

# Probing The Depths Of C. I. Sectarianism

## The Thirteenth Comintern Plenum

by B. Herman

After examining the thesis of the 13th Plenum, one must confess that it is indeed a matter for dispute whether the 15 months of silence of the Comintern leadership might not have been preferable. The world-shaking events in the interval, the terrible blows suffered by the Communist Parties, and the long deliberation of the C. I. resulted in not the slightest sign of improvement in understanding or policy compared with the theses of the 10th, 11th and 12th Plenums. The 13th Plenum accomplishes the feat of out-diving all other Plenums of the Comintern, and establishing a record for low theoretical level.

The thesis shows that the C. I. leadership is unable to analyze the significance of, or understand the reasons for the German defeat. It is therefore unable to draw any lessons from the German events, and strives to continue the worst aspects of the ultra-left sectarianism of the 10th Plenum "eve of revolution" days.

The theory of social-fascism runs rampant thru the document. The method of solving difficulties by bluffing prevails, without any attempt to face soberly the real plight of the Communist movement. For the 13th Plenum there is no crisis in the Communist International, altho its eyes are sharp enough to see the crisis in Social Democracy as a result of the German catastrophe. After five years of ultra-left sickness and war upon the "Right Danger", the "main danger" is still the "Right Danger." The main slogan for the Communist Parties the world over is: "Soviet Power", and we are told that the "question of (Soviet) power must be raised in the mass work of the Communist Parties." All sections of the Communist International are instructed to prepare "for the impending decisive battles for power." How soon the slogan of Soviet Power will be raised by Comrade Amter in the next Brooklyn car strike remains to be seen.

### Fascism Accelerates Revolution

The intoxication of revolutionary phrases can make one momentarily forget the destruction caused by sectarian policies, just as to the opium smoker, dreams seem more real than the actual world. The chief purpose of the 13th Plenum thesis is to deny the defeat in Germany. It, therefore, with amazing brazenness, attempts to revive the 10th Plenum theory that fascism is a stage toward the proletarian revolution. The Theses states:

"Revolutionary development is simultaneously hindered and accelerated by the fascist fury of the bourgeoisie."

The Pravda editorial on the 13th Plenum is equally emphatic:

"Fascism is a dangerous enemy of the revolution, but it is not only this: At the same time it accelerates the revolutionary development."

Concomitant with the theory of the acceleration of the proletarian revolution by Fascism, the 13th Plenum revives the theory that Germany is not Italy, that Fascism today has no possibility of as long a lease of life as it has had in Italy, regardless of the efforts of the sectarian policy pursued by the Communist Parties. The thesis declares:

"As distinguished from the first wave of fascization of capitalist states which took place at the time of the transition from a revolutionary crisis to partial stabilization, the capitalist world is now passing from the end of capitalist stabilization to a revolutionary crisis, which determines other perspectives of development of fascism and the world revolutionary movement of the toilers."

It is criminal self-deception to claim that the Communist Party which was impotent to strike a blow against Fascism before it took power, can more easily strike Fascism to earth after it has state power in its hands.

The New Right Danger  
No one can overestimate, it

seems, the revolutionary character of the situation. Ultra-left errors have disappeared for the time being, from the very vocabulary of the Comintern. Only the "right opportunist error" presents itself, declares the theses, in failing "to see now the objective tendencies of the accelerated maturing of the revolutionary crisis in the capitalist world."

All sections of the Comintern are instructed "to ruthlessly root out opportunism in all its forms, and above all, right opportunism (Remmele, Neumann, the defeatists in other countries in their estimates of the prospects of the German revolution) . . . Remmele, the one who boastfully declared in a speech in the Reichstag "We do not fear a Fascist government; it will come to an end even more swiftly than the previous governments", is now denounced as a defeatist! Heinz Neumann, the extreme left of the ultra-lefts, the one who advocated the infamous united front with the Nazis in the "Red Referendum" in August 1931, is now condemned as a "right opportunist". That the Comintern leadership stands to the left of the ultra-left adventurer Heinz Neumann is a revelation of the degree of left-madness infecting the C.I. today.

The leaders of the Comintern are so confused that they are unable to distinguish the trough from the crest of a revolutionary wave. After the defeat of the revolution of 1848 Marx fought bitterly against the phrase monger Willich,

whose ultra-left perspective resembled that of the Comintern today. After the victory of reaction in Russia, in 1905, the ultra-left among the Bolsheviks such as Bogdanov, Lunacharsky, and others, refused to see the recession of the revolutionary wave and heaped the abuse of "opportunist" upon Lenin as liberally as it is done by the Comintern leadership today. If the victory of Fascism has taken place without a revolutionary uprising preceding it, so much the worse for the Comintern leadership which said almost five years ago that we were "on the eve of revolution" and that the barricades were already being erected (10th Plenum).

### Sectarianism Endorsed

The entire theoretical structure of revolutionary phrase-mongering and pooh-poohing of Fascism by the 13th Plenum is for the purpose of white-washing the false political course of the Comintern leadership. For if, as a result of this sectarian course, the revolution has been "accelerated", who would dare to propose a change in policies which have proven so successful, as in Germany, for example? Therefore, the 13th Plenum thesis "fully approves the resolution of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. of April 1, 1933 on the situation in Germany and the political line pursued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany, headed by Comrade Thaelmann, before

and at the time of the fascist coup."

For United Front From Below  
Again the Comintern rejects the United Front of the Internationals, the political parties, the unions, and the other organizations of labor against capitalist reaction. Again the Comintern advocates the slogan, "Against Social Democracy and for a united front from below." The Pravda editorial analyzing the 13th Plenum speaks of the unity of the working class against fascism only "under the revolutionary leadership of the Communist Party." Five years of failure to establish such a united front "from below with the social democratic workers" has taught the Comintern leadership nothing.

The whole analysis of Social Democracy by the 13th Plenum is such as to prevent even the possibility of a united front of labor from being consummated. After the destructive attack of fascism upon all the social democratic organizations in Germany, Social Democracy is still Social Fascism—a wing of fascism. Altho Social Democracy in Germany presents a spectacle of ruins, the 13th Plenum thesis declares: "Social Democracy continues to play the role of the main social prop of the bourgeoisie also in the countries of open fascist dictatorship." It follows from this that the united front of Communist Parties and Socialist Parties against Fascism is impossible. How can one unite

with the main prop of the bourgeoisie against the lesser prop—fascism?

For United Front From Above  
At the same time, the 13th Plenum endorses the appeal for a united front that had been issued to the leadership of the British Independent Labor Party by the Presidium of the C.I. The logic by which this is achieved cannot be discovered. Neither does the Comintern leadership attempt to explain that the first united front achieved by the Comintern of any significance in the last five years, that between the Communist Party of Great Britain and the I.L.P., is not a united front "from below." Neither does the Comintern leadership make any attempt to explain the March 6 Manifesto of the C.I. which proposed to accept a non-aggression pact with the "social fascist" leaders of the 2nd International and which offered to enter into such united action with a guarantee to refrain from criticism of the "main prop of the bourgeoisie." The leadership of the Comintern clearly neither understands the Leninist policy of the united front, nor has it the slightest idea how to execute it.

### The Red Unions Rest In Peace.

On the trade union field the thesis of the 13th Plenum presents a new departure in regard to the revolutionary dual unions—the policy of muteness. The revolutionary red unions are to be built with silence, presumably, for not a word about them is to be found in the theses. To realize this, one must read the theses of the 10th, 11th and 12th Plenums of the E.C.C.I., in which the question of creating and building the Red Trade Unions is the central feature of the instructions to the parties. In fact the 11th Plenum considered the formation of an independent revolutionary trade union movement in Germany as the "principal achievement of the Comintern". Manuilsky said at the 11th Plenum: "The decision of a number of Communist parties in favor of organizing an independent revolutionary trade union movement is a decision of truly historical importance."

Why the chill silence of the 13th Plenum on matter of such great significance to the workers of the entire world? The truth of the matter is, that in the house of the hanged man one does not mention ropes. The dual red unions have suffered an unmentioned collapse in every country in which they have been set up. The 13th Plenum blessed neither with wisdom nor with valor prefers not to discuss the results of the splitting of the mass trade unions.

However, this does not signify the end of the dual union policy of the Communist Parties. Even though the thesis emphasizes the necessity of working within the reformist, the fascist and the Christian mass trade unions, it gives its formal endorsement simultaneously to the trade union directives of the 12th Plenum. The 12th Plenum thesis, it should be noted, emphasized the question of building the red trade unions, and working within the reformist unions for that purpose.

### "Silent Theory"

Other problems "difficult" for the Comintern leadership to analyze are simply ignored. The "Brandlerites" and "Lovestoneites" who have been so generously deluged with "counter-revolutionary", "social-fascist" and other choice appellations in the previous Plenum theses, are not mentioned. The Communist Party of America, once the apple of the eye of the Comintern, is now treated in the thesis as if it didn't exist. Typical of the methods of the Comintern leadership, the American party is not discussed or even mentioned in the thesis, yet so serious is the situation that the leadership of the Party is changed behind the scenes, with Foster replacing Browder, the Central Committee being declared in receivership, with a C.I. representative as censor-in-chief of all decisions. The membership of the Communist Party of America had absolutely no more to do with the

(Continued on Page 7)

## The Farm Revolt And The Labor Movement

# COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA AND THE FARMER

by E. B.

The past fifteen months have opened the eyes of those dogmatists who stubbornly insisted that the American farmers problem was just the same old peasant problem, and that the whole thing could be easily handled by just taking European precedents and following them to the letter. Nothing has been so embarrassing to these self styled "vanguards of the American working class" as the Farm Revolt.

The current questions now are: Should the communists immediately set about to subordinate the Farm Revolt leadership and try to put themselves above this leadership or should the communists take a much less omniscient stand and devote their efforts to helping develop, from the farm masses, a true Marxian-Leninist farm leadership? Can the communists be so brazen as to ask these long ignored farm masses to subordinate their courageous fighting groups to the leadership of the communists? There is reason to believe that there will be much more harmony, understanding and respect if the communists confine their present activities, amongst the farmers, to a widespread campaign of elementary Marxian-Leninist instruction, propaganda at first, probably more direct contact and organizational methods can be developed later.

Now the question of correct propaganda is not solved by just spreading anything and everything that is published by the communist groups amongst the farmers. The communists must be very careful in their selection, publication and distribution of the right kind of propaganda. There is more value in one little pamphlet of good propaganda than there is in a thousand communist newspapers full of matter about needle workers, silk workers, textile workers, coal miners and long theses on Nazis, struggles in Spain, China and Cuba.

Today there are very few pamphlets published by the communists on the farm question. And fewer of these hardly more than mention the farmers of the great corn, wheat and hog belt. There are even

more pamphlets dealing with agriculture in the U.S.S.R. in circulation in this country but strange as it may seem few of the poor and middle class farmers of the midwest are the least bit interested in state and collective farms in the Soviet Union. Circulating pamphlets about agriculture in the Soviet Union is an upside down method of bringing the midwest farmer to communism. The midwest farmer is militant, very militant, but he is totally lacking in Marxist-Leninist knowledge. The midwest farmer is fighting, but he is fighting to get back the "good old days." Ninety five per cent of the midwest farmers have that idea today. So it should be easy to understand that such pamphlets as "Modern Farming—Soviet Style" "The Ferry," "Kolkhozniki," etc., are almost 100% useless as propaganda in the midwest. A writer in "The Communist" says, "We must popularize Comrade Stalin's speech at the recent Congress of Collective Farm Shock Brigaders." This writer's suggestion exposes his misunderstanding of the poor and middle class farmers of the midwest. Not until the American midwest farmer clearly understands social evolution enough to see that the "good old days" of prosperous individual farming cannot be brought back, by any known force,

will he be the least bit interested in establishing state and collective farms in the Soviet America that is to come. A large majority of the midwest farmers still feel that this crisis is only temporary. Their various programs and demands prove that they all have a viewpoint along that line. So it should be obvious to any intelligent communist that state and collective farms do not, at present, interest the midwest farmers.

Communist papers dealing with news of evictions, sheriffs sales, etc., have certain values but there is too much of that subject matter and not enough real instructive matter in the papers. The farmer well knows what the A.A.A. and the N.R.A. are doing to him. In every neighborhood there are good examples of the injustices of capitalist reform legislation.

What kind of subject matter should make the best kind of propaganda for the midwest farmer to read? We shall answer that in this manner: The midwest farmer is a victim of political misunderstanding. This is due to the fact that his only source of knowledge of society and economics is through the very mediums that the capitalist uses to flood the country with his propaganda. The farmer has been at the mercy of the capitalists' book, magazines, newspapers, radio and movie reels. There are fakers who pretending for strategic reasons, to be "enemies of capitalism", are allowed the use of these mediums. John Simpson and Milo Reno are good examples of that type. Their job is to create confusion amongst the farmers in order to stave off attacks on capitalism.

Therefore the subject matter of all propaganda should be of an elementary nature. Clear and understandable pamphlets on Marxian economics and also pamphlets and articles analyzing the midwest farmers position in relation to the capitalist class should furnish the bulk of the propaganda that should be circulated amongst the poor and middle class farmers of the midwest today.

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# THE PLENUM OF THE E.C.C.I.

*(Continued from Page 5)*

selection of their leaders than they have with selecting the Ambassador to China. It is the irony of fate, that the members of the Communist Opposition expelled from the Party had more to do with the demotion of Browder by their struggle against the stupid policy of the leadership at the American Congress against War and Fascism, than did the members of the official Party.

The decisions of the 13th Plenum were adopted unanimously. While in the days of Lenin, large opposition votes on many questions were common occurrences, without resulting in any lynch spirit, and without any organizational persecution against a Radek or a Bordiga, today the procedure in the Communist International is just the opposite.

No revolutionary Party can grow and develop, nor can a correct line of policy be arrived at by a mechanical suppression of all dissenting opinion. Only mental atrophy can result, and the thesis of the 13th Plenum is the best proof of it.

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## The Seventh Congress

According to the decision of the 13th Plenum, the 7th World Congress of the Comintern is finally to be held (after 6 years of "revolutionary upsurge" without a Congress) during the latter part of 1934. If the 7th Congress is not to be a painful replica of the completely worthless 13th Plenum, the members of the Communist Party must raise their voices demanding an extended discussion before the Congress, the end of the terror-regime in the Parties, the reunification of the Communist movement, and changing of the tactics and policies that have brought ruin and repeated defeats to the Communist Party.

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