





ARE THERE LIMITS TO THE FALL?

Summary of the 13th Plenum of the Executive of the C.I. by L. D. Trotsky

The plenum of the Executive of the C. I. which met toward the end of December passed a resolution ("Fascism, the War Danger, and the Tasks of the Communist Parties"). This resolution resembles nothing so much as an epitaph—

"The Policy of the German C. P. Was Correct!"

1. The resolution once again takes a solemn oath—evidently there are a few who do not believe it—that the policy of the German Communist Party was unconditionally correct before, during, and after the Hitler overturn. We are told, however, in a parenthesis, that Remmele and Neumann belong to the "right opportunists and defeatists in their appraisal of the perspectives of the German Revolution."

The Growth of Fascism

2. According to the resolution, "The growth of Fascism and its assumption of power in Germany, and in a number of other capitalist countries, imply a growth of the revolutionary crisis and increasing indignation of wide masses against the hegemony of capital."

The Social Democracy

3. "The social democracy—reads the resolution—aims only to fool and disarm the workers by denying the Fascization of bourgeois democracy and by counterposing in principle (!) the democratic countries to the countries with the Fascist dictatorship."

The Reasoning of Anarchism

The 13th Plenum offers us the classic reasoning of anarchism during the period of its primitive dumbness; Messrs. Kuusinen, Manuilsky and so forth are no anarchists; they place much too great a value upon the aid of the G. P. U. in the struggle against revolutionary Marxists.

ist philosophy: changes of political regimes are, if you please, without any "principled" meaning! No doubt, those Communists who are sitting not in Hotel de Luxe but in the concentration camp see these matters differently.

4. The resolution teaches us that the difference between social democracy and Fascism involves only the "forms and methods of Fascization". That's all! In contrast to Fascists, social Fascists "defend the preservation of parliamentary forms while putting through the Fascization of the bourgeois dictatorship".

A Provoking Idiocy

g. "The social democracy—in the words of the resolution—continues to play the role of being the chief social (!) support of the bourgeoisie also in those countries where an open Fascist dictatorship exists."

Figures from the "Yearbooks"

7. The "yearbooks" of the Comintern, a few years ago, gave the following data relating to the numerical strength of the Communist parties:

the phantom universe that the bureaucrats of the Comintern inhabit. The British Communist party is a sorry myth. And on the other hand, the party of the Laborites, covered with betrayals, is preparing once again to assume power, for new betrayals. In 1926-1927, the Proletarian numbered a "million" workers in the ranks of the Left wing in the trade unions. Nothing has remained today of this movement.

Explaining the Facts

8. How does the Comintern itself explain these facts? It does not explain them but keeps mum on the subject. It makes a fleeting comment; only in speaking of the tasks of "mass work" of the Communist parties does the 13th Plenum remark that "their weakest side as yet (!)...is their work in enter-

Directives Contradict Analysis

11. The directives of the Comintern—which do not rise above the level of its theoretical analysis—contradict the latter, however, at every point. The 13th Plenum prescribes to the Communist parties that they "painstakingly explain what economic and political enslavement the Fascist dictatorship has in store for the toilers."

Stalinism Assisted Hitler

Had the Comintern placed, from 1929, or even from 1930 or 1931, at the foundation of its policies the objective irreconcilability between social democracy and Fascism, or more exactly between Fascism and social democracy; if upon this, it had built a systematic and persistent policy of the united front, Germany, within a few months, would have been covered with a network of mighty committees of proletarian defense, potential workers' Soviets, that is. Had the government of the U. S. S. R. announced in time that it would view Hitler's coming to power as a preparation to strike Eastward; if by utilizing the favorable situation in Europe, it had at the same time taken the necessary preparatory military measures on the Western boundaries of the U. S. S. R., it would have imbued a double assurance into the ranks of German workers, and Germany would have had all the chances of becoming a Soviet republic.

A Self-Indicting Recommendation

13. The E. C. recommends fighting for the right to strike, and the right to hold workers' meetings, in other words: for the democratic rights of the proletariat. To this must be added the defense of free elections and the inviolability of Communist deputies—and consequently itself against Fascist and Bonapartist assaults. In what a cowardly, confused, circumspect and hem-and-hawing manner do the ill-fated leaders of the Comintern approach the question of defending the democratic positions of the proletariat! These masked demi-concessions are entirely insufficient for a correct policy; but they more than suffice for an indictment against the Comintern.

Prospectives

15. And what of the prospectives? On this score, the resolution refers

by bureaucratic strangulation, it would be no exaggeration to say that the total number of members of the Comintern is now 1-10 of the number in the period of its apex. As regards the Proletariat, it would be necessary to cite a proportion even more depressing. The "Krestintern" (Peasant International) gave up its ghost long ago, and its very name has dropped out of circulation. The cited figures, however, far from providing a complete picture of the theoretical collapse of the Comintern, and of the decline of its revolutionary prestige.

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us back again to the question whether the victory of Fascism speeds up the proletarian revolution. One could maintain with equal success that a shipwreck "speeds up" the voyage from Europe to America. The great importance of this question is patent: if Fascism—"speeds up", then it is permissible to repeat in France, Spain, Belgium, Holland, etc., those policies which were applied so successfully in Germany. One can have no doubts as to the happy results. All the more mercilessly must the Bolshevik-Leninists drive the theory and practice of bureaucratic adventurism out of the ranks of the workers' movement!

It is incontestable that the proletariat crushed by Fascism will pass ultimately out of the deficit; but only at the cost of terrific sacrifices, equivalent to the political ruin of an entire generation. The experience of Italy clearly attests this.

As against the Italian example the Plenum advances the following conception: "In contradistinction to the first wave of the Fascization of capitalist states, which occurred during the transition from a revolutionary crisis to a partial stabilization, the capitalist world today is passing from the end of capitalist stabilization to the revolutionary crisis..."

New Revolutionary Situations

On this point the resolution remarks: "At any moment the turn may occur which would signify the transformation of the economic crisis into a revolutionary crisis."

Counter-Revolutionary

The 13th plenum graciously takes note of this tendency also, "The hiring of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, Trotsky, by his pathetic attempts to create a 4th International... seeks without success to halt the transition of the social democratic workers over to the side of Communism."

The 13th Plenum

The decisions of the 13th plenum are permeated with the spirit of bureaucratic cynicism. The Comintern is dead for the revolutionary cause. Nor will it be revived by the VIII Congress which has been called at last for the "latter part" of the current year. The revolutionary movement will follow another course. The Bolshevik-Leninists have the right to be proud of the fact that history has placed upon them the mission of being the new trail blazers.

Conclusion

—L. TROTSKY. January 18, 1934.

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