

AGAIN A "NEW TURN" IN THE COMINTERN *by Herbert Zam*

THE Executive Committee of the Communist International has made a "new turn"—a sensational turn! It has begun a "campaign" against the "ultra-left danger." The development of this campaign against the ultra-left is seen in a series of recent, almost simultaneous events. In the *Czechoslovakian* Party, Fried and Reimann, who became the ideological leaders of the Party after the expulsion of its leaders (Jilek, Muna, etc.), have been denounced as "ultra-lefts" and removed from the Polburo of the Party. At the recent *Plenum of the YCI* the Comintern representatives, Remmele and Manuilsky, developed the theory that for the Young Communist Leagues at the present time, the main danger is the *ultra-left danger*. *Chitarov*, who up to a few weeks ago was shouting loudly against the "right," has rushed lustily into the breach with a broadside in *Pravda* (January 10) against the "left deviation." In *Germany*, Ulbricht, a hero of the "new line," seems to have taken up the "struggle" against putschism. In the *Communist International* (Vol.6, No. 28) there are printed an article by Remmele against the "left danger" in the YCI and a speech by Manuilsky at the YCI Plenum with the same content.

THE CRISIS SHARPENS—A "NEW TURN"

This "new turn" is of great importance for the whole International and must be carefully studied. Has the Comintern leadership, under the blows of the International Opposition, abandoned its ruinous ultra-left course? Is it returning to the tactical principles of Leninism which have been abandoned? Is it preparing to take back into the Party the comrades who were expelled for saying *some time ago* what Manuilsky and Remmele *now* say? Everything indicates that these questions will be answered in the negative by the present leadership of the ECCI. The so-called "fire against the left" on the part of the ECCI does not indicate that the crisis in the Comintern is becoming less sharp. On the contrary, it indicates that the crisis has become so great that it can no longer be hidden from the membership. It is no longer possible to delude the Party membership with fine phrases of "bolshhevization" in the face of the loss of thousands of members in all Parties. It is no longer possible to hide the fact that, in the face of a general upward swing of the working class movement, the Communist Parties have been going backward in the past two years. The "new turn" of the ECCI is in actuality an effort to shift responsibility from itself for the disastrous condition in the Comintern. It is an attempt to keep the membership from going over to the support of the Opposition which is now demonstrated to have been correct in all its proposals and warnings.

The new turn of the ECCI will not bring the Comintern out of its crisis. It will only plunge it deeper into the crisis. *Only the complete abandonment of the course which has led to the crisis, the overthrow of the leadership which has foisted wrong policies upon the Comintern, the restoration of the correct Leninist policies and a leadership capable of applying them, the institution of internal Party democracy—in short the adoption of the main program of the Opposition (in the U.S.A., the CP-Majority Group) will restore the Comintern and its sections to health and vigor, to leadership over large masses of workers and to the road for winning the majority of the working class!*

For the present leadership of the ECCI it is important to put up an appearance of "combating all deviations." This is part of the game of confusing the Party masses and preventing them from seeing thru the false policies of the ECCI. But in reality the ECCI is continuing its ultra-left adventurist line which is at the bottom of the leftist errors committed thruout the Comintern. It is important to note that at the very moment when the so-called campaign against the "ultra-left" begins, the Comintern adopts an estimate of the present situation (the comparison of the present crisis with the World War in its consequences) and a policy on one of the most important problems facing the Parties (unemployment), which are not only ultra-left, but which are actually putschist. The ECCI is quite ready to destroy a Reimann or a Shatzkin, but the basic policies

which are responsible for the errors of the Reimanns and Shatzkins remain intact and even become worse!

WANTED—A SCAPEGOAT

It is characteristic of the present condition in the Comintern that in the discussion of the ultra-left danger, the Manuilskys and Remmelles are more anxious to find a scape-goat for the ills of the Parties (they cannot very well blame the "renegades" whose expulsion has "strengthened" the Parties!) than to analyze the conditions of the Parties and to find remedies for the serious crisis. In the Soviet Union there is found a Shatzkin and Sten who are held up as the "ultra-left danger" and upon whose shoulders are heaped all the blame for the ultra-left errors in the Soviet Union. In Czechoslovakia there is found a Fried and Reimann. The YCI comes in for criticism. No doubt in every country similar individuals will be selected. But those really responsible for the ultra-left policies and for the crisis will continue their ruinous domination of the Comintern and of its sections. Manuilsky becomes indignant at the losses of the YCI, but remains absolutely unperturbed at the losses of the CI.

"When any bourgeois general suffers a defeat, he is replaced; but we can lose half the membership of a Party and the members of the CC remain at their posts. We need a system of political responsibility when the Party will call its leaders to account for every failure, which will place the work of the leading bodies under diligent control."

Well said, Comrade Manuilsky! But let this apply all around and let it start immediately! If the YCI lost 20% of its membership in one year: that you agree is indicative of a crisis! That arouses your indignation! But why are you silent at the fact that the Comintern has lost over 30% of its membership in the same period? Nay, more! Why do you expel those who call it to your attention? And are you not a general of the Communist army, a member of its general staff? Have you lost just *one* battle? You and your fellow-members on the ECCI have lost battle after battle, campaign after campaign; you have lost 30% of your soldiers! But when the membership tries to call you to account, according to your own formula, you expel them, denounce them as "renegades" and as "servants of the bourgeoisie" and even organize physical attacks on them!

In the light of the above remarks, the examination of the recent events in the YCI becomes of special significance. It must be remembered that at the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI the representatives of the YCI played a very important role in the struggle against the "right" and in pushing thru the ultra-left line of the ECCI. The EC of the YCI was the banner bearer in the whole ultra-left course. Precisely for this reason does the YCI offer a shining target for the diplomatic manouvers of the leaders of the ECCI in their "game of right and left." It was the new line of the ECCI, embraced by the ECI, that led to the abandonment of the conception of the YCL's as broad organizations of the working youth. Every attempt to emphasize the fundamental tasks of the youth movement was met with the cry of "depolitisation" and finally with expulsion. The theory of vanguardism was officially adopted by the YCI, by the CI and by all Leagues. Only the various Oppositions (the United States, Germany, Sweden) fought determinedly against vanguardism and for this they were expelled. The result has been the continual decline

of the YCI at a time when the young workers are playing a particularly important role in industry and in the class struggle. Today the Young Communist Leagues have less members and less influence than ever before.

But it would be wrong to believe that this situation is confined to the YCI, or that it originates with the YCI. The basic causes are the same as those which lie at the root of the general crisis in the Comintern. But the Leagues are smaller and less consolidated organizations; their members are less politically developed, and their contact with the workers is weaker than that of the Parties. Naturally they can less afford to stand losses than the Parties. Not even Manuilsky can hide this connection between the crisis in the YCI and the crisis in the Comintern. In his speech to the YCI Plenum, he declares:

"You mustn't think that the defects and weakness of the YCI are quite separate from the general state of the Comintern sections. The morbid phenomena of various sections of the YCI are bound up with the abnormal state of the corresponding CP's. These morbid phenomena merely find even clearer expression in the YCL. And so in the YCI we are now feeling the defects and weaknesses of the Comintern."

What is characteristic of Manuilsky and of the entire leadership of the ECCI is that while ready to see the crisis in the YCI, they "refuse" to see that in the CI the crisis is even worse. While in the abstract they talk of self-criticism, in actuality every effort at genuine self-criticism is ruthlessly crushed. In words, the crisis is recognized, but in actuality those who first point out its symptoms are expelled. In words, ultra-leftism is condemned but in deeds ultra-left policies are more in the saddle than ever before. It is clear that the theory is now being put forward that, at the present time, the "left danger" is the main danger in the YCI and is becoming the main danger in the CI. Thus Remmele:

"These scholastic discussions within the Leagues . . . are typical manifestations of the leftist disease. . . ."

"However much these obstacles of a right wing opportunist nature weigh down the scale in carrying out the bolshevik policy of the Communist Parties, in the Youth Leagues they are not the preponderant and dominant causes which prevent the application of bolshevik policy and strategy. On the contrary. . . it is the ultra-left tendencies which explain the weakness and ineffectiveness in the work and methods of the Leagues."

Thus, while still uttering some face-saving phrases about the "right danger" being the "main danger," the ECCI actually abandons this view without any explanation. The "right danger as the main danger" was the conception which—the ECCI insisted—arose out of the very characteristics of the "third period;" it was to remain the "main danger" during the entire duration of the "third period," that is, "up to the revolution." If now this change of front is accomplished while we are still in the "third period," and, as Manuilsky declares,

"not in circumstances of reaction, but in circumstances of a radicalization . . ."

In other words, if there has been no corresponding change in the objective situation, then it is living proof of the complete bankruptcy and unprincipledness not only of the inner-Party course but of the entire line of policy which necessitated such an inner-Party course.

Order from

R-E-V-O-L-U-T-I-O-N-A-R-Y A-G-E
37 E. 28 St. New York, N. Y.

The Crisis in the Communist Party of U.S.A.

Price 35c — Bundle orders 5 or more 25c per copy

NEW PHRASES—BUT THE OLD LINE!

Manuilsky finds that the YCL's are "dominated by a contempt for the rest of the masses of working youth." This, he declares, is a sign of ultra-leftism. Correct! But the cause of this "contempt" is the theory of "social fascism" which originated in and still dominates the Comintern. Manuilsky asks: "Is it third period tactics, for instance, to exclude the application of the united front tactics in its new forms?" He directs this shaft against the ultra-left. But at the Tenth Plenum Manuilsky himself propounded the theory that the united front tactic was necessary when "we were weak; but *now* we are strong." And to Manuilsky the "new form" of the united front is represented by—*revolutionary competition!* "It is indisputable that the chief form of capturing the masses has always been and still remains the trade unions," declares Manuilsky. But it is also indisputable that today the Communist Parties, under direction of the ECCI, have given up the work in the trade unions and have even developed such anti-trade union work theories as the "fascisation of the trade unions from top to bottom." Manuilsky condemns the "shop-window aspect" of the Leagues. "On paper everything is O. K. Everywhere there is nothing but success but in reality the situation is otherwise." But how about the theory that every loss of the Communist Party represents "bolshhevization" which Manuilsky repeats even in this very speech? What Manuilsky, in the name of the ECCI pretends to criticize in the YCI, is precisely what Manuilsky and the ECCI have brought about and are still bringing about in the Comintern.

Remmele indeed is compelled to recognize that "these clear manifestations of irresolution and ultra-leftism in the Leagues are also apparent in the Parties, even in some sections of the most advanced Parties of the Comintern." But this "recognition," which is an admission of the correctness of the line of the Opposition (in the USA, the CP-Majority Group) does not mean that the correct line has been adopted and the crisis overcome. On the contrary, it means a deepening of the crisis and an aggravation of the non-Leninist methods in the Comintern. Only the overthrow of the present leadership, the complete abandonment of the present false line and the restoration of the tactical principles of Leninism can restore the Comintern and the individual sections to a healthy condition, to its position as vanguard of the working class!

THE WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS

The crisis in the Communist International is a serious one and is growing more serious every day. To solve it is necessary a complete change in the strategical line and method of leadership on the part of the ECCI and not any hypocritical turns or diplomatic manouvers. For a serious change in the situation in the Comintern the following steps are necessary:

1.—The rejection of the theory of "mechanical uniformity" that has been developed in the struggle against the "theory of exceptionalism"—the return to the Leninist conception of the uneven development of capitalism and the flexible application of tactics to the concrete situation.

2.—The rejection of the false ultra-left estimation of the world situation—the return to Leninist realism in estimating the objective situation.

3.—The return to the Leninist tactics of the united front for winning the masses—the rejection of such dangerous sectarian theories of "social fascism" and the like.

4.—The return of Leninist tactics in the trade unions and the mass organizations—the rejection of the sectarian split course of the present ECCI.

5.—The return to real inner Party democracy on the basis of democratic centralism: the readmission of the expelled into the Party—the end to the regime of terror and suppression.