" held against the former leadership of the Party is their "false theory of the primacy of the outer contradictions" and at the X Plenum, the main offensive against Comrade Bukharin was conducted along the same lines. In the *Pravda* editorial denouncing Bukharin it is charged that

*"in analyzing the contradictions of capitalist stabilization Comrade Bukharin stated that the outer contradictions of the capitalist countries are beginning to play the decisive role and not the inner contradictions" . . .*

In the official article "The Significance of the Comintern

Address" (*Communist*, June 1929, written by the representative of the EccI) the very first paragraphs declare:

*"In this third period of post-war imperialism capitalist economy . . . gives rise to more acute internal contradictions which in turn sharpen the external contradictions . . ."*

In the answer to the Appeal of the Convention Delegation the Polcom repeated the same idea but in a more confused form:

*"Instead of explaining the sharpening internal contradictions . . . Lovestone lays all stress on the external contradictions."*

In the Thesis of the recent C.C. Plenum we find reference to "the opportunist line based . . . on the primacy of the external contradictions." The main idea of the "new leadership" is clear: *insistence upon the primacy of the inner contradictions in the period of imperialism.*

How do our new "Leninists" defend this brazenly revisionist doctrine? They announce with a comical show of learning that

*"Long ago, in the third volume of Capital, Marx clearly explained that the so-called external contradictions result from the internal contradictions of the capitalist system." (Answer of the Polcom to the Appeal of the Convention Delegation.)*

This brilliant argument proves that its authors do not begin to understand the nature of Marx's reasoning; they cannot even distinguish between "historical priority" and "primacy" (for example, competition is historically "prior" to monopoly, yet monopoly holds the position of "primacy" under imperialism.) But more than this, it quite conclusively demonstrates that they see no distinction between the pre-imperialist epoch ("the epoch of industrial capital") and the imperialist period ("the era of finance capital"). They simply cannot understand that the "epoch of imperialism . . . signifies a new form of capitalism, a new system of relationships between the various parts of the world capitalist economy and a change in the relationships between the principal classes of capitalist society." (Pro-

gram of CI). What then is Leninism to these new "Leninists"?

A most decisive answer to the revisionists of today was given years ago in the well-known pamphlet of Stalin's *The Foundation of Leninism*. Stalin, in the chapter on the "Theory of the Proletarian Revolution", points out that, on the basis of the Leninist theory of imperialism, "our attitude towards the problem of the proletarian revolution has undergone a change".

*"Nowadays," he continues, "we have to regard the proletarian revolution, first and foremost, as the outcome of antagonisms within the world-wide system of imperialism . . ."*

Nothing could be more conclusive than this. It is especially recommended to the revisionists of today, with Stalin at their head.

The revisionist attitude on the question of imperialism and the primacy of the outer contradictions results immediately in an underestimation of the war danger in the present period of imperialism. It is no accident, as we shall see later, that the revision of the Leninist theory of imperialism leads directly to the grossest errors in the actual struggle against imperialism. It undermines and destroys the Communist character of our movement.

## CHAPTER III.

STABILIZATION AND THE THIRD PERIOD—  
AMERICAN IMPERIALISM3. *The Question of Stabilization and the Third Period.*

A false conception of the theory of imperialism and of the nature of its contradictions inevitably implies a false estimate of the nature of stabilization and the third period. The Address of the EccI ushered in and the “new leadership” of our Party has accepted and elaborated a radically false conception of these questions, the major questions for the Communist International in the present period. This is the root of the revisionist line that has seized hold of our Party and of the Comintern.

The VI World Congress saw the “third period” as a period in which the capitalist economy has already surpassed the pre-war levels of production. Stabilization therefore, so far from being liquidated, has actually reached a new level. But the very rapid development of the productive forces (“in some countries assuming the character of a technical revolution”—Theses of the VI Congress), is accompanied by a relatively much slower expansion of the world markets, thus leading to the development of sharp international contradictions and inner antagonisms and opening up a period of serious war danger and revolutionary perspectives. A clear estimation of the nature of present-day stabilization and the meaning of the third period was given by Comrade Lovestone in his report on the VI Congress at the New York district membership meeting on October 2, 1928:

*“Let us state at the outset that capitalism has in many ways managed to surpass its pre-war level of production. It has succeeded in restoring relations and reconstructing economy in a number of countries. But precisely herein lies its chief contradiction—the contradiction between the*

*possibilities of production and the capacity for marketing the commodities produced. . .*

*“From the very fact of stabilization, from the fact that production increases and trade grows apace, from the fact that technical progress and the productive capacities are increasing while the world market and the spheres of influence of the different imperialist groups are still remaining more or less stabilized—from this very fact arises a new profound and most acute crisis of world capitalism. . .”*

*“The crux of these contradictions is to be found in the antagonisms between the still rising American capitalism and the already declining, the decaying capitalism of Great Britain. . .*

*“Another feature of the present third period, besides the imperialist war menace, is the imperialist war against the colonies. . .*

*“But an even more dominant characteristic of this period lies in the danger of an imperialist war against the Soviet Union. . .*

*“Consequently, the war danger constitutes the very crux of the new period. . .*

*“ . . . The furious competition abroad causes a tightening of the screws at home. The capitalist government apparatus gives more and more open support to the trusts and cartels. Furthermore, such support is also given the big bourgeoisie by means of fascist methods and the utilization of the social democracy and trade union bureaucracy. For the workers rationalization of industry spells devastating speed-up, longer hours, ‘shorter’ wages, denial of the right to strike, compulsory arbitration. . .”*

This characterization of the present period of world capitalism was repeated almost verbatim in the official theses of the Agitprop of the EccI on the VI Congress (*Inprecorr*, vol. 8, no. 80, pp. 1515-1516, November 16, 1928). Evidently at that time it was not yet a “right wing” analysis meriting wholesale expulsion!

But it did not take long before these basic conceptions of

the nature of stabilization and the third period were completely revised. The X Plenum of the Ecce declared that "stabilization was already liquidated", that to speak of technical advance was an "opportunist error", that, in fact, the whole idea of stabilization was "unclear" and that, in the words of Comrade Kuusinen, the chief reporter:

*"The 'third period' is not a period of stabilization but a period of the liquidation of stabilization. . ."*

Thus the X Plenum repudiated the Leninist view of the nature of stabilization which had been developed by the Comintern over a period of years and deprived the concept of the third period of the entire political content given to it by the VI Congress.

The revisionist theoreticians in our Party have carried thru the same line of revision for America, naturally with less erudition and greater crudity. In America, too, they see the "end of stabilization," tho in the U.S.A. the effect of the imperialist war was rather to enhance than to disrupt the development of the capitalist production.

In America, too, there is no longer any technical progress! In America too the third period arises from the basic decline of capitalist economy. When transferred to America the present revisionist conception of the leaders of the Comintern becomes the notorious old Bittleman "apex theory", that was rejected more than once by the Comintern and our Party because of its obviously anti-Leninist character.

#### 4. *The Question of American Imperialism.*

It is a fact that the official leadership of our Party has now again embraced the often-rejected "apex theory" of the Foster group and it has accepted it because it is the inevitable consequence of the revisionist analysis of the world situation made by the new leadership of the Ecce. In more or less clear form it is being declared everywhere—and what is more important the policies of the Party are being based upon the view that "American imperialism is about to reach its apex of develop-

ment." American imperialism is already being "shattered" and the columns of the *Daily Worker* are strewn with its fragments. Indeed, only a short time ago (October 30, 1929) in connection with the recent situation on the Stock Exchange, the *Freiheit* devoted a long editorial to proving the following remarkable thesis:

*"America is no exception. American capitalism too is beginning its process of decline."*

This is no more than the American equivalent for seeing "world-wide crises" and "the approach of the July days in Western Europe" that distinguished the X Plenum.

In estimating the present position of American imperialism we must be careful to avoid all subjectivity and impressionism; we must base ourselves on objective facts. Of course, Comrade Bedacht upbraids us with paying too much attention to "capitalist facts" in which he is merely echoing the views of the X Plenum about "contamination by capitalist statistics" and about the "fascization of facts" (Kolarov)—but we still believe with Lenin that:

*"Marxism imposes upon us the duty of taking the most exact and verifiable view of the class relations and of the concrete circumstances of every historical moment. We Bolsheviks have always tried to be faithful to this obligation, which is an absolutely imperative one from the point of view of those who desire to gain a scientific basis for their policy."*

Nor must we fall victims to any moods of optimism and pessimism. Such expressions have no business in the estimations of a Communist. They must be replaced by *Leninist realism*. Comrade Ercoli was quite correct when at the VI Congress he said:

*"Here arises the question of optimism and pessimism. I absolutely reject the idea that it is a sign of pessimism to have the desire to make a basic analysis. . . and to examine thoroly the problems placed before us. What we want is the truth."*

A very accurate view of the present position of American



imperialism and its course of development was given by Comrade Bukharin in his report at the VI World Congress and was repeated in the theses:

*"The process of stabilization affects the situation in the largest capitalist countries in various ways. Partial stabilization is a two-sided process. On the one hand, there is a certain technico-economic consolidation of capitalism and on the other—which must not be left out of sight—contradictions grow, the class struggle becomes more acute, unemployment increases.*

*"The United States may serve as a classical example. It is a country where capitalist development proceeds at a most rapid rate and where side by side with growing productive forces, unemployment is constantly increasing. It is absolutely clear that this is tantamount to an accentuation of the class struggle in the United States."*

Let us briefly examine the main features of the present position of American imperialism. They are:

- 1) *The transference of the economic center of gravity from Europe to America and the still-continuing upward swing of American imperialism.*
- 2) *Its fight for complete world hegemony.*
- 3) *Its role as the leading aggressive and most brutal imperialist power in the world.*
- 4) *Its becoming increasingly involved in the contradictions of world capitalism.*
- 5) *Therefore, in addition to the contradictions which American capitalism engenders within itself, one must also emphasize the fact of its becoming increasingly subject to the contradictions, difficulties, and antagonisms of world capitalism which is itself in its final, basic crisis—the crisis of post-war imperialism.*
- 6) *It is the present very strength of American imperialism that serves as a force for sharpening and stimulating the elements of disintegration in international capitalism, thus making for a world crisis.*
- 7) *It is wrong to say that a crisis can come in the*

*United States only as a result of the internal contradictions. A crisis can come in the United States also as a result of the developing crisis in other capitalist countries. The internal contradictions in the United States are especially aggravated by the entire world situation. Our position is that the very strength of American imperialism, the very role it played in the momentary strengthening of certain positions of European capitalism is becoming the grave digger of American capitalism and a force for the disintegration of international capitalism.*

This estimation of the position and course of American imperialism is the one on which the entire work of the Party was conducted for years under its former leadership and which was reiterated a number of times in the most important official Party documents of the Party (especially the theses of February and December 1928 Plenums). It is still fundamentally correct and stands in direct contrast to the new revisionist line forced upon our Party by the present leadership of the Ecce.

It is important to note that the "apex theory" in its American and its international form, tho "left" in appearance, is essentially opportunist in content. It is an inverted social-democratic conception. Its main premise is that revolutionary work is possible *only* in a period of capitalist decline and that therefore periods of stabilization and upward development of capitalism hold forth no revolutionary perspectives. This is the viewpoint of opportunism and not of Leninism.

## CHAPTER IV.

## RADICALIZATION—RATIONALIZATION.

5. *The Question of Radicalization.*

ON the basis of its Leninist conception of the third period the VI Congress was able to formulate, in a precise manner, the degree and character of the leftward movement of the masses:

*"The resistance of the working class . . . is growing and assuming extremely diverse forms. The development of the contradictions of capitalist stabilization, rationalization, etc. . . . inevitably intensify the class struggle and broaden its base. The general process of the proletarian swing to the left continues further . . .*

*" . . . the slow rate of development of the crisis of capitalism in the course of which some of the principal parts comprising the capitalist system are on the upgrade while others are undergoing a process of relatively slow decline."*

The X Plenum of the EccI, confirming the revisionist line of the new leadership of the Comintern, rejected this balanced and Leninist picture and replaced it with superficial impressionistic "revolutionary-sounding" phrases without basis or content and often contradictory. It seems to have been the general conclusion that we are now "in the midst of a new wave of revolution." Comrade Lozovsky, in his official report on the trade union question approved by the Plenum, maintained that we were "on the eve of a revolution", while Comrade Moireva, member of the Presidium of the EccI, declared with the approval of the Plenum that in the West European situation today there are "some elements that recall the July days (of the Russian Revolution)!" The radicalization had progressed so far in the opinion of the X Plenum that "the Communist Parties had to restrain the most advanced sections of the working class in their surge forward!"

A viewpoint such as this is not only clear revision of the line of the Comintern; it is a manifest substitution of wild impressionistic phrases for a realistic estimation; it represents a most un-Leninist repudiation of the Marxist method of objective analysis. The construction of strategy and tactics upon superficial phrases can only lead to disaster.

The situation is exactly the same as far as America is concerned. Following in the footsteps of the great theoreticians of the Foster group who found radicalization in the large Smith vote in the election of 1928, the present Party leadership has completely lost every vestige of Marxism and Leninism. The keynote was given by one Mingulin who spoke of (*Inprecor*, vol. 9, no. 28, June 14, 1929):

*"the most numerous and up to now the most backward proletariat which is now developing revolutionary activity."*

In every document of the new leadership, in every issue of the *Daily Worker*, we find that the American working class has begun "its counter-attack and even a direct offensive", that the American workers "are taking up revolutionary activity." To substantiate these fantastic claims the American theoreticians merely borrow from the renowned "Leninist," Lozovsky, who, at the X Plenum, gave, as a proof of the "revolutionary rise which is taking place before our eyes," the following:

*"The strike of 2,000 street carmen in New Orleans is accompanied by a series of murders; not only the workers but their relatives distinguish themselves thru their heightened activities, which was not the case in the last decades. The wives of the workers lay themselves on the street car tracks and do not allow the cars to pass (!) . . . In the Gastonia strike also there were dead, wounded, etc."*

All that can be said is that neither Comrade Lozovsky nor his disciples in America have even the least idea as to what constitutes radicalization or as to the outstanding events in American labor history.

In Gastonia we have a struggle for the most elementary rights of the working class; in New Orleans the "revolution-

ary" workers were battling for—arbitration! The use of arms in these struggles and the violent suppression of the strikes is nothing new in American labor history nor is it a sign of radicalization. Lenin taught us to estimate the nature of a struggle by its *political class content* and not by its mere external forms.

The political quackery of the present leadership of our Party in transforming every event, great or small, into evidence of radicalization, probably "reached its apex" some time ago when, after the first days of the recent municipal election registration in New York City, the *Daily Worker* discovered that the unusually light registration was a sign of radicalization: the workers had become disgusted with the capitalist parties and would not register or vote! A few days later, when it became evident that the registration would be very heavy, the *Daily Worker* announced that the excessively heavy registration was a sign of radicalization: the workers were rushing to the polls to deal heavy blows to the capitalist parties! Could political bankruptcy and opportunism go further?

For all their shouting about radicalization, the present leadership of our Party (and of the Comintern) are unable to find the *real basis* for the *real* elements of radicalization in the present situation, for the *real* move to the left of the American working class. They do not see that:

*"The victory for finance capital (the 1928 Presidential elections) means, of course, more aggressive imperialist foreign policy. Intensified competition of American with European imperialist powers, means greater aggrandisement by the Yankee imperialists in their drive for world supremacy. This will be resisted by the other imperialist powers. Thus the very strength of American imperialism generates contradictions, conflicts and antagonisms in the bourgeois world. The conflicts resulting from these outer contradictions can only serve to sharpen the class war at home, intensifying the inner contradictions of American imperialism. Sharper attacks against the workers at*

*home mean, sooner rather than later, increasing mass resistance by the workers to the onslaught of the capitalists."*  
(*Lovestone: The 1928 Election*).

The new feature in the present situation is that American imperialist development has already reached the stage in its striving towards domination in world politics in which it is driven towards the most brutal forms of capitalist rationalization on the one hand and towards a tremendous growth in oppressive war preparations on the other. This is the basis of the tendency for the leftward movement of sections of the American working class. Here we have the objective basis for the element of growing radicalization among the American workers. But rejecting the whole conception of the nature of the present period as outlined above, the present "leaders" of our Party find themselves simply mouthing empty phrases without content or basis.

Decisive sections of the American working class, particularly the unskilled and semi-skilled workers are showing increasing discontent, are moving to the left, but it is absurd to maintain that the whole American working class has become revolutionary. To say that the American working class has already on the whole entered the period of offensive struggle, of counter-attack, of revolutionary activity, is folly. It is not necessary to produce a false picture of the situation to see the elements of increasing mood and readiness for struggle on the part of masses of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the United States. Conversely, presenting a false estimate of the situation renders it impossible for the Party to take advantage of the opportunities for struggle and condemns the Party to political impotence. This practise of deliberately distorting the objective conditions flows from a profound disbelief in the possibilities for struggle in the present situation in America. This is inverted social-reformism.

#### 6. *The Question of Rationalization.*

The fearful political bankruptcy which the attempt of the present leadership of the Ecce to force a revisionist line upon

our Party has produced, is best illustrated by the treatment of the question of rationalization on the part of our "new leadership".

In its answer to the Appeal of the Convention Delegation the Polcom declared:

*"Rationalization means a simplification of production. The skill of the artisan acquired thru years of training becomes more and more useless in modern production. The masses of the skilled workers are replaced by the unskilled and semi-skilled. The skilled worker sees himself robbed of the value of his skill and often has to hire out as unskilled. Thus (because of this blow to the skilled upper stratum of the working class) automatically the standard of living of American workers (skilled and unskilled) is reduced. Because of that the American working class is becoming more homogeneous."*

It does not require any profound knowledge of economics to see the profound error in this "definition".

The immediate implications of this "definition" show how far indeed are the conceptions of the present "leadership" of our Party from the line of Marxism-Leninism. By assuming that the skilled workers and not the great mass of the semi-skilled are hardest hit by rationalization, it orientates our struggles against the effects of capitalist rationalization exclusively upon the skilled workers. Above all, it fails to see the effect of imperialism (thru rationalization as thru other means) in deepening the differentiation within the proletariat as between the small labor aristocracy and the great mass of the workers.

Then, a few weeks later occurred the X Plenum of the Ecc which gave birth to the monstrous, completely anti-Marxist conception of rationalization as "in the true sense of the word the enforcement of maximum intensification of labor." Our learned theoreticians found themselves in a difficulty for, altho both are fundamentally wrong, their definition was in direct opposition to the equally fantastic one of the X Plenum. But our theoreticians are also "practical politicians." In the thesis of the recent CC Plenum we discover therefore that

*"rationalization as being only the simplification of production (is) the conception of the opportunists".*

This is deliberate political trickery not even cleverly executed!

As soon as the word came from the X Plenum, the ideological right-about-face was made without explanation and—blaming its original definition of rationalization upon the "opportunists"—our highly "responsible leadership" immediately discovered that rationalization was "the enforcement of the maximum intensification of labor."

This concept of rationalization which completely omits the factor of the heightened *productivity* of labor and technical advance is a thoroughgoing revision of every idea of rationalization ever put forward by Marxist economists or by the Comintern since the question arose. It is only necessary to refer to the VII Plenum of the Ecc (December 1926) where "increase in the intensity of labor" was found to be one of the *five* constituent elements of rationalization\*. The present gross distortion of the meaning of rationalization leads to the most serious errors in the tactics of the everyday struggle of the Comintern and of our Party against capitalist rationalization. It leads, moreover, to a complete dissociation of the problems of rationalization and the war danger—as is to be expected from any viewpoint that cannot see the primacy of the external contradictions in the present period.

The X Plenum justified its rejection of the fact of technical progress (as established by the VI Congress) and therefore its anti-Marxist conception of rationalization by referring "to the tendency of stagnation, of retarded development of the forces of production" during the period of imperialism. It referred to what Lenin said on these questions and indeed Lenin

\*The five are: "standardization and mass production, automatization of transport within the factory, the automatization of machinery, the organization of superintendance, the increase in the intensity of labor". To these points must be added: "the concentration of industrial enterprise... and technical innovations". At this Plenum Comrade Lovestone, in the name of the American delegation, declared that:

**"One must not overlook a fundamental feature of rationalization manifested in America where rationalization is most highly developed. In the United States the class collaboration movement is an integral part of the rationalization process..."**

did bring out the "tendency to decay" as a characteristic of the stage of imperialism. But Lenin said something more which the great theoreticians of the X Plenum seemed to have "forgotten". Lenin declared:

*"It would be a mistake to believe that this tendency to decay excludes the possibility of a rapid growth of capitalism. It does not. Separate branches of production, different strata of the bourgeoisie, and individual countries display with more or less strength in the imperialist period one or the other of these tendencies. In a general way, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before, but this growth is becoming more and more irregular and the irregularity is showing itself in particular in the decay of the countries which are the richest in capital (such as England)."*

## CHAPTER V.

### SOCIAL REFORMISM AND "SOCIAL-FASCISM"— UNITED FRONT—TRADE UNION QUESTIONS.

#### 7. *The Question of the Labor Aristocracy, Social Reformism and "Social Fascism."*

**I**N its answer to the Appeal of the Convention Delegation the Polcom states:

*"Yet anyone not blinded by the theory of exceptionalism should be able to see that rationalization, by its simplification of the processes of production, is lessening the gap between the skilled and the unskilled workers, that the skilled and unskilled are being pushed down to the same level. At the same time rationalization creates a handful of extremely highly skilled functionaries of the capitalist apparatus, a small corps d'elite of foremen, technicians, etc. which already is no longer to be reckoned as labor but passes over and becomes the lowest rank of the bourgeoisie. This means the dissolving of the old form of the labor aristocracy."*

In the first place our present leadership does not seem to be able to understand the nature and the roots of the labor aristocracy. It is absurd to say that the skilled workers constitute the labor aristocracy or that the existence of a labor aristocracy is conditioned upon skill. Lenin explained to us that the formation of a "labor aristocracy" is one of the inevitable results of imperialism. Thru the surplus profits which it extracts thru "special" methods (exploitation of the colonial masses, etc.), the imperialist bourgeoisie is able to corrupt an upper section of the proletariat, by means of higher wages, special privileges, or social conditions, etc. and thus to some extent to harmonize the interests of that section with the general interests of imperialism. Such a division of the proletariat is extremely valuable for the bourgeoisie; the corrupted

labor aristocratic elements become the bearers of bourgeois influence (social-reformism) in the ranks of the working class. This is the Leninist theory of the labor aristocracy and of social-reformism.

Does rationalization destroy the labor aristocracy as our "Leninists" insist? On the contrary, the Theses of the VI Congress declare:

*"In the great majority of capitalist countries at the present time the politics of the bourgeoisie are determined by two main tasks, first, to further increase 'competitive power,' i. e. to further develop rationalization, and second, to prepare for war. From the social-class standpoint bourgeois politics leads, on the one hand to increased pressure upon the working class and to an increase in the rate of exploitation. On the other hand, they lead to the employment of 'compensating' methods, of economic and political corruption, the conscious vehicle of which social-democracy is more and more becoming."*

That this is correct is self-evident to anyone who has any understanding of the present world situation. It is precisely because of the increasing pressure upon the masses of the workers thru rationalization that the bourgeoisie is compelled to resort to complex methods of corrupting economically and politically definite sections of the working class itself and its political and industrial organizations.

But if the labor aristocracy "in its old form" is disappearing, then so is *social reformism* for the labor aristocracy is the social bearer of social reformist influence in the working class. This is exactly the position of the present leadership of our Party—and it is here that they come into natural contact with the viewpoint of the X Plenum whose theoretician, Bela Kun, officially declared that

*"in this stage of development social-reformism dies out."*

Yet one of the "biggest points" against the former leadership of our Party was that it "underestimated" the influence of social-reformism!

Our "leaders" seem to be able to conjure away the labor aris-

tocracy with their empty words; they prove equally capable of conjuring up into existence a new "class"—technicians, foremen, etc. Is it necessary to point out that these elements form part of the labor aristocracy, in fact its upper stratum?

It is hardly necessary to call attention to the close resemblance of the theory of the "dissolving of the labor aristocracy" and its replacement by "foremen, technicians, etc." to the old discredited Foster theory of "capitalist efficiency socialism." Here as elsewhere the old factional platform of the Foster group foresaw the coming "official" revision on the part of the Ecc. i.

It would indeed be an example of real "exceptionalism" if the fantastic and dangerous ideas of "social fascism" as elaborated by the X Plenum did not find a fertile ground here in America in the minds of our own theoreticians, where it has enjoyed a rank growth. If Bela Kun discovered that the thugs and strike-breakers in the United States are "social fascists" then certainly it is permissible for Stachel to supplement this achievement by a discovery of his own, namely, that John Dewey is a "social fascist"! Is it not a real contribution of the USA to the international revision of Leninism to discover as does the *Daily Worker* that

*"Fascism has broken out in North Carolina."*

*"Already it is spreading over the land. Already it is moving North, West and East."*

The conceptions brought out by our new leadership on all of these questions are the natural results of the desertion of the main strategy of Leninism now taking place all along the line, in every section of the Comintern.

## 8. *The United Front.*

The real nature of the fantasies of "social fascism" and the ultra-left phrases of "revolutionary waves," etc. is shown in the complete *rejection* by the Ecc. of the tactic of the *unite front*. Lenin and the Comintern repeatedly pointed out that united front tactics must be applied until the barricade struggles—and after.

But if the Social-democratic masses "from top to bottom"

are becoming fascists then they must be treated as fascists. What becomes of the distinction between leaders and masses? What becomes of the united front? Here is the answer of the X Plenum (concluding remarks of Comrade Manuilsky):

*"Let us consider the question of the tactics of the united front. We have never considered it as a formula for everybody, for all times and peoples . . . Today we are stronger and we proceed to more aggressive methods in the struggle for the majority of the working class."*

So that the united front was all right for the second period but is too tame for the "third period" à la Heinz Neumann! Could a more disastrous rejection of Leninism be conceived? And yet our "leaders" speak of "winning the majority of the working class."

### 9. Trade Union Questions

The false revisionist line in the mobilization of the masses comes to the sharpest expression in the new line in trade union work. This new line is in essentials a sectarian anti-trade union course, amounting in effect not only to a rejection of the tasks of the Communists in the mass organizations but even to a repudiation of the essential role of the trade union movement—whether under reactionary or revolutionary leadership—as the elementary form of the class organization of the proletariat.

The false trade union line finds its roots in two sources: in the absolutely false estimation of the present objective situation and in the equally false attitude towards the mass organizations of the workers under reformist control. We have already examined these points. The ultra-left impressionistic phrases about the "new revolutionary wave" have given rise to the promulgation of a new edition of the theory of the "offensive all along the line." Every economic movement has become a "counter-defensive or a direct offensive struggle."

On the basis of the undoubted fact that the fusion of the reformist trade union bureaucracy with the state apparatus as well as with the apparatus of trust-capital has been greatly intensified in the last period, the *Ecc* draws the absolutely

false conclusion that the trade unions as such have ceased to be centers of class organization and have been transformed into "agencies and appendages of the capitalist state." It is clear that such a thoroly anti-Marxist conception is only the "trade-union" phase of the theory of "social-fascism." Already at the VI Congress Comrade Bukharin, in the name of the Congress, carried on a vigorous polemic against such dangerous views.

The distinction between the bureaucratic leaders, "cringing at the feet of imperialism," on the one hand, and the "sincere but mistaken" masses is the primary distinction underlying Leninist strategy. To deny this distinction in word or deed is to break with Leninism!

The X Plenum did not have the political courage to declare openly for the immediate inauguration of a policy of splitting the unions; it would have been "untactful" and "premature." It satisfied itself with general declarations as to the "permissibility" of splits "under certain conditions" and with the putting forward of certain "organizational" proposals of profound political significance which would in effect mean the setting up of dual organizations immediately, as, for example, the proposal (of Lozovsky) to set up "independent commissions opposed to the reformist unions" to lead strikes, to make terms, to conclude wage and hour agreements, etc. and to "maintain their existence after the struggle in order to see that the agreements are carried out," i.e., to set up new unions in fact.

It is well known what Lenin thought of such split tactics. But unfortunately our "leaders" of today have forgotten entirely the lessons contained in Lenin's pamphlet on *Leftism*.

The negative anarcho-syndicalist orientation towards trade union work shows itself not only in the attitude towards the reformist unions but also in the attitude towards the red unions. The official theory now is that industrial struggles must be led *not* by the unions but by "fighting leaderships" to which even the red unions must serve as auxiliaries. This line was indicated in all clearness by the resolution adopted at the XII Congress of the Germany Party:

*"The organs for the organization and leading of the workers struggles under the leadership of the Communist Party are the 'fighting leaderships', the factory councils, the revolutionary shop delegates and representatives, the delegates conferences, etc. These organs cannot be replaced even by revolutionary unions. The role of revolutionary unions in relation to these organs of struggle is that of stimulating energetically their development as well as their activization."*

This is equivalent to the liquidation of the red unions for it denies them the role absolutely essential to any trade union organization—the role of leading economic struggles.

The anarcho-syndicalist deviation of the Eccis shows itself most crassly in the utterly false estimation of the role of the organized workers and the relations between organized and unorganized. The organized workers are looked upon as "more or less reactionary" just because they are organized while the unorganized workers are considered the "most advanced section of the working class." Thus the position is reached that lack of organization is a revolutionary virtue. This is anarcho-syndicalism with a vengeance.

The new trade union line of the Eccis is not the line of Leninism. The trade union line of the Eccis today agrees in essentials with the trade union theses put forward by the ultra-lefts in 1929.

The syndicalists also fall in line. The old German syndicalist, Lintner, who certainly speaks with authority for the syndicalist viewpoint, recently announced publicly:

*"The Communist Party has taken over the best from syndicalism. I have absolutely no objections of any sort against the decisions of the Party which correspond to our conceptions."*

The trade union question is, as Lenin more than once pointed out, the decisive question in the mobilization of the masses. A false line on this question makes impossible the fulfillment of the most fundamental task of a Communist Party in a capitalist country: the winning of the majority of the working class!

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE RIGHT DANGER—TROTSKYISM

#### 10. *The Right Danger.*

IT is well known that the movement for the revision of the principles of Leninism today officially hides behind what they call the struggle against the right danger. In this way the attempt is made to hide behind the phrases of the VI Congress while distorting and rejecting its substance.

The VI Congress dealt with the question of the right danger in a very precise form. In the first place it defined the *sources* of the right danger:

*"On the basis of the partial stabilization of capitalism and directly owing to the influence of social-democracy, the principle line of deviation from the correct political position observed within the Communist Parties at the present time is towards the Right . . . However, side by side with this there are 'left' deviations . . ."*

But what is the "new line," especially as expressed at the X Plenum? In the first place, it maintains that the present period "is not the period of stabilization but of the liquidation of capitalist stabilization"; secondly, it insists that "in this stage of development social-reformism dies out." After this what remains as the objective basis of a right danger? The new revisionism perverts the whole question of the struggle against right errors into an *empty phrase* to be utilized as an *instrument in factional manipulation and destruction* of the various sections of the Communist International.

The contradiction here between the new line and the line of the VI Congress is so gross that even the agile new "theoreticians" feel that something must be done. So, in direct opposition to the words of the VI Congress theses, they proceed to invent a new "source" of the right danger—the "leftward movement of the masses!"



The suicidal "campaign against the right danger" as conducted by the Eccí is being exposed more and more as a cover behind which the "new leadership" can hide its monstrous line of ultra-leftism and sectarian isolation. It is the cover behind which three new "leaders" can carry on their factional and disruptive manipulations. It lacks every vestige of sincerity and principle.

The VI Congress declared:

*"The Congress instructs all Parties to combat these deviations and to combat them primarily by means of persuasion."*

The ink was hardly dry on these words when the first expulsions on the pretext of "fighting the right danger" took place! Since then thousands and tens of thousands of the best comrades have been expelled, whole Party and mass organizations have been wrecked under the pretext of "fighting the right danger." And yet the Party wreckers have the political audacity to claim that they are carrying out the line of the VI Congress!

It is inevitable that once the fight against right errors is emptied of its political content and is converted into a factional Party-wrecking game, that then the struggle against real right deviations will be altogether liquidated, the crassest right-wing errors will flourish unrestrained, and the worst and most incorrigible opportunists will be elevated into the highest Party positions. Czechoslovakia affords a most startling example. Here the last Congress (March 1929), with the approval of the Eccí, condemned Smeral, Kreibich and Zapotocky by name as the kernel of the historic right-wing in the C.P.Cz. And now, after the expulsion of Muna and Jilek, the founders of the Party and traditional "lefts," and of thousands of others as "right-wingers" and "renegades," Zapotocky is a member of the Secretariat of the C.P.Cz., Kreibich of its Polburo, and Smeral of the Polsecretariat of the Eccí!

#### *The Question of the Right-Wing in the American Party*

But nowhere is the factional perversion of the struggle

against the right danger more apparent than in the U. S. A. where the Address of the Eccí has taken away the leadership from the traditional left of the Party supported by over 90% of the Party and has given it to the traditional right-wing in our Party (the Foster group), recognized as such for many years by the Comintern.

The traditional attitude of the Comintern towards the groupings in the American Party is laid down in very precise and unmistakable form in a series of official documents. From the time (1924) when the Comintern approved the Labor Party policy of the old Ruthenberg group down to its rejection of the charge of a right-wing line against the former C. C. at the VI World Congress (August 1928), the record has been one of continual endorsement of the former leadership of our Party and an equally continual repudiation of the political line and the factional attacks of the Foster right-wing group.

On April 13, 1928 the Eccí examined the thesis adopted by the February 1928 Plenum of our Party and declared:

*"Amidst an atmosphere of growing deep depression . . . the Workers (Communist) Party has already played a leading role in the struggles and was able also to take a prominent part in the miners struggle in Colorado . . ."*

*"The instructions given by the C.C. . . . arise logically from the correct analysis of the present political and economic situation in the U. S. A. contained in the February thesis."*

This was the first time that a particular political thesis of our Party was expressly endorsed by the Comintern.

Towards the middle of 1928 there was held the July Plenum of the C.P.S.U. Comrade Manuilsky, reporting for the C.C. of the C.P.S.U., made the following declaration in his summary remarks:

*"Take such a Party as the American Party. Every one knows that in recent times the American Party has achieved great successes. I will utilize my time for saying a few words about the conditions in this Party. There were two groupings—one a left one enjoying influence in the Party,*

*the other connected with the trade unions thru Foster. . . . They have there at the head a leadership of lefts . . . the C.C. is a left committee; we have there nobody more left."*

At the VI Congress the Foster-Cannon group developed a strong offensive against the former C.C. as an opportunist leadership. The enlarged Anglo-American Secretariat organized by the Congress reported back as follows:

*"We are told . . . that the Lovestone group is a right wing group . . . and yet we are told that thru this 'right wing' policy the Party . . . has unquestionably established its influence among the broad masses of the workers. This is absolutely unique in the history of the Comintern . . . It is the first time in our history that a general right wing policy has led to such results."*

Expressing the same viewpoint the Congress thesis declared:

*"The Workers (Communist) Party of America has displayed more lively activity and has taken advantage of symptoms of crisis in American industry . . . A number of stubborn and fierce class battles (primarily the miners' strike) found in the Communist Party a stalwart leader."*

About the same time that the VI Congress of the Comintern took place there was held the V Congress of the Young Communist International. The leader of the Congress, Chitaroff, was compelled to make himself very clear on the American situation:

*"Hitherto it (the Foster group) has in general been a right-wing group. In the past it was the group that fought against the line of the Comintern while the Ruthenberg group was much nearer to the Comintern. The past of the Foster group hardly justifies these comrades for coming up here and speaking of the 'right-wing majority' of the Party leadership."*

In September 1928 the EccI declared in a special decision that

*"the charge of a right wing line against the Central Committee is unfounded."*

It is hardly necessary to add that even the Open Letter to

our VI Party Convention was full of praise for the Party's work and leadership, altho here it was already obvious that these phrases were mere camouflage to hide the fundamental change of attitude of the new EccI towards our Party.

This revision of attitude began just after the VI Congress and gained strength with the progress of the general revision of the line of the Congress. It did not take long before it was "discovered" that the Party's policies had been wrong all along until "put right" by the May 1929 Address of the EccI. Indeed the then Organization Secretary of the C.C., John Williamson, has plainly stated in a special article in the *Daily Worker*:

*"In the present situation our Party, for the first time in many years, has a correct political policy. The Address of the C.I. was the instrument to win the Party membership away from its past opportunist policies."*

The Party press is just overflowing with "proof" that before May 1929 the Party had never done anything worth mentioning and that whatever was done was "right-wing" and "opportunist" anyway!

As a result of this revision of attitude towards the political line and activities of our Party came a complete right-about-face in connection with the estimation of the groups. The former leadership—than whom "we have nobody more left there"—suddenly became "right-wingers" and "renegades" and the Foster group—which "has in general been a right-wing group"—just as suddenly became the left-wing whose mission it was to save the Party! Could political jugglery and destructive diplomacy go further!

#### 11. *The Question of Trotskyism.*

It has become increasingly clear in the last period that the revision to which the line of Leninism is being subjected by the EccI is in the direction of Trotskyism. Basic Trotskyist concepts are being smuggled in more and more and very frequently given official recognition. A careful analysis of any

of the important points in the new line of the Eccí will show how true this is.

No one realizes the direction in which the "new course" is heading better than Trotsky himself. In his letter of August 25 he estimates the existing Party relations quite clearly:

*"The fact of a turn to the left of the official leadership is very clear today.*

*"It is quite unnecessary to attempt to prove the undeniable fact that—just as the struggle against our platform was conducted on the basis of the arguments of the present right-wing group (i.e. Bukharin)—so the official struggle against the right-wing group today is conducted with arguments that are taken wholly and completely from our platform."*

The natural consequence of the systematic appropriation of the platform of Trotskyism by the present Eccí is the pronounced movement of hundreds of Trotskyites back to the Party. The declarations of Radek, Smilga and Preobreshenski and the later declaration of Rakovski, Kossior and 400 other Trotskyites are already well known.

The Trotskyites who are coming back to the official fold—because "on many important points it (the Party) has returned to the correct path" (Declaration of Preobreshenski)—are being welcomed back very warmly by the new leaderships of the various Parties as a "reliable support in the struggle against the rights and conciliators." The official struggle against Trotskyism has stopped in theory and in practice.

The main resolution of the X Plenum, for example, thousands of words long, could only devote *three words*, part of one sentence, to the question of Trotskyism! In none of the recent political documents of the Eccí is the question touched upon at all. And this holds true for the various sections where the political approach to Trotskyism and the alliance with the Trotskyites are becoming clearer and clearer every day.

The cessation of the struggle against Trotskyism is the natural consequence of the Eccí's revision of Leninism in that di-

rection. The mass readmission of the Trotskyites is likewise the other side of the medal of the mass expulsion of those who traditionally have been the banner-bearers of the struggle against Trotskyism, those who are now called "opportunists" and "right wingers."

The new turn to Trotskyism is seen in very clear form in America. In America the official gospel of the "new leadership" is the document, *The Right Danger in the American Party*, which they share with the Trotskyites in whose organ, *The Militant*, it first saw the light. In America all of the political "arguments" of the "new leadership" against us are taken from the Trotskyist arsenal. Finally, in America the "new leadership" forced upon our Party by the Eccí bears all the marks of its Trotskyist origin.

It is well known that the present Foster group, now finally "entrusted" with the control of the Party, was until last October the *Foster-Cannon group*; at this time Cannon and his supporters determined to come out openly as Trotskyites while the rest of the group could not take this step. But it should not be forgotten that this character of the Foster group dates back much further. Already in December 1923 when, at the III Convention of our Party, the Foster group took control, Lore wired to his paper in New York (*Volkszeitung*): "*The Trotskyites have won the Party!*"

The matter appears to have been mutual, for Trotsky always had "a high regard" politically for Foster. In a recent letter to the American Trotskyites he declared:

*"I haven't had an opportunity of close contact with the other ruling elements of the Communist Party—except, to be sure, Foster. The latter always seemed to me made of much more trustworthy material than Lovestone and Pepper. In Foster's criticisms of the official leadership of the Party there was always much that was true and acute . . ."*

The turn of the Party, of the present Eccí towards Trotskyism shows the direction in which the "new course" is heading. It characterizes politically the whole nature of the present revision.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE EFFECTS OF THE "NEW COURSE"

*The False General Line of the Party*

IT would be a grave error to believe that the revision of the line of Leninism is limited to the sphere of pure "theory." For every Leninist, theory and practice are inseparable and a false estimation of the objective situation and a revision of the Leninist strategy and tactics are certain to lead to a radically false line in the every-day work of the Party. As a matter of fact the application of the revisionist course in America as laid down in the Address immediately perverted the hitherto correct line of the Party into a line of the grossest *opportunist sectarianism*, into a course appearing "left" and "revolutionary" on the surface but exhibiting the features of crass opportunism when carefully examined. A study of the Party policies since the Address will confirm this.

1. *Imperialism and the War Danger.*

In recent months a number of questions have arisen dealing with the problems of the struggle against imperialism and the war danger in which the serious opportunist-sectarian course of the "new leadership" has shown itself.

The first of these is *International Red Day* (August 1). In this campaign which should have been a mobilization point for large masses of American workers and farmers, the new leadership of our Party followed a deliberately sectarian line. All talk of a real united front was branded as opportunism. No serious effort was made to draw into the campaign any non-Communist working class organization or to penetrate any mass organization (especially unions) with the slogans of *International Red Day*. Factory work was forgotten, as was any serious work in connection with the armed forces. All mass work was replaced by abstract agitation which was not tied up in a vital manner with the real issues facing the working

class: the Manchurian crisis, the Kellogg "Peace" Pact, the recognition and defense of the Soviet Union, etc. The united front tactics were replaced by paper conferences of closely sympathetic organizations called together merely for the sake of publicity and empty show. Absolutely no attempt was made to bring the campaign into the fields of the class struggle in the South where the struggle against the war danger could very easily be linked up with the struggle against capitalist rationalization then being waged by the workers of Gastonia, Elizabethton, Marion, etc.

To cover up this passivity and pretense the "new leadership" gloried in the most empty ultra-left phrase-mongering. Slogans were put forth in the most irresponsible manner without the least regard to objective conditions. In the *Connecticut* district (where there are huge munition factories) the slogan was issued by the district organizer in a printed leaflet:

*"Organize into shop committees to fight the bosses war . . . with ammunition and all that you produce!"*

Towards the close of July the slogan was suddenly issued for a *general strike* on August 1—"Down Tools on August First!" It was well known to every Party member that these slogans were issued merely to appear "revolutionary". "Good" and "loyal" Party functionaries openly joked about it! The lack of seriousness with which the whole matter was taken is shown by the fact that in New York the "general strike" was to begin at four o'clock in the afternoon, in Philadelphia, at noon; in Buffalo the "strike" was ordered for a full day—but here the "leadership" was considerate enough to postpone the "strike" from Thursday, August 1, to *Sunday*, August 4.

For all of these reasons the August First demonstrations were an admitted fiasco. Everywhere the meetings were poor; in Philadelphia there was no outdoor meeting at all! In such an important industrial center as *Detroit* there was no demonstration of any kind! Nor was there any attempt at a demonstration in Gastonia or anywhere else in the South where the

opportunities were so favorable. As a campaign for mobilizing masses against the danger of war the International Red Day Campaign was a failure—especially when compared with the splendid anti-war campaign organized by the previous leadership in 1927 and this failure is to be traced directly to the false line of the Party.

The *Manchurian crisis*, the threat against the U.S.S.R. in the Far East, found the leadership of our Party completely unprepared and helpless, ideologically and organizationally. Outside of empty general phrases the *Daily Worker* and the Party press offered no explanations as to what was taking place or any guide to the Party members and revolutionary workers. Attempts to obtain a clear policy in the Party organizations were branded as “Lovestoneism” and punished with expulsion. Finally, after several weeks, “official” explanations began to be forthcoming and inevitably, being based on a perversion of the Leninist theory of imperialism, these “explanations” were false.

Weinstone, member of the Secretariat and District Organizer of New York, faithful to the theory of the primacy of inner contradictions, advanced the astonishing view that the Nanking government had made the attack upon the U.S.S.R. because of the rapidly maturing “inner contradictions” within China! Along the same lines he explained that the American government was playing a “pacifist” role out of fear of the “radicalized masses” at home!

It was in this way that the vicious Stimson note urging an “international regulation” of the Manchurian Railway crisis was interpreted by Comrade Weinstone. The energetic reply of the Soviet Union to the effort of Stimson to invoke the Kellogg Pact against the U. S. S. R. in the Manchurian crisis shows that every move of the Wall Street government was dictated by aggressive hostility towards the Soviet Union and not by fear of revolting American working masses, as the official line of the Party leadership would have us believe.

The District Organizer of the Anthracite District, Gorman,

analyzed the situation along the following lines:

*“While the seizure of the railway is a great economic loss to the Soviet Union it is an even greater economic and financial loss to China even tho the Chinese-Eastern railway will be under the complete control of China because the Soviet Government will now direct all traffic over the railway on Soviet territory.”*

Finally the official theses of the Polcom appeared, consisting of a mass of generalities, a compilation of all errors previously made and some new ones. Certainly the central question for the American Party was the question of American imperialism. Unable to understand the apparently “pacifist” role of United States imperialism as a reflection of the antagonisms between British and French and American imperialism within the general bloc against the Soviet Union, our “Leninist” leadership fell into the crassest pacifist errors, assuming that the U. S. A. was naturally “friendly” and had to be “urged on” against the Soviet Union. In the Theses on the War Danger we find:

*“It is probable that the latest ‘understandings’ between Great Britain and the United States is based on a compromise as regards Russia, that is, that certain temporary concessions of Great Britain to America . . . were bought at the price of a joint pact against Soviet Russia.”*

Naturally on such a basis it was impossible to mobilize any sections of the American working class against United States imperialism and for the defense and recognition of the Soviet Union. The role the Party played in the Manchurian crisis is one of the most shameful in its history!

But the *Palestine* events brought out the real meaning of the “new course” most clearly. When news came of the clashes in Palestine the *Freiheit* and the Jewish Buro of the Central Committee reacted immediately—but how? The policy of the Party in the Palestine situation was a policy of open capitulation before the nationalist-imperialist ideology of Zionism. The line of the *Freiheit* was the line of the general bourgeois

Jewish press, only with a "radical" labor tinge. The slogans of the *Freiheit* were identical with the slogans of the big Zionist protest meeting held in New York. This shameful betrayal of Communism by the official organs of our Party could only take place because both the editorial board of the *Freiheit* and the Jewish Buro of the Central Committee had just been "purged" of the "renegades"—that is, of the best proletarian revolutionists—and filled with the most notorious nationalists and opportunists. The results were inevitable.

For a week the Party leadership tolerated and supported the daily betrayal of Communism in the columns of the *Freiheit*. Under our pressure, however, the Polburo was finally forced into action. It issued a statement "condemning" the *Freiheit* and forced a change of policy. The next day the *Freiheit* made a complete and unexplained right-about-face\* The "pogrom" became a "mass revolt" and the British Government instead of supporting the Arabs was now recognized as the protector of Zionism. But Leninists cannot be made by command and Bolsheviks do not grow up overnight. The change had been mechanically made without explanations. The workers were bewildered and the Zionists and Socialists made the most out of the political instability and nationalist tendencies of the "100%-loyalist" *Freiheit* editors. But the story is not yet over. A few weeks after the first right-about-face came another. As soon as things "cooled" down somewhat, the old nationalist-Zionist line reappeared in the columns of the *Freiheit*. Again the stories about "race wars" and "pogroms" and again the denial of the national-revolutionary character of the Arab uprising! As a result, instead of utilizing the situation to break thru the influence of Zionism and Jewish chauvinism among the Jewish workers the Party leadership gravely discredited

\*The rapidity of the change of policy of the FREIHEIT is indicated in the following quotations:

"England Supports the Arabs in Palestine!"—FREIHEIT, August 24, 1929.

"Arabian Mass Revolt Against England Embraces All Palestine!"—FREIHEIT, August 27, 1929.

It is only necessary to add that this right-about-face took place absolutely without any explanation whatever.

itself among the Jewish workers and drove them into the arms of the reactionary Zionists and Socialists. Such are the fruits of revision!

## 2. *The Revival of Deleonism in Trade Union Work.*

As was to be expected from the absolutely anti-Leninist line of the present leadership of the CI on the trade union question (as exhibited at the X Plenum), the "new course" in our Party has hit our trade union and mass work hardest of all.

The *Cleveland Trade Union Unity League Conference* may serve as an example of what the "new line" means. After a disastrous postponement for purely factional reasons, the T. U. U. L. Conference as finally held could under no circumstances be regarded as a real mass conference for the establishment of a militant trade union center. It was organized exclusively from the viewpoint of factional advantage and was composed of Party members overwhelmingly and represented only a very small portion of even the advanced sections of the American workers. It was handled thruout as an openly narrow Party-controlled affair and consequently lost whatever spontaneity and mass response it might have had. The Program it adopted—the Program of the new Trade Union Unity League—is a program of ultra-left anarcho-syndicalism and is certain to condemn the T. U. U. L. to isolation and sterility. The basis of the T. U. U. L. is made the *dictatorship of the proletariat*—in a country like the United States—and the task of *achieving* the overthrow of capitalism is assigned to the T. U. U. L.! The question of immediate demands and everyday struggles is completely forgotten—even such an important issue as the injunction.

The objective of the Conference—the establishment of a unifying center for the new union movement and for the left-wing minorities in the old unions—was not achieved!

The new trade union line as laid down at the Cleveland Conference has now penetrated the entire work of the Party. Work in the A. F. of L. has entirely ceased and merely to raise the question is a sign of "opportunism". In this way several

milions of organized workers have been surrendered by the Party leadership to the reactionary bureaucrats. It is now officially forbidden to raise within the A. F. of L. unions the question of the organization of the unorganized! Politically and organizationally the once powerful left wing in the A. F. of L. is liquidated.

The destructive trade union line of the "new leadership" extends even to the new unions. A virtue is made of parading everywhere the crude mechanical hold of the Party upon the machinery of the new unions; it looks so "revolutionary"! Non-Party workers are repelled and are fast losing interest in the unions they helped to build. The representatives of the "new leadership" in the militant unions commit one disastrous error after another but are completely protected for factional reasons.

Thus for example, in Boston, the notorious Fosterite, Koretz, who is being pushed forward as the "left" leader in the needle trades made an open offer to the bosses to sign up at rates lower than the reactionary International Fur Workers Union. In a letter to the fur manufacturers he complains that

*"By false pretenses these 'gentlemen' (the right wing union leaders) have done everything in their power to mislead the manufacturers and prejudice them against our organization. In one instance their malicious interference resulted in a strike which, while we regret very much, we were obliged to resort under the circumstances . . . We hope that you will not be misled by their malicious propaganda."*

It is this individual who dares to refer to Zimmerman, Gross, etc. as "agents of the bosses"!

In New York, when the police went around the shoe factories registering the foreign born shoe workers for the Department of Labor in an open attempt to terrorize them and to destroy the militant Independent Shoe Workers Union, the only action taken by Biedenkapp, with the advice of Weinstone and Wicks, was to write a letter to Mayor Walker protesting that

*municipal* police are used to carry on the work of a *Federal* Department!

The absolute incompetence of the new Communist "leaders" in the unions, coupled with their disastrous line, has caused our Party to lose its control of and influence in a number of important unions in the past few months. In the *Architectural Iron, Bronze and Structural Workers Union*, in the *Window Cleaners Union* in Philadelphia, in the *New York Bakers Union*, in the *Technical Men's Union* and in a number of other organizations the Party has lost the leading position it had held for years.

But the most dangerous phase of the "new course"—which shows its essential anarcho-syndicalist character—is the conception that the new unions are to be unions of left-wingers exclusively and not broad mass organizations of all workers who are ready to fight for their immediate economic interests, who are ready to fight in the class struggle against the exploiters. It is in this light that we must understand the abolition of the left-wing groups in the new unions. A policy such as this is the most obvious sectarianism. It means death to the new union movement.

The new trade union policy of the Party shows itself in the policy of splitting whatever cannot be captured and in the organization of paper "industrial unions" one after the other. The absolutely anti-Leninist split policy which was recently carried thru in the Workmen's Circle is similar to the policy decided upon in the Amalgamated Food Workers, in the Furniture Workers Union, and everywhere else. Whatever the "new leadership" finds itself unable to control mechanically it decides to split; patient, persistent, difficult Leninist activity among the workers is unknown to it!

There cannot be the least doubt that the present trade union line of the Party deviates very radically from Leninist strategy in the direction of anarcho-syndicalism—especially its American variety, *De Leonism*. The whole experience of the American labor movement—and of the world labor movement—has

shown that such a course spells complete loss of mass influence and sectarian isolation; it is the greatest help to the reactionary bureaucrats in the labor movement.

### 3. *The Struggle Against Social Reformism and The Socialist Party.*

The "left" line of the new leadership is a brand of opportunism covered with "left" phrases but it is opportunism nevertheless. It is natural therefore that the struggle against social-reformism and against the Socialist Party should be gradually liquidated and perverted. It will be remembered that the official theory of the "new leadership" (of the Party and of the Ecci) now is that "social reformism is dying out". Consequently any serious struggle against the influence of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy and against the Socialist Party is no longer in question, it has been replaced by vague abstract empty phrases in the columns of the *Daily Worker*. At the same time the surrender of the tactics of the united front by the Party and its sectarian line in the mass organizations have helped the forces of social-reformism very greatly in maintaining their hold on the masses of the workers. This is best illustrated in the recent election campaign in New York.

In the "new leadership" are to be found the most serious opportunist illusions as to the S. P. The continuous reference to Norman Thomas as a "Left" Socialist at a time when Thomas especially represents that section of the Socialist movement nearest to open petty bourgeois liberalism shows the complete misunderstanding on the part of our new "theoreticians" of the real relation of forces in the Socialist Party and its course of development. All of these opportunist illusions and passivity are covered with the frantic shouts of "fascism" and "social-fascism" on every page in every issue of the Party press.

The objective capitulation to social-reformism is shown by the failure to understand the double character of the Muste movement: to see in it not only an attempt to head off the left-

ward movement of the masses from militant channels but also as a *reflection of this leftward movement itself*. This false approach has condemned the campaign of the Party and has greatly helped the social-reformists.

### 4. *The Labor Party Campaign.*

Quite in line with their opportunist sectarian policy the "new leadership" has openly given up the *Labor Party campaign*. The struggle for united front independent working class political action is now branded as "opportunism". This is especially dangerous at a time when there is a noticeable leftward movement among the American workers; for it is precisely at this time that the Labor Party slogan is valuable and fruitful. Already spontaneous Labor Party movements are visible in certain parts of the country, but under present conditions they will inevitably fall under the influence of the S. P. and the social-reformists. The policy of the Party today is a conscious repetition of Bittleman's famous dictum that "*if the workers are not ready to follow the Communist Party then they can dig a collective grave for themselves!*"

### 5. *Municipal Election Campaigns.*

The false line of the Party leadership showed itself clearly in the recent *New York municipal election campaign*. The Party started this very important campaign with a grossly opportunist election platform which was "unofficially" withdrawn under our pressure. For months the campaign went on without a Communist platform or even any Communist election statement before the workers. Finally, a week before the elections, a "new" program appeared, only a trifle less opportunist than the first. The whole campaign was marked by neglect, passivity and continuous failure even to attempt to penetrate the masses. The result was that in spite of very favorable conditions, the Party suffered a bad defeat in the New York elections, losing thousands of votes, actually falling behind the practically defunct Socialist Labor Party.



In some cities the municipal campaigns were even worse. Boston, Chicago and Detroit had no candidates for some reason or other. In other cities there was no campaign of any importance. The results were uniformly bad for our Party.

#### 6. *The Legalistic Gastonia Campaign.*

The real nature of the false ultra-left line of our Party was seen in the Gastonia campaign. Here as nowhere else would the struggle against the frame-up have rallied the broadest support among the workers and farmers. But the new "left" leadership actually rejected the historic struggle against the frame-up as "opportunism" and insisted instead on conducting the campaign on the basis of the "revolutionary right of self-defense." In practise, this ultra-"revolutionary" slogan became crass legalism, for the whole trial revolved on the legal questions of self-defense.\* The gross opportunism that was covered by the "left" phrases was further seen in the capitulation before legalism that characterized the whole trial. The testimony of Beal, himself a good militant but acting under directions of the defence counsel, was shameful in the extreme and when Edith Saunders made some efforts to conduct herself on the witness stand as a Communist should the defence counsel actually repudiated her publicly by insisting that her testimony be stricken from the record. When the brutal class verdict finally came, instead of attempting to rally the workers on the slogan: "Free the Victims of the Gastonia Frame-up!" the Party issued the ridiculous opportunistic slogan: "*Veto the Verdict!*"

In conducting the defense campaign the Party (and the I. L. D.) followed the narrowest sectarian policy. No attempt was made to develop a big *united front movement* as in the Passaic strike; no attempt was even made to penetrate any

\*This is made quite clear in the report of William F. Dunne, representative of the Central Committee in Gastonia, in the DAILY WORKER, (August 27, 1929):

"A long and costly legal battle involving interpretation of amendments 6 and 14 of the constitution and dealing specifically with the attempts to deprive the defendants charged with murder of life and liberty without due process of law was made certain this morning...."

but the closest sympathetic organizations. The result was that the Gastonia defense campaign—on an issue of tremendous historical significance—fell far below the Passaic campaign and actually failed to mobilize any but the narrowest circles around the Party.

Examples could be cited without number but the lesson is clear. *The revision of the basic Leninist line forced upon us by the Address of the Ecce has distorted the entire line of our Party in the direction of opportunist sectarianism and isolation!*

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE EFFECTS OF THE "NEW COURSE"

(continued)

*Organizational Chaos and Demoralization*

THE forcing of the anti-Leninist line of the Address upon the Party could only be accomplished by the most *destructive inner-Party line* ever witnessed in our movement. In the first phases it took the form of the "enlightenment campaign," the blighting effects of which were instantaneous.

The *expulsion campaign* began almost immediately. Every doubt, every question, every criticism was answered by expulsion. Comrades were expelled for not voting for somebody else's expulsion. One of the officially recognized conditions for remaining in the Party was to "recognize the correctness of" the Address, in other words, to exercise a sort of religious faith. As a result, in less than six months after the Address, *over 400 of the leading functionaries of our Party have already been expelled.* There have been expulsions in every district of the Party. These comrades—who are branded as "renegades" and "agents of American imperialism" because they defend the Leninist line—are in general the oldest and the best revolutionary forces of our Party, its founders and builders. They constitute the historically developed cadres of our Party which are now being destroyed.

But the expulsion campaign has only just begun. The Party wrecking course is penetrating every Party organization and every Party unit. All those who show the least dissatisfaction with the ruinous course in the Party are branded as "right wingers" or "conciliators" and are summarily dealt with. *The Party is being split and wrecked by its "new leadership!"*

Lately the "enlightenment campaign" has set into a new stage. In desperation at the failure of their tactics of terror, misrepresentation, slander and expulsion, the Party "leaders" have resorted to the worst methods of the reactionary trade

union bureaucrats—to *hooliganism* and *gangsterism*. Meetings of Party members and left wing workers, some held in private houses, have been broken into by specially mobilized gangs and violent attacks made resulting in serious injuries. While such tactics cannot stop our struggle they can and certainly do discredit the name of Communism among the masses of the workers and do permanent injury to the revolutionary movement.

The wrecking of the Party and the false political course has already shown itself in the *paralysis and destruction of the Party organization.* From the 13,000 members the Party could count under the former leadership it is doubtful if more than 5,000 remain. The "new leadership" has ceased publishing financial and dues reports. The loss in membership is generally recognized and admitted and is justified by the Party-wreckers on the ground that "with the loss of members the Party is becoming more bolshevized!"

This loss has hit hardest the proletarian sections and proletarian strata of our Party. The *shop nuclei* and *shop papers* built up thru years of hard work are fast disappearing. In Detroit all shop papers except the *Ford Worker* have disappeared and the *Ford Worker* is printed irregularly and in a much smaller edition.

The Party units have lost every sign of *political life* because the attempt to discuss political questions is met with "enlightenment" and expulsion. The demoralization that has spread thruout the Party shows itself in the sinking level of attendance at unit meetings and the ridiculous measures (expulsions, etc.) taken to get comrades to attend the Party meetings.

The suspension of the *Negro Champion*, the dangerous position of the *Daily Worker*, the continuous failures of the Party's financial drives all point to the same organizational chaos.

But the most dangerous consequence of the new inner-Party course is the alarming spread of *ideological corruption, political hypocrisy* and *unprincipledness* in the ranks of the Party membership. For the first time in the history of our Party com-

rades deliberately say one thing in private and another in public in order to avoid being struck by the terror of the Party bureaucracy. The spread of political cynicism and careerism is alarming and is fast undermining the ideological foundations of our movement.

#### *The Corruption of the Young Communist League.*

The Communist youth movement of this country has been hit especially hard by the "new course." Under direction of the leaders of the Young Communist International, the Young Communist League of America has turned its back on the great achievements made under the old leadership. It has completely given up every semblance of doing *youth work* and of being a *youth organization*. It has converted itself into a *tiny sectarian super-Party* whose main task is watching the purity of the political line of the Party. This idea has naturally led to isolation and disorganization. In the last few months the League has probably lost half its membership, above all its best proletarian elements. Entire League organizations have disappeared in a number of districts. The social composition of the League in New York, Chicago, and elsewhere has become very much worse; the proletarian elements have been lost and replaced by the worst types of petty bourgeois elements. The leadership of the League has been greatly deproletarianized and converted into "a skeleton without bones." The clique struggle in the "united new leadership" has now again broken out and further disintegration is certain. The League is rapidly ceasing to be any sort of factor among the working youth of this country.

#### *The Disruption of Mass Organizations.*

The "new leaders" of our Party could hardly be content with wrecking the Party; they had to introduce the wrecking campaign into all mass organizations under guidance of the Party. The interests of the workers and of the Party have been completely forgotten for the sake of factional advantage over the

"Lovestoneites." The non-Party character of such organizations as the *International Labor Defense* has been completely belied in the attempts made to oust all supporters of the C.P.-Majority Group from office and membership. The final disruption of these organizations is the next inevitable step.

But it is in the *unions* under Party influence that the wrecking course has gone furthest. The attacks upon and the removal of Dawson, Pires, Weisbord and Keller from the *National Textile Workers Union* have already greatly weakened this Union. In the *Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union* the attempt to oust the best and most experienced leaders (Zimmerman, Gross, S. Cohen, Zukowsky, etc.) can only be accomplished thru the destruction of the whole Union. It is the officially recognized policy to smash the *Anthracite miners organization* in order to "get rid of" Vratarec, Gallia, Borich, and the rest. The latest manifestation of this and destructive anti-proletarian course of the "new leadership" is in the *Shoe Workers Union* where, in the face of the most bitter attacks of the bosses, the courts and the Department of Labor, the energies of the Party wreckers are concentrated upon defending the notorious bureaucrat and opportunist, Biedenkapp, and in attempting to destroy the influence of Jonas, Fishman, etc. among the workers. Everywhere the "new leadership" leaves destruction in its wake.

The same course is followed in other mass organizations. In the *Harlem Tenants League* (an organization largely of Negro workers) the attempts of the Moore-Briggs clique to introduce the Party fight nearly led to the break-up of the entire organization. Only the timely action on the part of our comrades saved this organization from destruction.

In the *United Council of Working Class Women* the ousting of Kate Gitlow, its founder, builder and secretary, has gone hand in hand with the installation of a clique of petty bourgeois nationalists and opportunists under whose direction the organization will most certainly be destroyed.

The attack of the "new leadership" upon the mass organizations has only just begun. No one can foretell where it will

end and what damage to the American working class movement will be accomplished. *There can be no question that the present line and leadership of our Party are the dangerous enemies of proletarian unity and of the proletarian mass organizations!*

*Discrediting the Name of Communism.*

Outside of all the immediate effects of the false political line and Party wrecking course of the "new leadership," there is deeper and more permanent damage done to the revolutionary movement: *the very name of Communism is being discredited, its prestige is being destroyed by the so-called "leaders" of the Communist movement!* What effect can it have to brand before the whole working class as "renegades" and "agents of American imperialism" such comrades as Lovestone, Gitlow, Wolfe, White, Zimmerman, Vratarec, Myerscough, Dawson—precisely those comrades whom the workers know to be their best leaders and the builders of the American revolutionary movement? What effect can the opportunist sectarian and isolationist line of the Party have upon the workers? What effect can the irresponsible and anti-proletarian wrecking campaign of the Party bureaucrats in the mass organizations have upon devoted and self-sacrificing revolutionary workers? It is inevitable that large sections of the working class whom we have won to look up to the Communist Party, thru years of hard work, should lose their faith in Communism as such and lapse into political indifference. It is this crime against the Party and the Comintern that will always stand as the gravest and most inexcusable charge against the "new leadership" here and in the Ecc!!

CHAPTER IX.

DISCIPLINE AND PARTY DEMOCRACY—PERSPECTIVES—INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS.

*Discipline and Party Democracy.*

**T**HAT the "new course" and the "new leadership" represent a serious danger to the development of our Party and indeed to the whole revolutionary movement in this country, is now clear. That it is the duty of every honest Party member, of every Leninist, of every comrade having the best interests of the Party at heart, to fight against the "new course" and the "new leadership" and for a restoration of the Leninist line of our Party as the condition for its healthy development, should now be equally clear. But shall our fight be limited by the rules of "legality" laid down by the Party bureaucrats themselves for their own protection; shall our struggle for Leninism be bound by the conceptions of "discipline" that these Party wreckers have developed in order to safeguard their revisionist line?

The question of discipline is a very important one. We all know how many times Lenin dealt with this question and what emphasis he put upon it; we all know that Leninism regards the forging of a firm iron Party discipline as a phase—and a most important phase—of the process of bolshevization.

But Lenin just as frequently declared that revolutionary discipline is not something that falls ready made from the heavens or that can be produced by a command. Revolutionary discipline, Lenin taught us, does not stand outside of space and time; it is closely bound up with the political course and the inner line of the Party. Lenin (in *Infantile Sickness of "Leftism"*) defined the objective prerequisites for revolutionary discipline:

*"And first the question arises: Upon what rests the discipline of the revolutionary Party of the proletariat?"*

*How is it tested, controlled—reinforced, strengthened? First: by the clarity of aim of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its steadiness, spirit of self-sacrifice and heroism. Second: by its ability to lead the toiling masses, to form contact with them and to a certain extent to fuse itself with the proletarian masses primarily, also with the non-proletarian toilers. Thirdly: by the correctness of the political leadership carried out by the vanguard and by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, based on the idea that the workers convince themselves of the soundness of this political leadership, strategy and tactics thru their own experience. Without all these conditions, discipline in a revolutionary Party, really capable of becoming a party of the advanced class whose object is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and revolutionize all of society, is impossible of realization. Without these conditions, all attempts to create discipline result in empty phrases, in tomfoolery, in clownishness."*

Do these conditions, upon which Communist discipline "rests, is controlled and strengthened," exist in our Party and in the Comintern today? Manifestly no.

1. Instead of possessing "clarity of aim" — which is the line of Leninism—the leadership of our Party and of the Eccis have undertaken a thoroughgoing revision of some of the most important phases of Leninism.

2. Instead of possessing the ability of tying itself up closer to the proletarian masses our Party is fast falling into a position of sectarianism and isolation from the masses and their struggles.

3. Instead of correct political leadership by the Party and correct political strategy and tactics, the Party has adopted a fundamentally anti-Leninist tactical line on all important fields.

These are facts that cannot be denied; they show that *not a single one of the conditions which Lenin puts forward as necessary for discipline actually exists* so that "discipline . . . is impossible of realization" and "all attempts to create discipline result in empty phrases, in tomfoolery, in clownishness!"

In the second place, *revolutionary discipline rests upon Party democracy*. Only on the basis of the latter is the former realizable; without it, it becomes bureaucratic violence. But is there any shred of democracy left in the Party today? Only a fool or a conscious deceiver can speak of Party democracy at a time when comrades are expelled from the Party not because they have done anything or refused to do anything but because they do not "believe" a certain thing! The Party bureaucrats have completely destroyed every sign of Party democracy, Party rights and the Party statutes. This is equally true on an international scale.

The attempt to use the idea of revolutionary discipline to force thru a dangerous and destructive anti-Leninist line must necessarily fail. Every conscious Communist, every one who regards the defense of Leninism as his highest duty, will necessarily refuse to allow bureaucratically imposed discipline to stand in the way of saving the Party. Lenin long ago pointed out:

*"You must and you certainly will understand that once a member of the Party is convinced of the incorrectness and the harm of a certain doctrine he is in duty bound to take a stand against it . . . at all costs!" (Letters to Gorki).*

The duty of defending the line of Leninism, the revolutionary content of Communist policy, the duty of fighting uncompromisingly for the life of the Party stands supreme!

There are still a large number of well meaning comrades—the so-called "conciliators"—who declare that they disagree with the revisionist line but because they are "disciplined Communists" they must surrender to all conditions of the Party wreckers, even to the extent of declaring that they "agree" with the "new course" when they really disagree with it. This they must do to "maintain their positions" and "to remain in the Party," in order to be able, so they declare, "to fight the wrong line from within." They do not see that when they give up their convictions they give up everything. The least little whisper or movement they make against the Party wrecking course will be the occasion for contemptuous expulsion. The only condition on which they will be tolerated will

be if they "obey the law and keep their mouths shut"—and help in the campaign of Party wrecking. Otherwise out they go—in spite of all pious phrases.

Other "conciliators" declare they will maintain discipline as a "manouever." They are convinced that the present "leadership" and its line will collapse in a short time. By "maintaining discipline," by "agreeing" with and voting for everything, they aim to adapt themselves as far as possible and hold on to their positions, so that when the "new leadership" collapses they will be there to "save the Party." They fail to see that their capitulation (manouever or not) throws them in the camp of the Party wreckers whose work they are obliged to do and tars them with the same stick. When the "new leadership" collapses they will go with it too for they are birds of a feather. They fail to see an even bigger thing: that such a policy if adopted by all of us would inevitably insure the ruin of the Party. If the present false ultra-left and Party-wrecking line is allowed to continue without meeting with the very sharpest resistance, if there are no comrades in the Party who hold their convictions and the future of the Party above their positions, then inevitably thousands and thousands of workers will lose their faith in the Party and the prestige of the Party among the masses will suffer incalculable and irreparable damage. One thing we must decide: *to place the life and the Leninist line of the Party above everything else!*

#### *Perspectives.*

It is clear that against the widespread and deep-going revision of the line of Leninism which has thrown the whole Communist International into profound crisis, it is the duty of every true revolutionist, of every Communist to *fight*. But the problem is not exhausted with the formulation of this fundamental fact. On what *basis* to fight, *how* to fight, what shall be our *perspectives* in the fight are questions of primary importance which must be answered in clear and unambiguous terms.

Our struggle is *not* for the foundation of a "new" Party. There can not be two Communist Parties in any one country. The only circumstances in which the Communists of any country can be faced with the task of organizing a "new" Communist Party is when the hitherto existing Communist Party, for some reason or other, disappears as a Communist Party, when, in essence and in fact, it ceases to exist.

This, today, is not the case either in this country or in the Comintern as a whole. The Communist International and the various Parties—in spite of the disastrous consequences of the crisis—are still *Communist* organizations in the sense that they still stand upon the rock foundations of Communism (the Leninist theory of the State, the armed uprising, the proletarian dictatorship, the Soviet Power, etc.) On these questions we actually have no differences. Our differences are almost entirely concentrated on questions of the estimation of the present situation and on the various problems of Leninist strategy and tactics. It is on these points that the dangerous deviations from Leninism on the part of the present Ecce have taken place. Of course, it is clear for any Marxist that if the revision on matters of analysis, policy, strategy and tactics is permitted to continue without resistance and goes far enough, then it will ultimately lead to an undermining of the fundamental principles of our movement and to the eventual loss of the Communist character of our Parties. But we are not in such a situation today and we should base neither our line of struggle nor our perspectives upon this contingency.

Basing ourselves upon the actual situation in the Comintern and in our Party and upon a realistic analysis of the forces at work, we must declare that *we reject the perspective of a "new" Party or any tendencies in that direction*. Now as always our objective remains: *the winning and the saving of the Party and the Comintern, the restoration of their Leninist line!*

What does *the winning of the Party* mean? Does winning the Party mean "converting" the "new leadership," winning over the individuals who now compose the first and second layers of the Party apparatus, after the best functionaries in

the Party have been expelled? Nonsense! Altho we do not by any means deny the possibility—and even the necessity—of winning over certain elements of the present leadership, we do not base ourselves upon such expectations. We do not build a house on sand. We understand very well that the saving of the Party can only be accomplished thru the elimination from leadership of the bulk of those who today use their leading positions to destroy the Party. They have so compromised themselves by their unprincipledness in the eyes of the Party membership and of the revolutionary workers that a fundamental change of the political line of the Party can take place only thru the elimination of these elements. The winning of the Party means: *the mobilization of the Party membership and the revolutionary workers for the overthrow of the "new leadership" and its destructive political and inner-Party course.* This is our objective and our perspective. It remains unchanged—indeed it is strengthened—by the slime and slander heaped upon us by the Party burocrats, by the mass expulsions of our best forces, by the whole campaign of terror and wrecking in the Party and in the mass organizations.

For this reason we are not for a "new" Party nor are we striving in that direction. We are *an organized political tendency, a group, within the Communist Party,* fighting against the anti-Leninist course that is eating away its very foundations, striving to save it and to restore it to its rightful position in the working class movement. All attempts to "expell" us from the Party and the Comintern cannot change this fact. For we do not regard the Party as the private possession of these "new leaders" to do with as they please. The Party is a definite section of its class—its advance section, and from this no one can expell us!

Altho our struggle is to win the Party for the Leninist line, it by no means follows that we are engaged in a *purely* inner-Party struggle. Such a conception is impossible and anti-Leninist. The Party is not separated by a Chinese wall from the class of which it is the vanguard. The Party is an organic

part of its class and its very life depends upon its constant, live relations with the proletariat. The affairs of the Party are the affairs of its class; the struggle to save the Party is the concern of the entire working class.

Not only do we not limit ourselves to the inner-Party struggle but we cannot be satisfied with merely making the correct analyses and issuing in an abstract manner the correct slogans. *We regard it as our duty to hold aloft the banner of Leninism where the official Party "leadership" has dropped it and to rally the workers around this banner.* This is no tendency in the direction of a "new" Party; on the contrary, it proves that we are determined to do our duty as Communists and Party members for the Party under all conditions and in the greatest difficulties. Our struggle to win the Party and to save it is carried on not only within the Party organization itself but also in the mass organizations, among the masses of the workers. The exact relation and proportion of emphasis varies with the changing moment, but in any case it is clear that an organic relation exists between the two, for vigorous and correct activity among the masses and in the mass organizations results in the winning of new strata of Party members and vice versa. The two are as inseparable as they are essential.

We are confident that the best elements of the Party membership will in the end rally to our struggle, no matter what their position may be now. The bulk of our members and of the sympathetic workers around the Party are Communists at bottom, and sooner or later, thru the experience of life itself, they will come to a realization of the great danger to the Communist movement in the present revisionist line and the present leadership. It is upon these forces that we base our confident assurance of ultimately winning and saving the Party.

#### *International Aspects*

Neither the causes nor the effects of the crisis in our Party are limited to our Party alone. In fact, our crisis is but a part of the crisis in the whole Comintern, with similar sources and

similar consequences. We have already analyzed the source of this crisis and characterized it politically as a revision of some of the basic principles of Leninism, especially on questions of strategy and tactics, and a thoroly un-Leninist estimation of the present objective situation and the course of development of the struggle. It is a revision of Leninism in the direction of ultra-leftism. We have already noted the main points of this revision, especially as they apply in America; a study of the X Plenum (July 1929) will show in a most startling manner how broad and how deep the revision of Leninism really is.

The results of the imposition of an anti-Leninist line and ultra-left policies were certain and inevitable. These results we have already described as they have shown themselves in America and in other sections of the Comintern: isolation, confusion, disorganization, demoralization. But the development of the crisis has brought about another result: *on the basis of the effects of the anti-Leninist revision in each Party, Oppositions have everywhere arisen—and are still arising—who have taken up the struggle against the destructive “new course.”*

These Oppositions have sprung up and developed on the basis of their special conditions and they have roots in the specific Party situations, in the history, traditions and problems of the movement. This explains why—in spite of the fact that they are all fighting on a common basis—there should exist among the various Opposition movements some important differences and disagreements. But what is common to all of them is the fact that, having arisen in resistance to the revision of the basic principles of Leninism, they therefore—each in its own country—fundamentally represent and embody the movement to save the Party and its Leninist line and thus help overcome the crisis in the Comintern. These new Opposition movements—each in its own country—represent the *positive feature of the international crisis*, the concentration point of the forces that are trying to restore the Comintern and its sections to political health and effectiveness. This fundamental fact not only establishes the nature of the present Opposition movements

but also distinguishes them sharply and categorically from the Trotskyites. The Trotskyites—insofar as they still maintain their independent existence and have not yet returned to the official fold—attack the new line of the Ecc because it is not Trotskyist enough, because its departure from Leninism is still not great enough. The new Opposition movements, on the other hand, criticize the present line of the Comintern because it revises Leninism primarily in the direction of Trotskyism. There could not be a more fundamental difference.

The *American Opposition movement* (Communist Party of the U. S. A.—Majority Group) is a reflection of the international crisis manifesting itself in our Party and therefore bears so forcefully the marks of the history and traditions of our movement. We have many differences and disagreements with the views of other Opposition movements—some on points we have differed for years. These differences we will not try to stifle or overlook. To do this would be to follow the methods of unprincipledness raised to a system by the present leadership of the Ecc. On the contrary, recognizing the fundamental nature of the present situation, we must likewise recognize it as our main international task to work in such a manner as to help eliminate the most important differences and unclarities in the international Opposition movements. *Only thru constant mutual criticism, thru persistent clarification on program and tactics, thru free and constructive discussion will Leninist clarity and united effective revolutionary action be achieved!*

The struggle for Leninism in America—or in any other country—is a part of an *international struggle*, since the revision of Leninism that is at the root of the present crisis exists on an international scale. The decisive defeat of the revisionist Party-wrecking course in one country cannot be fully accomplished unless it is accomplished internationally. The return of our Party to its Leninist course is directly bound up with the return of the Ecc to the line of Leninism. National in immediate aspects and form, our struggle is international in essence and substance. *It is a struggle for the future of the Communist International.*



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