

The "New Turn" Twists the "New Line"

An Analysis of the CC Thesis for the Convention

II. THE QUESTION OF TACTICAL LINE

Putschism Raised to A Complete System

(concluded from last issue)

But if the "new turn" appears in the analysis of the world situation, at least in the analysis of the position of the workers and in drawing the conclusions for the tasks of the Parties, the old "new line" still holds sway. According to the Presidium, the period of the Tenth Plenum was "the beginning of the counter-attack of the proletariat to the offensive of capital," but the present period is marked by the "maturing of the revolutionary upsurge." This is marked "not so much by the strike movement itself" but by "the tempestuous forms it assumes." While it is true that there are no general strikes, nevertheless we must remember, with the ECCI, that: "The English General Strike of 1926 was a very important event of the class struggle, but it proceeded under extreme peaceful forms, whilst (note the whilst—H.Z.) the present partial strikes bear a fighting character." By this form of self-hypnotism, it is not difficult to finally reach the conclusion, as done by the *Prauda*, that we are in a revolutionary situation, in which the struggle for power is on the agenda. While we have seen that in the analysis of the economic situation, the "deep-going, world-wide crisis" disappeared, it appears again in the analysis of the position of the workers. How else would it be possible to preserve the ultra-left tactics? The mere trifle that the Party members may wonder whence comes this revolutionary situation if there is no deep-going crisis, does not worry the ECCI. For the mere asking of such a question will be proof positive that the member is impregnated with "Lovestoneism" and therefore a subject for expulsion. Therefore, in the matter of tactics for the Communist Parties, the last Enlarged Presidium has gone even beyond the Tenth Plenum, for it has put the system of ultra-leftism upon a permanent plane, has built up a complete theory out of the ultra-left tactics.

"Whether the present economic crisis will grow into a general political crisis depends on a number of factors, and before all on the subjective factor, on the power and fighting capacities of the Communist Parties."

This, Comrade Manuilsky, which you have delivered in the name of the ECCI, is putschism raised to a political theory. This, Comrades Browder and Plott, we repeat for your benefit, is political putschism. If the Communist Parties act along the lines of this theory, they will enter into such a series of disastrous adventures as the Comintern has not yet witnessed. If the tactics dictated by this theory are applied, they will bring such a series of defeats for the working class as will set the revolutionary movement back for years. Have you so forgotten all the most elementary teachings of Lenin as to believe that the Communist Parties can create a general political crisis? Do you not know that the Communist Party does not and cannot create crises—what the Communist Party does is prepare the working class so that in the crisis it can make a struggle for power, led by the Communist Party?

The American CC is at one with the ECCI analysis of the movement of the working class, even tho there is a "difference" in the world analysis. It begins by speaking about the "counter-offensive of the exploited masses" and, becoming more enthusiastic as the thesis proceeds, finally concludes that "a revolutionary upsurge grips the working masses" in the United States. Even Bittleman with his deep-going, widespread radicalization fades into insignificance when viewed thru the revolutionary spectacles of the ECCI and its satellites in America. If Manuilsky can so easily explain away the decrease in strikes, then just as easily can the CC explain away the growth of capitalist reaction, the defensive position of the workers, which in many cases is marked by retreat, and the loss of membership and influence of the Communist Parties.

Here is the formula: "... if capitalist reaction is more militant and more all pervading than ever before, the revolutionary movement and its ally the oppressed colonial peoples are advancing still more rapidly *thruout the whole world*." (Emphasis mine—H.Z.) All the CC has to do now is show the membership where the "revolutionary upsurge" advancing more rapidly than capitalist reaction, has actually succeeded in beating the latter back. And still more interesting, let them show where in the United States has this been done. It would also be interesting to know how it is possible for capitalist reaction to be "more all-pervading than ever before" if at the same time the revolutionary movement is advancing much more rapidly.

In the thesis of the CC of our Party we find the first application, tho in a comparatively mild form, of the already discussed putschist theory. The CC thesis declares that the main road for the winning of the working class, the main road to the revolution is the building of new, revolutionary unions. The conclusion is based on the analysis that, in the United States, "a revolutionary upsurge grips the working masses, opening the road for the Communist Party for leading and mobilizing these masses into struggles." But, "the working masses, who are becoming increasingly revolutionary in the economic crisis, cannot be embraced organizationally by the Party alone... The primary organizations for this task are the revolutionary unions..."

Naturally, there is a rush—"revolutionary competition" to organize new, "pure," "perfect" "industrial" unions—which have but one shortcoming—they have no workers in them. The A. F. of L. having been condemned first as "social fascist" and later as "fascist," there is no longer any need for working in the old unions. The slogan and idea of the Labor Party are abandoned, because it means building a Labor Party out of "fascist organizations," that is out of A. F. of L. unions. The CC forgets that the Labor Party slogan has always been considered a means of mobilizing the workers in the A. F. of L. against the bureaucrats. The left wing workers and the Communists wherever they follow the instructions of the Party bureaucracy, are being drawn out of the old unions, and the several million workers in them are left to the tender mercies of the labor bureaucrats. The genuine leftward movement in these unions, caused by the tremendous unemployment and the continuing onslaughts on the conditions of the workers, together with the open collaboration between the trade union leaders and the bosses, finds no leadership in the Communist Party. In its search for a fictitious "revolutionary upsurge," the Party leadership fails to see a powerful leftward swing of the masses where it really exists. In the entire thesis of the CC only the following phrase appears regarding work in the old unions: "Decided efforts must be made to increase manifold the activities of the Communist fractions in the reactionary trade unions." But the entire content of the thesis, the entire tone and line are against any further work whatsoever in the old trade unions. This face-saving phrase will not even be noticed by the membership, who are being drilled to believe that "the fifty thousand new members" which the TUUL wants to recruit represent the "road to the millions." Here is the essence of anti-trade union work! To believe that the winning of a few thousand workers for the revolutionary trade unions, even if it could be accomplished, is a substitute for work in the old trade unions is the counter part on the field of mass work of Manuilsky's analysis of the "crisis"—that the Communist Party can create the crisis.

The Condition of the Party

Of course, between writing down a high-sounding revolutionary phrase on a

sheet of paper and showing concrete results for the Party there is a vast gulf—precisely the gulf that exists between the present ultra-left line of the ECCI and its puppets in the various countries and a correct Leninist line. For in the present period, in the period since the Address to the American Party, what can the Party leadership boast of as a real achievement? In the two years previous, the Party had to its credit the great Passaic strike, the historic struggle of the miners in Pennsylvania and Ohio and West Virginia, the strikes in New Bedford and Fall River. The series of strikes in New York which really rooted the Party among the masses took place before the Address—the cloak makers, dressmakers and furriers struggles and the series of smaller strikes. The establishment of three new unions growing directly out of the struggles of the workers—the National Miners Union, the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union, the National Textile Workers Union—was also one of the achievements for which the present leadership is so much ashamed. But as against these historic accomplishments, the Party leadership can show—demonstrations. And even here, none of the demonstrations have yet exceeded the Sacco-Vanzetti demonstrations of 1927. In such a situation, the Party leadership has embarked on a campaign of bluff which must nauseate every honest worker in the Party. On March 20, the *Daily Worker* makes the following insignificant claim:

"The Communist Party of the U.S.A., after being free from the debasing influence of the renegades Lovestone, Pepper & Co. is advancing in size and political maturity at an unprecedented rate. It can be said approximately that the Communist Party of the United States is now gaining at the rate of about 100 new members every day. The Party has already arisen within a few short months from a position of relative isolation to one in which more than a million workers knowingly follow its leadership, and the revolutionary trade union movement is already becoming a serious reality."

On this basis, no less than 30,000 new members should join the Party in one year. The figures of the CC itself have shown, unfortunately that not only has the Party not increased its membership, but today it has less members than at any previous time in its history. This situation is so bad that even the CC is compelled to recognize it in its letter of May 28, but instead of laying this at the feet of the false line of the ECCI and

of the Party "leaders" it finds the usual scape-goat—the districts did not carry out the instructions of the center, and the membership consists of skilled workers and foreigners, and are therefore objectively right wingers. This is the extent of the "self-criticism" of the Party leadership. The campaign of bluff, however, cannot last forever. Already large sections of the membership are beginning to question and to doubt. The answer of the Party bureaucracy is still expulsion and branding as "renegades." This campaign of expulsion, which strikes the best section of the Party because the ones with independent thought and the courage of their convictions, is rapidly bleeding the Party white of forces. Even Manuilsky, who only a few short months ago boasted that the expulsions were a sign of Bolshevization, now complains that "we have very few people capable of leading mass movements, of winning the confidence of the masses, of consolidating among them the authority of the Party." No wonder! After precisely these elements have been expelled and destroyed in the Party, do you expect the "obedient but stupid" ones who are left to do this mighty work? Do you expect the Browders and Plotts to do it? Or perhaps you expect those people to lead the masses who have not the courage and the will to lead themselves—who disagree with everything the Party leadership does but dare not raise their voices in protest or their hands in contrary vote?

The Party convention is meeting in the shadow of the ideological terror of the ECCI and of the Party bureaucracy. There is a pre-convention discussion, but no discussers and no opinions. There will be a convention, but not a convention of delegates. All the representatives will be carefully selected in advance. There will be no free discussion at the convention. Fear will be the steering committee which will direct the actions of the convention delegates. This convention will be a strait jacket upon the Party—unless the Party membership breaks thru the ultra-left sectarian bounds which are being fastened more tightly about the Party daily. The first step that must be taken for the convalescence of the Party is a free and open discussion in which every member can participate and express freely and without fear of consequences his opinion on the present situation in the Party. It is not to be expected that the membership will adopt our line over night. But a free discussion is a step which will lead to the adoption of our line, the line of the Opposition, the line of Leninism, for this is the only correct line, the only line that can bring the Party out of its present crisis!

—HERBERT ZAM

Letters from Workers

Comrades:

In answer to your letter of appeal find enclosed check for \$5.00.

"Revolutionary Age" has been the sharpest weapon that workers should possess, the courage to think and fight. Thru this only a victory is secured.

Readers of the "Revolutionary Age" cannot help to see the indispensability of this revolutionary paper which enlightens every phase of the workers struggle for the possession of the world's wealth. No doubt every reader will do the utmost for its support.

Yours, for the continued fight to a victorious finish.

P. G.

June 14, 1930.

Dear Comrade:

I have just finished reading No. 15 of *Revolutionary Age*. It is a wonderful number. When I got it I read right thru it (except the Thesis which I will read tomorrow). Comrade Gitlows article on the needle trades is very good and so is the explanation of the Indian Revolution.

I was surprised to see about the Post Office attack upon the *Revolutionary Age*. The Party says you are renegades but the government tries to stop you. But from the \$1,000 you raised I am sure you will beat them and not let them break down the *Age*.

In my section there is a lot of sym-

pathy to you because of the needle trades and building trades situation about which maybe you saw in the *Daily Worker*. I agree with you too especially about the trade union question. Maybe after the Convention I will come out and fight open. Anyway, I wish you luck.

Comradely,
A Comrade.

Dear Comrades:

I want to tell you how much I like the *Revolutionary Age*. It is a real workers paper. I am not a Communist myself and I don't know much about the fights that are going on inside the Communist Party in this country and in Moscow. But I know that what you say in the *Revolutionary Age* about all workers uniting their forces to fight the bosses is the right stuff. That's what the union men in the United States need.

I used to belong to the Socialist Party up to 1919 and also to the Wobblies. I think I will get more acquainted with Communism now.

ALEX JOHNSTONE

Cleveland, Ohio.

READ

REVOLUTIONARY AGE