

# The Tenth Plenum of the ECCI

By Will Herberg

(Continued from the last issue)

*Fascism, "Social-fascism", and Social Reformism*

ONE of the most dangerous phases in the revision of the line of the C.I. at the X Plenum was the question of *fascism* and "*social-fascism*." The careful analyses of the IV, V, and VI Congresses and of the Program on the question of fascism were entirely forgotten and some of the strangest anti-Marxist theories were put forward. Instead of a phenomenon conditioned by and arising in certain historical conditions, fascism is made into an unrecognizable all-pervading generality. The military dictators of the Latin American Republics become full-blown fascists as do also in America the "armed bands of strike breakers recruited by the Fascists"!

Fascism is made a universal stage of development of the capitalist world thru which every country must pass before the proletarian revolution. Moreover, fascism is declared to be the period just before the proletarian revolution—in other words, the last stage of capitalism:

*"The capitalist world is heading for revolution but before succumbing it goes thru the phase of fascism."*

These words from Comrade Manuisky's concluding report are confirmed by an even more positive formulation in which he declares that

*"fascism is going to be the last stage of capitalism before the world revolution."*

This is quite contrary to the viewpoint of the Comintern Program which sees in fascism a specific historical phenomenon under definite historical conditions.

The false line in regard to fascism showed itself in the most dangerous form on the question of "*social-fascism*."

Altho at the X Plenum there seemed to have been considerable confusion on this question, yet the general outlines of the new "theory" are clear: *Social-democracy from top to bottom is turning from a reformist into a fascist organization.* This "*social-fascism*" is supposed to be the specific form of fascism in the more highly developed industrial countries. Comrade Bela Kun, the official theoretician of "*social-fascism*", declared:

*"Social-fascism is the type of fascist development in those countries . . . in which capitalist development is more advanced than in Italy."*

The idea of "*social-fascism*" was elaborated by other speakers. Comrade Semard pointed out that social-democracy "from top to bottom" is being "*fascized*", in which he merely echoed the official viewpoint of Manuisky:

*"the fusion of social-democracy with the capitalist state is not merely a fusion at the top. This fusion has taken place from top to bottom, all along the line."*

Comrade Bell (England) discovered that "all of the characteristics of social-fascism apply to the English Labor Party" and that "the transformation of the Labor Party into a social-fascist organization is in full swing." Bela Kun insisted that the thugs hired to break strikes in the USA are "*social-fascists*". There was really no limit to this extravagance and stupidity.

The only serious "proof" offered for these fantastic "theories" was the fact that *the Social-democratic Party has become a tool of the bourgeois state and uses armed force against the workers.* But not every form of violence used against the working class is fascism. The IV, V and VI Congresses pointed this out very clearly. Secondly, there is nothing new in the Social-democratic Party aiding the bourgeoisie in armed attacks upon the workers. This did not begin in May 1929. We need only recall Noske in 1919-1920. Whereas Bela Kun insisted that so-

cial-fascism was a phenomenon of the third period, Manuisky maintains that already Noske was a "*social-fascist*." For years Lenin and the Comintern had been living in ignorance of this startling discovery!

The basic error lying at the bottom of the theories of "*social-fascism*" is the utterly non-Leninist assumption of the homogeneity of the Social-democracy, the absolute failure to differentiate between the leading strata of the Social-democratic movement (SDP and trade union bureaucrats) on the one hand and the broad masses influenced by the Social-democracy (masses in the SD Parties and in the trade unions, etc.) on the other. The X Plenum speaks of the "*fascization of the Social-democracy from top to bottom*" but the Theses of the VI Congress insisted on

*"the duty (of the Communists) of drawing a distinction between the sincere but mistaken Social-democratic workers and the obsequious leaders cringing at the feet of imperialism."*

The contrast could not be greater.

The Italian comrades, especially Comrade Garlandi, tried in vain to refute the dangerous fantasies of "*social-fascism*." Comrade Garlandi very correctly branded Bela Kun's remarks as "*pseudo-analytic*" and a "*repetition of the ultra-left policies supported by Bordiga in his time.*" Comrade Garlandi also correctly pointed out that while it is true that the Social-democracy is an aid to and clears the way for fascism, while it is true that some sections of the leadership of the Social-democracy tend to approach fascism, yet this very process means profound crisis within social democracy and its disintegration as it exists today. To say that "*social democracy from top to bottom*" is becoming facisized is to reject the very elementary Leninist ideas.

The relation between fascism and Social-democracy is clearly and correctly given in the Program of the Comintern where it is pointed out that altho both are specific agencies of bourgeois reaction in particular situations, yet they are distinct and separate:

*"The bourgeoisie resorts either to the method of Fascism or to the method of coalition with the Social-democracy according to the changes in the political situation."*

The idea of "*social-fascism*" leads to a basic revision of the Leninist idea on the question of reformism and particularly of the Program of the Comintern. The Program declares (I-3, VI-1) that reformism in the ranks of the working class grows out of the very conditions of imperialism itself (super-profits, bribery of sections of the proletariat) and can only be destroyed by the proletarian revolution. But if the social democracy "*from top to bottom*" is becoming a fascist organization what happens to reformism? Comrade Bela Kun, the theoretician of "*social fascism*," answers:

*"In this stage of development social reformism dies out; it is transformed partly into social-demagogic elements (?) and partly into the element of mass violence of fascism."*

In other words social-reformism is liquidated! Could revision go further? And yet it is the Bela Kun and Kuusinen who accuse the so-called right-wingers and conciliators of "*underestimating social reformism!*" (Continued in the next issue.)

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