

## In Germany

## The «New Turn» in the C.I.

BERLIN—

conformity with the new course decreed by the Stalinist leadership after the 15th of March the presidium of the Executive Committee has ordered a general turn in all sections of the Communist International.

The new turn cast its shadow before it a while ago. It was announced in the speech of Manuilsky last November during the sessions of the Young Communist International. During the course of his speech Manuilsky attacked with extreme violence the Central Committee of the Austrian Communist Party which he reproached with having "sectarian conceptions" for having spoken of an imminent revolutionary situation at the time of the aggravation of the Austrian crisis, and for having played with insurrection. He thus exposed the thoroughly opportunist character of the new turn.

For it was the leading bodies of the Comintern, with the German C. P. Central at its head which had simply thrown the leadership of the Austrian C. P. into the "river of insurrection". The Constance conference of September 18, 1929, declared that "today the question of the seizure of power presents itself in Austria" and Remmele declared at a meeting of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party at which were present members of the Austrian Central Committee, that it was not sufficient to propagate the idea of Soviets but it was now necessary to set about realizing them.

## The Real Responsibility

The Left Opposition rose up against this playing with insurrection and showed that the Party had already let slip a decisive occasion when it neglected to mobilize the masses against the repressive regime of Schober; nevertheless it was denounced as "defeatist" and its slogan—the creation of defense committees in all factories against the threatening fascism—was not even given a hearing.

The hopeless bankruptcy of the "Left" Stalinist course was revealed in all its tragicomic aspects last fall in Austria.

The cowardly and pitiful retreat of the theoreticians of adventurism, of the Third Period inventors, before the political conclusions of their slogans and their theories in the Austrian crises clearly portrays the character or rather lack of character of the new turn.

Without appearing to do so, Manuilsky in his report set out to outline a new interpretation of the "Third Period". Until quite recently it was the period of "violent revolutionary upsurge", of the imminent collapse of stabilization; now, however, the maturing of a world economic crisis is very modestly announced and the phenomena of the crisis coming to light in the various countries are examined. "It is not yet the finish of stabilization that approaches, but only the beginning of the decomposition, for the collapse of capitalist stabilization would mean the collapse of the capitalist system, that is, the birth of an objectively revolutionary situation in the capitalist countries"; that is what Manuilsky announced while the Berlin Rote Fahne spoke, since February 1st of the capitalist collapse that is developing at a "breath-taking pace".

But isn't such a "re-interpretation" made to reveal the whole stupidity of the theory of the Third Period? Does not the whole strategy outlined by the Sixth Congress threaten to give way under this weak attempt made at revision behind the back of the Party? And does not the collapse of the theoretical and strategical basis of the "Left" Stalinist course threaten to shake the authority of the all-powerful apparatus of the C. I.? The fear of seeing these questions posed openly absolutely dominates the exemplary bureaucrat in the first and timid attempt at revision. And that is why Manuilsky swiftly throws a morsel to the astonished members of the Communist Party; he declares that the "growing revolutionary upsurge has already mounted a degree".

These contradictions in Manuilsky's

speech are only the reflection of the contradictions of Centrist policy in general. Each attempt to correct itself must be paid for by the "deepening" of its past errors; in this manner, Centrist more and more prepares the ground for avowed opportunism and favors the development of adventurism and openly Right wing tendencies.

## The Turn a la Thaelmann and Co.

The most perfect picture of internal contradictions, of half-measures and of the most dangerous opportunism is furnished us by the turn affected in Germany at this moment by Thaelmann, Neumann and Remmele. The resolution adopted at the meeting of the C. C. of the C.P.G. on March 20 and 21, declares that "all the recent events prove that the revolutionary upsurge, in spite of its unequal developments is rising upwards as before..."

And in the name of the revolutionary upsurge, the resolution of the C. C. demands "a strong consolidation of the struggle against social-fascism".

Now, the "strong consolidation" consists in the fact that the C. C. suddenly discovers the difference between the social democratic workers and their counter-revolutionary chiefs. At the same time, the resolution attacks the "Leftist sectarianism" and declares that the "fraction work has considerably diminished lately in the reformist and Christian unions."

And still, at the same time, the C. C. declares that "the existing revolutionary unions must be strengthened in the most energetic manner".

Rarely has a leadership tried in a more cowardly and disgusting manner to wash its hands of its mistakes behind the backs of its adherents. It is at last discovered that "the theory of the little Zoergel (according to which the simple social democratic worker is a "class enemy") belongs to the realm of absolute cretinism. This discovery is masked by the slogan of the "consolidation of the

struggle against social-fascism".

The need for working within the free trade unions (social democratic), to which more than 5,000,000 workers belong, can no longer be evaded. But to conceal the recognition of this necessity, the work is made equivalent to that done in the Christian trade unions and at the same time "the most energetic strengthening of the revolutionary trade unions" is demanded.

## Effects of the Turn

This cowardly right-about-face of the Party bureaucracy which, within 24 hours, tramples underfoot what it still proclaimed to be patented Bolshevism yesterday, has had various effects in the Party. A part of the apparatus, specialists sworn to the struggle against social fascism, has responded to the turn by an apparatus rebellion. At the head of this "apparatus rebellion" is the trade union strategist, Paul Merker, member of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee. Among the members of the C. P. there is above all, an extreme agitation. The rebellion of Merker has found substantial support in the Central Region (Berlin). The Party functionaries, by 70 votes against 7, have rejected the new "turn", and demanded the exclusion of Remmele and Heinz Neumann from the C. C. It is a typical trait of the hypocrisy of the leadership that it now tries to convince the militants that the manifestation of the ultra-Leftist Merker group is... "a resurrection of vanquished Trotskyism". And this after having declared for years that the Trotskyists and the Right wing were identical! The leadership of the Party will not succeed in unloading its faults, and the responsibility for the line it defended up to now, upon the Merker group. It will succeed still less in putting into the same bag the real Left of the Party and the ultra-Leftist Merker group.

The Left Opposition which has been fighting for years the erroneous course of Stalin and Thaelmann, now fortified by the unification of the Left Opposition that took place on March 31, will fight more vigorously than ever in the Party in order to win to the ideas of the International Opposition the most advanced elements of the Party.

—K. I.

## In France

## The Impending Crisis in the Party

The Communist Party of France and the French revolutionary trade unions have had, ever since their foundation, a considerable handicap in the struggle for influence among the workers. The powerful wave of post-war revolution carried an enthusiastic majority of the old Socialist Party over into the ranks of communism, at the scission of Tours. The splitting, bureaucratic policy of the Jouhaux-led C. G. T. drove still more workers toward the revolutionary trade union center, the C. G. T. U., born under the United Front slogan. Thus, organizationally, the original post-war conditions favored the revolutionary movement, gave the Communists a considerable advantage over the yellow reformists.

## The Stalinist Course in France

However the vacillating, equivocal, adventurist character of the Comintern "line" after Lenin's death, initiated, as elsewhere, in France too, a serious disintegration of the revolutionary ranks particularly as far as the political side of the movement is concerned. The membership of the Party has been almost decimated. (From well over 120,000 members after Tours, there remain now from 15 to 30,000.) The influence of the press has immensely fallen. The socialists have been able to recover and strengthen their positions—at the expense of the Communists.

An example of passive reaction among the rank and file, was offered to view on the First of May. The Party and the C. G. T. U. issued a manifesto, calling for a "Day of Struggle" appealing to their adherents to come "All into the Streets". What actually happened, was this:

In Paris and in the suburbs several hundreds of thousands of workers struck, obeying the call, not only of the C. G. T. U. and the Communists, but also that of the C.G.T. and the S.P. There were, however, no demonstrations, no meetings, whatsoever.

At the Grange-Aux-Elles, the C. G. T. U. headquarters, only the flies (cops) were to be seen in appreciable numbers. Rue Lafayette (the Party office) was likewise deserted. At the Sante prison, where the Party called for a demonstration in the evening, there was instead, a veritable demonstration—of flies...

## Rise of Left Opposition

Why this inactivity, why this apathy among workers organized in hundreds of thousands in mass revolutionary organizations? The apparatchiki, the greater and the lesser bureaucrat explain this away with "self-criticism". They didn't make a "bon boulot" (good job) of the preparation! They are in general imbued with an entirely non-Communist, non-Marxist spirit of subjectivism. Revolution to them is merely an administrative affair, a matter of stereotyped routine. As a result: Among the youth a positive abhorrence for theory, a strong inclination for "revolutionary gymnastics", for the many times over discredited and unmasked "Herveism". Among the adults, slavish execution of "instructions".

The more serious, the more sincere elements in the Party and the League have, however, lately begun to be affected by the meager results of their work. They are beginning to think things over. In the C. G. T. U. these elements are rapidly developing into a principled, pro-Party, anti-bureaucratic opposition, grouping themselves about our comrades of the Verite and the Ligue Communiste. Among the youth, a similar process is taking place.

The Stalinist apparatus-men have, in fact, become alarmed already. They are now groping about for a suitable label to tag on to these new oppositionists, before proceeding with the customary suspensions and expulsion measures. And this groping about displays a pitiful intellectual confusion, a true reflection of chained intelligence.

The editorial of the May number of the Cahiers du Bolchevisme sets itself the task of "analyzing" the new opposition. The objectives that guide the "analysis" are clear. One, to discover a scape-goat upon which to cast the guilt for the errors committed by the bureaucrats themselves since the inauguration of the "third period"—and lately condemned by the infallible Manuilsky-Stalin. The other, to discredit the real opposition as much as possible in the eyes of the workers.

The second objective produces only a barrage of abuse and slander, which the workers will hardly tolerate. The new oppositionists are called "centrists", allies of the "Popists", "hidden opportunists", agents of the reformist minoritaires" and similar epithets. But, it is well known that the militants of the new C. G. T. U. opposition have always fought the syndicalists and opportunist tendencies of the Monatte group as well as of the Rights. Comrades like Aulas, Douemange, Villatte possess a prestige among the workers for that. After "analyzing" the opposition "currents" into "pessimists" and "left phrase mongers" (the discovery, then, of some ephemeral "Merker" group in France?!) the editorial writer proceeds with illuminations.

## Finding a Scape-Goat

"As to the latter," he writes, "they displace the practical work by bombast and by mechanical procedure (!) and surrender themselves to Leftist demagoguery (exaggeration of the crisis (!) slogan of the conquest of power as a practical task (so!) etc.). A perusal of the Humanite of the "third period" in any arrangement of days whatsoever would enable anyone to call these mysterious "latter" by their real given names. But—it seems—the "texts" were, nevertheless correct; the question here deals, with such "latter" phrase-mongers, who "...interpreted the texts, falsely denatured our estimations" etc. It is clear that this to date non-existent ultra-Left "group" is to be picked in the main from the conscientious lower layers of functionaries who simply took the slogans issued by the directing organs on good faith. To these are to be attributed all the sins of the "Left turn" in the first section of the third period just finished.

However, it is extremely difficult to find an "important" personage who has gained the disfavor of the Council of the All-High, to attach to this group as a sort of a loadstone. Even Vassart, among the leading until recently in the Party and the C. G. T. U. can only merit the label "pessimist" (despite his well-known attack against Chambelland of the "forty years of social peace"). This is a real dilemma for the analyst. Yet, the new opposition has been "proven" an ally of the Right wing; Vassart as "skeptical" and "pessimist" has been created a confederate of Chambelland, in the Party ranks and even those ephemeral Leftists are some sort of opportunist anyway. And so, our writer trembling for his own hide (as Lovestone, for instance, did for his, in the days of our own Trotskyist Right danger) concludes:

"In our Party we cannot speak of two battle fronts (this is already sacrilege) as among the youth (reference to Manuilsky). The few Left errors, which might have been committed by good revolutionary workers ought to be eliminated, but they should not be confused with the "Left" bombast of several braggarts (!) who by that means attempt to disguise their opportunism. There is only one opportunist front with different shadings which we have underlined above."

## The Perspectives

This confusion, this uneasiness in the ranks of the bureaucracy, marks an impending crisis. Couple this bureaucratic uneasiness with the growing dissatisfaction among the better rank and file elements, who watch in pain and despair, the fluctuation and the diminution of the Party influence, who begin to recognize the disrespect, the neglect of revolutionary theory, as the source of the evil, and we perceive the dawn of a fierce inner struggle in the French Party, an important opportunity to lead to the rehabilitation of the Party as the party of the proletariat. The French section of the International Left Opposition under the leadership of L. D. Trotsky and the Russian Leninist-Bolsheviks, will be at its post in the days to come. Under the banner of Leninism, it will fight to lead the French Party on to the correct Communist path, as part of the struggle for the renovation of the Comintern.

Paris, May 10

—S. G.