

The MILITANT

VOL. I, No. 1.

NEW YORK, N. Y., NOVEMBER 15, 1928

PRICE 5 CENTS

For the Russian Opposition!

Against Opportunism and Bureaucracy in the Workers Communist Party of America!

A STATEMENT TO AMERICAN COMMUNISTS BY JAMES P. CANNON, MARTIN ABERN AND MAX SHACHTMAN.

1. In the view of the necessity of concentrating the full attention of the Party on the election campaign, we have refrained up till now from any statement or step calculated to open a Party discussion on disputed questions until the election campaign will have been ended and the pre-convention discussion opened.

2. We have definite views on a series of fundamental questions vitally affecting the whole future of the Party and the Comintern which it was our intention to bring before the Party in the pre-convention discussion period.

3. The "discussion" of these questions conducted up till now has not been a real discussion since many of the documents—in our opinion some of the most important political documents of our time—have been suppressed and concealed from the parties of the Comintern or presented to them in garbled form. The opportunity which has come to us in the recent period to read a number of these documents, dealing with some of the most disputed problems of the Comintern in the past five years, together with the rapid confirmation of their correctness by the whole course of events, have shaped our views and convictions. We consider it our revolutionary duty to defend these views before the Party.

4. We had intended to undertake this task at the opening of the Party discussion after the election campaign. However, the arbitrary actions already taken against us (our removal from all positions on October 16) and the plain indications shown in the present hearing of the intention to take further organizational measures

Trotsky and Radek Seriously Ill

The most alarming reports have reached us concerning the condition of health of Leon Trotsky and Karl Radek, leaders of the Russian Opposition who were forcibly exiled to Turkestan and Western Siberia respectively. Both of them are severely stricken with malaria and unless they are given the most careful medical attention grave concern is felt for their lives.

We have just received a message from Moscow, from unquestionably reliable and authentic sources, which tells of the repercussions among the Russian workers. Despite the utmost official vigilance to hush up the story of Trotsky's and Radek's illness, the entire city of Moscow woke up this morning (i.e. the day this letter was written) to find the walls and buildings all over the city placarded with appeals by the Opposition workers to the Moscow proletariat to protest against the scandalous treatment accorded the exiled Bolsheviks in their illness.

The Volkswille, organ of the German opposition, reports a letter written by L. Sosnowski to the Moscow Izvestia, official organ of the Soviet Government, in which the seriousness of Trotsky's illness is confirmed by information received directly from Alma Ata, Trotsky's place of exile. The banished revolutionist's malarial condition has been rendered more serious by other complications. Sosnowski bitterly protests against the cold-blooded cynicism of the present chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council, Voroshilov, who made himself infamous with his sneering reply at a meeting when a worker asked about the disturbing reports regarding Trotsky's health.

The life of Lenin's co-worker, one of the geniuses of the revolution, lion-hearted Trotsky, is in imminent danger! The condition of Comrade Radek is also serious. Should the official neglect that is being substituted for comradeship aid prove fatal to these revolutionary giants, their blood will be upon the heads of those who persecute them and those who do not protest.

Communist workers of America:
Defend the lives of Trotsky and Radek!
Demand their return to Moscow and the provision of the best medical aid in their illness!

An end to the persecution of the fighters for Bolshevism!

On October 27 the undersigned members of the Central Executive Committee were declared expelled from the Party for the views expressed in our statement to the Political Committee on the same date, which is printed below. This action, taken by the Political Committee in violation of the Party constitution, without even the formality of a meeting of the Central Executive Committee to which we were elected by the Party convention, was designed to deprive the Party members of the opportunity to hear our views and to insure themselves against any opposition in the forthcoming Party discussion and elections to the Party convention. Our views relate to principle questions upon which it is not possible for revolutionaries to remain silent. We proposed to defend these views in the Party according to the rules for Party discussion laid down in the Party constitution. The abrogation of the Party constitution and the denial of our rights as Party members compels us to take this method of direct appeal to the Party members in order to bring our position before them. We will continue to expound our views in the columns of The Militant until our Party rights are restored.—Editor.

and to begin a public campaign against us in the Party press make it necessary to state our position without further delay. It must be made clear to the Party that the measures are being taken against us solely because of our political views. These views must be presented to the Party as they really are.

5. We present them here in outline form and will elaborate on them more fully in our appeal to the Central Executive Committee against the actions taken by the Polcom.

6. Se stand on the main line of the document entitled "The Right Danger in the American Party" (excepting certain erroneous formulations dealing with the world position and role of American imperialism), presented to the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern by the delegation of the Opposition, in the drafting of which we actively participated. As set forth in this document, we believe that the present leadership of the Party, mechanically imposed upon the Party by the E. C. C. I. against the will of the membership, is a consciously developing right wing, whose course and actions are all in the direction of undermining the position of the Party in the class struggle. Its activities since the presentation of our document on "The Right Danger in the American Party" to the World Congress, have confirmed and not refuted this estimate. The irresponsible adventurism, the factional degeneration and bureaucratic corruption of the Lovestone group leadership are an organic part of its fundamental opportunist character.

7. The latest decision of the secretariat of the E. C. C. I. which undertakes to dismiss a whole series of principle questions raised in our indictment of the Party leadership with a formal motion, giving no answer whatsoever to the burning questions of the Party in all fields of the class struggle, serves only to strengthen the mechanical stranglehold of the right wing leadership upon our Party. This bureaucratic secretarial method of dealing with disputed principle questions must be emphatically rejected by the Party both in form and content, since they have nothing in common with Lenin's teaching regarding the ideological leadership of all Communist Parties by the Comintern and the unremitting struggle against opportunism on all fronts.

8. The present attempt of some of the leaders of the Foster-Bittelman group who signed the document on the "Right Danger" to abandon that platform, to moderate the struggle against the Lovestone-Pepper right wing, and to effect a political coalescence with them in order to direct their attack against those who remain true to that platform and develop its logical and inevitable international implications, in no way alters the funda-

mental correctness of the document. It merely demonstrates the political instability of these leaders which hampers the process of developing an opposition to the present right wing leadership and line of the Party on a principle basis. We have no doubt that the supporters of the Opposition who have regarded the struggle against the right wing leadership as a principle question will continue to adhere to this position despite the vacillations and maneuvers of a section of the leaders.

9. The problems of the American Party are organically bound up with the fundamental questions confronting the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Comintern, and cannot be solved separately from them. The left wing of the American Party, taking shape in the principle struggle against the right wing leadership of the Party (Lovestone-Pepper group) will go forward only insofar as it recognizes the necessity of a struggle against the right danger on an international scale and links up its fights in the American Party with the Bolshevik fight for the fundamental tenets of Leninism in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and in the Comintern.

10. The Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union led by L. D. Trotsky has been fighting for the unity of the Comintern and all its sections on the basis of the victory of Leninism. The correctness of the position taken by the Russian Opposition over a period of five years of struggle has been fully confirmed by events.

a) The struggle led by Trotsky since 1923 for Party democracy and against bureaucracy as the

M. Spector Expelled In Canada

Maurice Spector, member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International has just been suspended from the Communist Party of Canada for his refusal to endorse the expulsion of Cannon, Abern and Shachtman from the Communist Party of America and for his statement defending his position and supporting our demand for the publication of the suppressed documents of the Russian Opposition. His statement, a scathing arraignment of the bureaucratic regime, will be printed in the next number of The Militant.

The great seriousness for the entire Communist movement of North America of the action taken against comrade Spector will be realized when it is pointed out that he was unanimously elected to the Executive Committee of the Communist International at the Sixth World Congress on the nomination of the Canadian delegation. He has been the Chairman of the Canadian Party for many years and the editor of the Party organs, the Canadian Worker and the Canadian Labor Monthly. The suspension of comrade Spector, the political leader of the Canadian Party since its formation, is fully in line with that course of desperate bureaucrats on an international scale who are unable to defend themselves in open discussion and whose "leadership" depends on an abrogation of the democratic rights of the party members.

We send our warmest greetings to our fellow-fighters in the Canadian Communist Party and express the confidence that his fight against our expulsion will be met with reciprocal support from the proletarian Communists in the ranks of our party. Our cause is international and the Communist militants of all countries must fight together for it.

As we go to press word comes also of expulsion proceedings beginning against other members of the Communist Party of America and the Y. W. L. who oppose our expulsion. It is being attempted to carry out this campaign of disruption behind a curtain of silence in the official party press. But this game will not succeed. The real facts about the attempt to silence the voice of Communist workers by expulsion, which the party bureaucrats have learned from Sigman and Lewis, will be revealed in the next number of The Militant. The expulsion of the editors of The Militant is dealt with on another page of this issue.