

What Happened In Moscow

By Ben Gitlow

The following analysis of the policies of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, which recently met at Moscow, has been prepared for The CALL by Ben Gitlow of New Jersey. Comrade Gitlow, before he rejoined the Socialist Party last year, was a prominent communist and in 1928 was the Communist candidate for vice-president of the United States.

After seven long years, years of tremendous consequences to the working class, the Communist International has held its Seventh World Congress. Its decisions are important to Socialists and communists alike; as an important section of the world labor movement, the Communist International sessions and reports command the attention of every class-conscious worker.

What was the communist analysis of the grave problems before the working class? Did it make an effort to overcome the errors of the past? What policies did it adopt in the fight against fascism? Did the congress take a real international stand against war?

Decisive Turn

The answers of the communist congress to these questions mark a decisive turning point in its abandonment of Marxian revolutionary positions.

Dimitroff's report on "The Offensive of Fascism and the Tasks of the Comintern"—(The Comintern is an abbreviation for Communist International—Ed.)—must be commended for its frankness. No doubts are left as to what is now Comintern policy for Dimitroff is not expounding his own views; he is reporting the official views of the CI.

The offensive of Fascism, involving as it does the destruction of the labor movement and the plunging of the world into a horrible capitalist mediocrity, of darkest reaction, terror, bloodshed and servitude, makes necessary that the labor movement take a positive stand on how to defeat fascism. What is the position of the CI?

Dimitroff gives the position of the CI as follows:

Coalition

"The Communist Parties are not only ready to join in the united-front struggles against the fascist offensive, but they are willing as well to participate in non-communist but anti-fascist governments, drawing a sharp distinction between Social-Democratic participation in coalition governments aiming to bolster capitalism on the one hand, and united front governments for the purpose of blocking fascism on the other."

Here we have a very bold, very

frank statement—which is a revival of the Social-democratic policy of coalition government!

Can coalition government be formed upon any other basis than the maintenance of capitalism? It was in Germany that the working-class through the German Social-Democracy shared government responsibility with the capitalist rulers—and this policy proved disastrous to the working class.

Must Keep Status Quo

Upon what basis did the Social-Democracy in Germany enter the coalition government? One does not have to be a political genius to realize that the German Socialists could not have formed a coalition government on the program of Socialism and the abolition of capitalism. The capitalists would never participate in such a government. The capitalists are not going to agree to enter a coalition the basis of which is to be that they are to commit suicide.

Every coalition therefore is in the first and final analysis a defense of capitalism. Moscow, which has fought against this policy of coalition for so many years, knows very well that coalition government, whether Socialists or communists participate in it, will rest upon the premise of maintaining the status quo, i. e., rule of the capitalist state. Communist leaders may call participation in a capitalist government a "united-front" government, but putting an ass's skin on a wolf does not change the wolf or his nature. Calling a coalition government a "united-front" or a "peoples" government does not change its form or its nature.

Doesn't Stop Fascism

Can coalition block fascism? It did not do so in Germany. There it aided fascism because the partnership with the capitalist government tied the hands of the Socialists. It forced the Socialists to agree to measures which sought to bolster capitalism by seeking a way out of the crisis at the expense of the workers, farmers and lower middle-classes. These "emergency decrees" (such as the Bruening emergency decrees) did more than anything else to discredit the Socialists and to throw millions in the arms of the Nazis.

It is no accident that the left wing in the Socialist movement recognizes the necessity of repudiating the policy of coalition. We have learned from the German debacle. But such is the nature of history that the Comintern, which has always repudiated coalition, now hastens to grasp it and revive it.

Dimitroff continues. He states as the official policy of the CI:

"The Communist International makes no other condi-

tions for unity of action than that it be directed against the class enemy, against the offensive of capital, against fascism and the war danger."

Good and Bad

Who then are our class enemies? Are the capitalist rulers in non-fascist countries our class enemies? Are capitalist governments to be divided into two categories—bad governments and good governments? And even in fascist countries, is there a good fascist government and a bad fascist government?

Dimitroff states:

"The most reactionary type of fascism is the German type. German fascism plays the role of the gendarme of the international counter-revolution; of the chief instigator of imperialist war and of the originator of the crusade against the Soviet Union."

Mussolini "Liberal"

If we follow this logic, Italian fascism is more liberal, more progressive, more tolerant than the German brand. Perhaps Mussolini's military regiments of 6-year-olds is an advanced liberal step and his campaign in Ethiopia is really a good-will flight of the dove of peace! The soft-peddling of Italian Fascism at the communist congress shows the extent of the degeneration of the CI and exposes the fact that the Russian communist leaders are fully aware that as a result of the Franco-Soviet pact they may have to fight with France on the side of Italian Fascism. Hence, we now have not only good governments and bad governments but good fascism and bad fascism! The Comintern can sink into no lower depths.

The A-B-C of Socialism teaches us that capitalism breeds war, that under capitalism war is inevitable. But, says the report, "German Fascism is the chief instigator of war." Is England less of an instigator of war when it allowed Hitler a free hand to prepare for war by approving his policy to build up a powerful military machine in defiance of the Versailles treaty? Is Japan—with which the communists lose no love—a peaceful, unwarlike nation as it carries on war in the Far East?

Imperialist France

Is France an innocent baby in the war instigation game? France is the second imperialist power as far as colonies and subjected people are concerned. With a domestic area of 212,659 square miles, France has colonies

with an area of 5,657,802 square miles. In France live 46,938,847 people but French imperialism subjects 69,834,953. French fortifications, a big air fleet, a large standing army and enormous military expenditures prove that should the occasion profit, France will not shrink from instigating war.

There is then the added excuse that the Nazis are the originators of the crusade against the Soviet Union. But before the Nazis it was England at one time, Japan at another and a combination of capitalist powers at still another. Should the Soviet Union adhere to the principles of proletarian revolution, it will discover that all the capitalist powers will be arrayed against her. But it is even doubtful whether the sacrifice of principles will guarantee the Soviet Union the peace it desires. Only a strong revolutionary working class movement in the capitalist countries will assure her that guarantee.

Prepare for War

All the capitalist countries, fascist and non-fascist, are engaged in feverish military ex-

pansion. Alliances and counter-alliances are being cemented. The line up for the next world war is being drawn. Is all this preparedness and military expansion a guarantee for peace? Rubbish!

If there ever was a time to adopt the Socialist view against capitalism and its wars, now is the time. But the Comintern decisions give us a new line. It confuses the revolutionary workers; many of them reason: "Perhaps under certain conditions it becomes the duty for revolutionary workers to support their imperialist masters in war and to fight heroically on their side." The Comintern policy breaks the international front of the working-class and throws worker against worker. The slogan of International Socialism—Workers of the World Unite—becomes a huge fraud. The Comintern policy disarms the workers, divides them and renders them helpless in the face of fascism and war.

The new line of the Comintern cannot be the basis for unity in the struggle against fascism and war.

FOR LABOR VICTORY

Knee Pants Makers' Union

LOCAL 19

Amalgamated Clothing Workers' of America

GREETINGS FROM

United Neckwear Makers Union

LOCAL 250

Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America

7 East 15th St.

New York, N. Y.

Edmond Gottesman, Secretary, Treasurer

Louis Fuchs, Manager

For A Powerful Labor Movement