

Party Cleansing or Party Wrecking?

By JAY LOVESTONE

THE Political Secretariat of the Executive Committee of Communist International has decided upon another "cleansing" of the Parties. This time it is to be from the bottom up instead of from the top down. Of course, we are assured and even given "proof" that the demand for this new "cleansing" comes from the various sections themselves and is not inspired by a desire of "mechanically transferring the experience of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union."

Party cleansings are not only desirable but sometimes become absolutely necessary. And never were they more necessary than they are today. For, in the history of the Communist International, opportunism, incompetency, ultra-leftist adventurism and unprincipledness, have

never before been as rife in the official leaderships as they are today. Likewise, the looseness, irresponsibility, and absence of reliability on the top has brought into the Party ranks—in nearly every section—a flood of dangerous, untrustworthy, non-proletarian forces. But it is not to overcome such shortcomings that the Executive Committee of the Communist International proposes a Party "cleansing" thruout the International. On the contrary. From the instructions it is clear that the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) "cleansing" aims to perpetuate rather than eliminate these cancerous growths in our world Party. This can only lead to still further Party-wrecking.

fiercest struggles so far that are now doing the expelling. Let's look into some interesting facts. Lozovsky is today an outstanding "bolshevik." Stalin, of course, on the basis of the new line, is first. For, has not the *Daily Worker* told us that "Lenin, like Stalin was a revolutionist" and that "Stalin succeeded where Lenin failed"? Lozovsky is today a most prominent "Party-cleanser"! This is the same Lozovsky who joined the Party of Lenin only after the Bolshevik Party crushed him and his White Guard forces on the field of military struggle. To make sure that Lozovsky shouldn't be able to sink a poisoned arrow into the Party from behind, Lenin himself made a motion—and it was carried—that Lozovsky was not to be on Central Committee of the Party for a minimum of ten years. In Germany, the Remmels and the Thalmanns, late graduates of the Independent Social-democracy, have expelled the closest associates of

Liebknecht and Luxemburg—and the Dengels (decorated for service as lieutenants in the Prussian army) have been expelling the Spartacans! In the United States, recent members of the Democratic (not Social-democratic) Party and offshoots of the Gompers A. F. of L. bureaucracy, have been expelling the Gitlows, Winitzkys, Whites, Bixbys and other comrades who began to organize and build the American Communist Party when the success of the Bolshevik revolution was not yet assured, when to belong to the Communist Party was considered a crime by the capitalist class and its government.

Similar situations prevail in the other sections. Only, now, the rank and file is going to bear the main burden of the attack, the main fire of the "cleansing". This simply means spreading the ruin and striking more mortal blows at the Communist World Party.

Shrouded In the Mist of Diplomacy and Confusion

The entire "cleansing" proposal is shrouded in a mist of diplomacy and confusion. We are told, on the one hand, that: "The Political Secretariat has rejected the general proposal for a cleansing in the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries." On the other hand, and in the very next breath, the ECCI thunders:

"In the campaign for cleansing the ranks of all opportunist, cowardly, and other undesirable or dangerous elements, the main problem now arising is the following: the Parties must organize a very serious, thoroughly business-like examination, without regard to personalities, as to what extent the new revolutionary line is being carried out in practice . . . The central question is to assure the carrying out of the new line, the line of the Sixth Congress and the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI . . . The chief sphere of the campaign should be the examination of the work of the local (and District) Party Committees to test their ability to work in the factories and develop the fight against Social-Fascism and Fascism."

Still More Power in the Hands of the Bureaucrats

The proposed "cleansing" aims to place still more power in the hands of the various Party bureaucracies now posing as "left" leaderships. Says the ECCI:

"The experience of all Communist Parties in capitalist countries shows that it would be altogether wrong to think that right-wingers, who cannot be left within the ranks of the Communist International, are only to be found amongst the leadership."

Now that most of the founders and builders of the various Parties have been expelled, the ECCI proposes to take the next step in expelling another layer of their rank and file followers. Now these Party members who, on the basis of an

empty, formal, "loyalty and discipline" have hitherto accepted, endorsed and knelt before the ultra-leftist catechisms and ikons are to be thrown out as inherent, concealed, disbelievers in the new faith of adventurism and sectarianism. Many of those who voted for the expulsion of the former leadership of our Party will now be "cross-examined" (examined on the cross—crucified). And the Party will be pronounced, "stronger than ever"—after the dwindling process is speeded up a bit. Perhaps we will be treated to another parody on "socialist competition" among the districts in the campaign to kick out still more workers who followed the former majority!

The Czecho-Slovakian Party—A New

Line Tragedy

On the basis of the "new line"—the road of ultra-leftist adventurism—the once-powerful Czech Party has been turned into a veritable morgue. The Executive Committee of the Communist International "cleansing" manifesto itself thus characterizes the present condition of the Czech Party—after one year of the new line and the 14 karat Bolshevik leadership of Gottwald-Reimann-Zapotozky:

" . . . Even at Party sessions, which had been called to discuss some urgent fighting question, only a small part of the organization appeared at the meeting, that many rank and file organizations of the Party are in general extraordinarily passive, and that those members of the Party who come to

"Out With the Rank and File!" The New Slogan

The "cleansing letter" goes on to say: "It becomes quite plain that in the course of the sharpening of the class struggle, there have been removed (and in the future must be removed) from the communist movement not only a few leaders who have been infected with Social-democratic traditions, together with their immediate assistants from the middle or lower ranks of active members, but a certain part of the rank and file members of the Party, including those who, while remaining sympathizers of

general meetings of the Party or to meetings of factory nuclei, do not show the slightest activity . . . that in some factory nuclei, in all districts, the attendance at meetings has not been more than 10%.

How come? These "culprits" are supposed to be the "cream" of the Czech Communist movement left in the Party after all the "cleansings," "bolshevizations" and reorganizations. Why doesn't the ECCI dare to face the facts? Why doesn't the ECCI at least pretend to try to find out the reasons for this debacle in Czechoslovakia which is only at worst a slightly enlarged picture of the situation in the best Comintern sections today?

the Comintern, for some reason or other cannot stand the fiercer class struggle which has commenced . . ." In every section of the Comintern it is precisely those leaders and large sections of those masses of the membership which have led and participated in the sharpest and fiercest struggles against the Social-democracy, the reactionary trade union bureaucracy, and the imperialist ruling class that have been expelled. And in nearly every section of the Comintern it is precisely those who came to Communism after the

THE ECCI Admits Huge Losses to the Parties

In order to give a "theoretical" excuse for the coming wholesale expulsions, the "cleansing" document develops the fantastic theory that the most revolutionary workers have been staying out of the Communist Parties. This is given as the excuse for such parties as the British and Czech continually losing members. Thus, we are told:

"In place of excluded members and opportunists or of Fascist members there is not an inflow of new revolutionary elements who have already been in the foremost positions of the class struggle."

This is confusion worse confounded. How did so many "Fascist members" ever come into our Parties? What attracted them? Will we now be ordered—on the pain of expulsion—to believe that the Communist Party has become the vanguard of the proletariat only in the "third period" and that prior to this the Communist Parties attracted only Fascists and passive workers? What does this mean? Was there a Communist International at all before the crack horseman Molotov "took over" the reins?

The ECCI goes on to admit that "fundamental masses of rank and file mem-

bers are leaving the Party" and that amongst these masses there are "good revolutionary proletarians" who "do not find in it (the Party) a means of giving vent to their revolutionary energy." Startling confession, indeed! But, why is this so? Here the ECCI again proceeds to lay the basis for wholesale expulsions from the lower ranks of the Party by giving the lame excuse that this exodus takes place "because the lower local organization, of which they are members, works badly." Thus, the ECCI tries to do three things: First, to shift the blame from the shoulders of the top bureaucracy—the various puppet "leaderships"—to the local functionaries. Secondly, to extend the expulsion campaign to the lower, the basic functionaries. Thirdly, to evade the reason for these functionaries being deficient.

Again, we emphasize: why doesn't the ECCI dare even ask—let alone answer—the question: *How does it come about that despite the new "revolutionary" line "good revolutionary proletarians" are leaving the Parties, while in the past, with a so-called opportunist line, these "good revolutionary proletarians" were attracted to our Parties?*

A Hypocritical Mockery is Made of Self-Criticism

The ECCI seeks to cover its new "cleansing" maneuver behind the threadbare phrases of loyalty to "systematic and all-around criticism." Nothing could be more hypocritical. Under the leadership and pressure of the present ECCI there have been artificially set-up "leaderships" which punish by expulsion any member who merely dares ask a question, let alone attempts to criticize. This ceaseless repetition of the words "sys-

tematic and all-around criticism" will be empty talk so long as it is not also applied to the ECCI itself, to the "loyal leaderships" and even to the Stalin regime in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Today, the cardinal Bolshevik principle of self-criticism has been perverted into a factional weapon with which to hide the wanton wrecking of Parties.

The Mass Production of Leaders Overnight

Finally, in its anxiety to cover up the debacle to which its revisionist line has led the Comintern, in order to screen the gaps, the gaping holes which its adventurist policies have made in the ranks of the world party of Lenin on every front, the ECCI declares:

"Non-Party activists who joined the Party should be unhesitatingly promoted to work in the Party leadership. Without waiting for them to join the Party formally, the organs of the revolutionary trade unions, and the union opposition in reformist unions should be strengthened by such elements."

Who are these mysterious "non-Party activists"? Where do they hail from? Where have they been and what have they been doing in all these years of class war that now, even before they have joined our Party, they are to be "unhesitatingly promoted to work in the leadership"? Why throw overboard all

Communist Unity—The Greatest Need of the Hour

This is the message of the "new turn." This is the meaning of the empty maneuver "against the ultra-left." International Communist unity is absolutely necessary. The sharpening class struggles demand it. For us, organic Communist unity cannot come too soon. But

we know that genuine Communist unity and the development of a victorious world Communist movement can come only thru the adoption of a correct, a Leninist line—and never thru fraudulent factional "cleansing" or a zig-zag line of ruinous twists and turns.