

pressure of another class upon the Party of the proletariat, was absolutely correct then and is even more so now. The adoption of this position by Zinoviev, Kamenev and others in 1926, and the attempt of Stalin to adopt it now, demonstrates the tremendous pressure of class forces which impel the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to this platform. The struggle for Party democracy, against bureaucracy and for a regime of genuine Leninist self-criticism are burning questions now for every Party and for the Comintern as a whole.

b) The necessity for a more relentless struggle against the Kulak and the Nepman—for an orientation exclusively upon the workers and hired hands, united with the village poor and lower peasantry and in alliance with the middle peasantry—proclaimed by the Opposition, becomes clearer every day. The trend of events and the irresistible pressure of class forces is already driving a deep cleavage in the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and is forcing the Stalin Group to struggle against the right wing (Rykov, etc.) with other elements (Bucharin) vacillating between the two. The platform of the Russian Opposition, prepared for the Fifteenth Congress of the C. P. S. U., indicates the revolutionary policy for the present situation in Soviet Union. The prediction and warning contained in this platform against the inevitable growth and aggressiveness of a genuine right wing in the Party (Rykov, Tomsky, etc.), has been precisely confirmed in the intervening period, particularly in recent months. The activities of this right wing, have already necessitated organizational measures in the Moscow and other organizations of the Party—a proof of the awakening of the proletarian masses of the Party to this danger. The "left" course of the Stalin group in the direction of a struggle against the right dangers, for Party democracy and self-criticism, against the bureaucrats, the Nepmen and the Kulaks, can become a real left course only insofar as it abandons zig-zag movements, adopts the whole platform of the Opposition, and reinstates the tested Bolshevik fighters, who have been expelled, to their rightful places in the Party.

c) The attempts to revise the basic Marxist-Leninist doctrine with the spurious theory of "socialism in one country" have been rightly resisted by the Opposition led by Trotsky. A number of revisionist and opportunist errors in various fields of Comintern activity and its ideological life in general have proceeded from this false theory. To this in part at least can be traced the false line in the Chinese revolution, the debacle of the Anglo-Russian Committee, the alarming and unprecedented growth of bureaucracy in the Comintern, an incorrect attitude and policy in the Soviet Union, etc., etc. This new "theory" is bound up with an overemphasis on the power and duration of the temporary stabilization of capitalism. Herein lies the true source of pessimism regarding the development of the proletarian world revolution. One of the principle duties of every Communist in every Party of the Comintern is to fight along with the Opposition for the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin on this basic question.

d) The Opposition was absolutely correct when it demanded the immediate rupture of the Anglo-Russian Committee and the concentration of all the fire of the Comintern and the British Party upon the leaders of the British Trade Union General Council (Purcell, Hicks and Co.) immediately after the betrayal of the general strike. The maintenance of the Anglo-Russian Committee after that event did not serve as a bridge to the British masses but as a partial shield of the traitorous leaders from the fire of the Communists.

e) Rarely before in history has a Marxist-Leninist appraisal and forecast been so completely and swiftly confirmed as in the case of the Opposition theses and proposals (Trotsky, Zinoviev) on the problems and tasks of the Chinese revolution. The line of the E. C. C. I., formulated by Stalin, Bucharin, Martynov, etc., and the rejection of the proposals of the Opposition, which were suppressed and concealed from the Parties of the Comintern, have brought catastrophic results and hampered the genuine development of the Communist Party of China and the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants. In view of

PAMPHLETS COMING

The Editors of The Militant are undertaking the task of publishing all the suppressed documents of the Russian Opposition, a treasure of Leninist literature, in pamphlet form as well as serially in The Militant. Your help is needed in this revolutionary work. Follow the example of a group of Communist workers in New York who are pledging a regular amount weekly.

its world historical importance, a real discussion of the problems of the Chinese revolution, with all the documents being made available, is imperative for all Parties of the Comintern. The prohibition of this discussion must be broken down, the truth must be told and the enormous errors exposed down to their roots. Only in this way can the great lessons of the Chinese revolution be learned by the parties of the Comintern.

11. We demand the publication of all the documents of the Russian Opposition without which the Party members do not and cannot know the essential issues of the struggle and cannot form intelligent opinions in regard to them. The discussion of these issues heretofore has been conducted in an atmosphere of prejudice, misrepresentation, terrorism, outlawing of all thought and inquiry, the substitution of official say-so for the study of documents and facts on disputed questions. All this has been part of a campaign of unparalleled slander against Trotsky who, after Lenin, was the outstanding leader of the Russian revolution and the Comintern, and was accompanied by the falsification of the history of the revolution itself.

12. We intend, at the coming Plenum of the Central Executive Committee, to propose that our Party shall take the initiative in demanding the return from exile and the re-instatement into the Communist Party of the Soviet Union with full rights, of Trotsky and the other imprisoned and exiled members of the Russian Opposition. Violence and persecution against counter-revolutionaries is a revolutionary duty; violence and persecution against tried and loyal Bolsheviks is a crime.

13. The consolidation of the Opposition in the American Party, which logically and inevitably merges with the path of the Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union led by Trotsky, has developed in the struggle against the right danger. The pitiful attempt to characterize this Opposition as a "right" tendency, related to non-Communist elements such as Lore who have been fighting the Party from the right, and anti-Communist elements like Salutsky, who have gone completely over to the side of the labor lieutenants of capitalism, does not in the least correspond with political reality and is designed to cover the progressive drift of the Party leadership to the right. On the contrary, the attempts to exclude us from responsible Party work, and even from the Party itself, along with the proletarian Communists who support us, while at the same time the control of the Party apparatus and the Party leadership in such unions as the needle trades consolidates more firmly in the hands of the opportunists, who fight their Communist-worker critics with expulsion and physical violence—all this can only accelerate the rapprochement between the right wing leadership of the Party and right wing and petty-bourgeois elements now out-side the Party.

14. The Lovestone group leadership, by its opportunist political outlook, its petty-bourgeois origin, its corrupt factionalism, its careerism and adventurism in the class struggle, is the greatest menace to the Party. Its mechanical grip on the apparatus of the Party grows steadily tighter and chokes out its inner life. Capable, experienced and trustworthy comrades are one by one removed from responsible posts and replaced by faction agents, incompetents, upstarts, unknown and inexperienced in any serious work in the class struggle. The Party itself, the mass work and the mass organizations under the influence and direction of the Party, are thereby undermined.

16. By its whole character the Lovestone leadership is the "logical" American banner-bearer of the demagogic and unscrupulous international campaign against the leaders of the Russian Opposition. The aspirations of certain former leaders of the Opposition in the American Party to grasp this banner for themselves are pathetically futile. The hopes of the Foster group to escape thereby the factional persecution of the Lovestone group and to secure their organizational positions can succeed only insofar as they surrender their former opposition standpoint. The whole course of the Lovestone group, which has no roots in the labor movement, is toward a monopoly of the Party apparatus and cannot be otherwise.

17. We declare our intention to appeal to the Plenum of the Central Executive Committee to reverse the action of the Polcom against us, which is motivated by neither principle foundation nor Party interest, and is the result purely of factional considerations and bureaucratic fear of discussion and criticism.

18. The arbitrary decisions made against us cannot in the slightest degree change our position as Communists, since the Party we helped to found and build is our Party. Reserving the right to express our viewpoint and opinion on these disputed questions, we will continue to adhere to the discipline and decisions of the Party as heretofore. Under all circumstances we will continue to live with the Party and work for its future.

19. We demand that simultaneously with the announcement of the decision of the Polcom on the outcome of this hearing, our statement shall be given to the Party in the same manner.

JAMES P. CANNON, (Member of the Political Committee and C.E.C.)

MARTIN ABERN, (Member of the C.E.C.)
MAX SHACHTMAN, (Alternate to the C.E.C.)

Trade Union Questions

The past year has witnessed a sharp turn in the tactics of the party and the left wing in the direction of organizing the unorganized and forming new unions. The sharpening of the class struggle and the crisis in the labor movement created the conditions for this turn and the Party was not ahead of the situation, but lagged behind it. This arose from the natural conservatism of the Party leadership and its inability to understand the processes going on in the working class and in the labor movement. It was the hammering of the Opposition and the pressure of the R.I.L.U. which compelled the formal adoption of the new line—and this only after many favorable opportunities had been lost.

How has this new line been carried out? In the recent months the question of the new trade union policy passed over from the field of debate to the field of practice. The forces of the Party and the left wing have gone through some grueling battles, and in at least three industries—Coal mining, Textile and Needle Trades—definite experience in the formation of new unions has been gained. The Communists and left wing workers again proved themselves to be the leading dynamic force in the labor movement in these struggles.

What are the results and lessons of this experience, the successes and the errors? One will seek in vain to find answers to these questions in the Party press or, for that matter, to find sufficient authentic information recorded there from which deductions could be made.

It is time now to review the experience and draw some necessary conclusions for the trade union work of the next future. Such indeed is the paramount task of the Party. In order to do this it will be necessary to proceed from an understanding of the situation as it actually exists; to know the sober facts which have been hidden behind the blatant press-agency; to lay bare the enormous errors (and worse) of the Party leadership which have been covered up by optimistic official reports.

The document on the "Right Danger in the American Party," in the trade union section (written by Foster) which is printed in this issue of The Militant, speaks warningly of the harmful consequences which ensue when irresponsible dillettantes and opportunist faction-mongers gain control and direction of mass work. This warning, fraught with the gravest consequences for the future of the movement, is written in blazing letters in the experience of the past year, and particularly the past six months, of the Party's trade union work. The longer this lesson remains unlearned the greater the prices to be paid for the knowledge.

In forthcoming issues of the Militant—while we are denied our rights to expression in the Party press—we intend to deal at length with the question of the Party trade union policy and work; and to do so not only from a general standpoint, but also from the standpoint of the concrete experience and the actual facts connected with it—and with specific and particular reference to the Miners', Textile and Needle Trades' Unions.

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Concerning Our Expulsion:

A Letter to a Comrade
by James P. Cannon

Dear Comrade:—

We were very glad to receive your letter and to hear of your reaction against our expulsion and your wish to receive more information and advice as to procedure. Enough of such letters have already been received to make it clear that the attempt to dispose of the principle questions we have raised by the simple mechanical expedient of our expulsion from the Party will meet with resistance from the worker Communists in the ranks.

Your statement that our expulsion took you by surprise and that the comrades there want to know more than they can learn from the official communications is echoed in other letters also, and quite naturally. Another letter which came today from a Communist coal miner says, "At the beginning I was tremendously surprised. The entire matter hit me so hard that I don't know whether I have come back to earth or not." The people who gamble with the proletarian movement regard the expulsion of loyal fighters for the Party as a clever "trick," a quick and easy solution of troublesome questions. The rank and file militants and the serious revolutionaries who have built the movement and stood loyally by it in its hardest days will take another view in exact proportion as they learn the facts and understand the disruptive consequences of this criminal act. Our foremost task is to make these facts known to the Party and we will endeavor to do this at all cost.

The "suddenness" with which the whole issue has burst upon the Party was unavoidable on our part. The Polcom majority declared us expelled from the Party for our views without even waiting for the Plenum of the Central Executive Committee, before the party members had the slightest inkling of the situation and before we had the opportunity to inform them. Their object was to confront the Party members with our expulsion as an accomplished fact and then to terrorize them into an endorsement of it before the slightest information is in their hands. They expelled us, as they have expelled many good Communists before, in order to deprive us of the possibility of speaking to the Party as Party members. Then they tell the Party it has no right to listen to us because we are "not members of the Party." Such shallow trickery can be based only on the most profound contempt for the intelligence of the rank and file of the Party. To allow such methods to succeed would be to give the power of self-perpetuation to any clique which might gain control of the apparatus and to reduce the principle of democratic centralism to a fiction. According to such procedure the fact of expulsion settles the question. But in the absence of any preliminary discussion, the Party can decide the question wisely and responsibly only if it knows why the expulsion took place and what the expelled members have to say. A Party member who does not demand that right, who keeps quiet, or who votes to endorse this act of bureaucratic disruption for fear of expulsion is not acting like an upstanding Communist whose vote means understanding and conviction.

"How does it happen that you became a supporter of the Russian Opposition and insist so categorically on the right to defend it—even up to the point of temporary expulsion from the Party?" This is the question asked by many comrades as well as by you. "The question is five years old, Trotsky is expelled and the questions are settled—why bring it up again?" Well, it is true that the question is old, but it is by no means "settled" and cannot be settled on the present basis. This is the answer. We are late in learning the truth, late with the performance of our international duty, but that is by no means entirely, or even mainly, our fault. It was possible for us to secure adequate information and judge for ourselves only recently.

We do not demand or expect anyone to accept our views on our say-so. All we ask of those who have stood closest to us in the past, and of the broad circles of the Party which are being stirred to a new interest in the question by our stand and our expulsion, is that they study the question honestly and objectively on the basis of the material which we will provide. From honest study of the material will come conviction as was the case with us. We have no doubt, either, that they will defend these convictions as we do, regardless of personal consequences, because the very essence of the matter is the overshadowing importance of

Editors' Note:—The following letter was written to an active party worker in reply to a letter from him in which he raised a number of questions similar to those dealt with in numerous other letters from comrades in various parts of the country who have asked information and advice on the question of our expulsion from the party and the issues connected with it.

the issues involved.

The wisdom of our action in presenting a clear and direct statement of our position was questioned; but it seems quite clear that its correctness has already been established. The Party needed an alarm bell; it needed an awakening from the stupor of factional intrigue over small questions. The Party needs plain speech now above everything. Strategy, of course, is not to be excluded in such a fight, but it must be strictly subordinated to the major task of telling the truth and stimulating the Party members to demand the truth. This is the real duty of leaders now. It is from this standpoint, in our opinion, that you and the other leading comrades must decide your course—from the standpoint of your responsibility as leaders to the Party and to the rank and file comrades who have confidence in you and look to you for guidance.

It is true that the raising of the fundamental questions of Bolshevism which have arisen on an international scale over a period of five years plays havoc with second-rate and tenth-rate questions of controversy and the group which concerns itself exclusively with them. The fate of the "loyal" Opposition to Lovestone and Pepper is indeed a sad one. But the fate of all groups which base themselves on purely local or national issues cannot be otherwise when the larger questions are "brought up." At the Chicago D.E.C. meeting the majority has already demanded "united support" of the C.E.C. in the fight against "Trotskyism." This only confirms what we predicted from the first. The group which wants to fight "Trotskyism" and at the same time wants to fight the Lovestone-Pepper group which has a copyright on that fight and makes its political living that way; the group which does not know from one day to another where the greatest "danger" lies and where to direct its blows, will naturally and very quickly demonstrate its complete bankruptcy. There is no place for it. Its elimination from the scene proceeds inevitably from the whole situation.

We wish to say a few words regarding the attitude of those comrades who seriously and from their own knowledge and conviction count Trotsky's position prior to 1917 against him. Such an attitude is in no way contradictory to ours. We know that Trotsky and Lenin had differences in the pre-revolutionary struggle and we know that Bolshevism took shape and the Comintern was founded on the basis of Lenin's doctrine to which Trotsky came over. Do we not know also that Trotsky from 1917 fought side by side with Lenin and that even when Trotsky differed with him afterward Lenin never allowed a campaign against him, but on the contrary placed the greatest confidence in him and helped to elevate him to the highest positions? To our own knowledge he spoke at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern as the outstanding leader (next to Lenin) and he made the main report. We know that he had less differences with Lenin after 1917 than any one of the other leaders, although they do not tell us that in the official information.

We have not the slightest doubt, from a study of all the material dealing with the period of 1917-1928 that we have been able to secure, that "Trotskyism" as a political tendency in conflict with Leninism was liquidated prior to the October revolution. The disputes of 20 years ago are made the center of the fight against Trotsky in recent years only because his opponents and defamers are not able to stand up against him on the actual merits of the present controversies. What is the great historic significance of the action of Zinoviev and Kamenev in uniting with Trotsky in 1926 but an acknowledgement that the campaign against "Trotskyism" in 1923-4-5 had been a false one? Zinoviev, who above all others "educated" us in this campaign said so in so many words.

The struggle of the past five years has resolved around the living issues of the present period. It is our absolute conviction, based on the most objective study of all material we could secure—and carried on in the face of a previous prejudice—that on all of these basic questions of the period the

questions around which the whole life and future of the International Communist movement revolve—Trotsky has been in the main correct and the true defender of Leninism.

Regarding our expulsion and the expulsion of others which is already being prepared a few words should be said. The great significance and unbounded consequences of such criminal acts by the Political Committee cannot be overestimated and no kind of diplomacy or expediency will be able to subordinate such an issue. It will inevitably rise up and confront the Party at every turn. The expulsion, for their views alone, of loyal Communists, founders of the Party, with honorable records of 15-20 years of activity—in contradistinction to the shady records of many of those who expelled us—cannot be covered up or minimized by any kind of slander. For we are revolutionaries who will fight for our right to belong to the Party and will not let anything tear us away from it. The Polcom "settled" the question by summarily expelling us, but it will arise again immediately after the election campaign when others will demand our reinstatement and are also expelled.

Expulsion is a dangerous fire to play with in a Party which has all too few forces of the kind that are being expelled, forces loyal to the Party and working for its future, who have contributed not a little in building the Party and establishing its prestige among the workers. As the struggle continues and our material is made available to more and more Party members the issue will grow more acute. The wholesale expulsion of proletarian fighters while the petty-bourgeois careerists and adventurers are attracted and drawn to the center—this is the only possible logic of the expulsion course initiated by the Polcom.

We do not believe it is in principle possible for any comrade who disagrees with such a course and understands its unavoidable consequences to give any kind of support to our expulsion. To say that a protest against our expulsion can be made only if one agrees with the position of the Russian Opposition on all points seems to us to be putting the question upside down. It would be more correct to say that the expulsion can be endorsed only if one is convinced that the position is wrong on all important points and that we have become enemies of the Party, which no Communist adult believes.

We surely intend to advise a certain tactical line to some of the rank and file comrades to avoid expulsion without repudiating their principles, but leaders to whom the whole Party is looking are duty-bound to speak clearly and tell the Party just what they think, even if it is not a complete support of one position or the other. What is wrong about voting against expulsion when one does not know the facts and has not had sufficient opportunity to adopt a definite position one way or the other? What kind of an atmosphere is it in the Party, what form of Party democratic rights exist, when members feel compelled to vote one way or the other on the spot without any real knowledge of their own? A Party uprising against this whole system will be one of the most fruitful results of our fight.

It is to be expected that those who deprived us of all rights to defend our views in the normal Party way will now raise a great hue and cry because we take other means of bringing our position to the Party membership. They pervert the great Leninist principle of discipline based on a correct revolutionary policy into an instrument for shutting the mouth of the loyal Party member and protecting their opportunist policies and disloyal acts from any real criticism and exposure. Such bureaucratic machinations have nothing in common with Leninist organization principles. We would be unworthy of the name of revolutionists if we allowed our views to be suppressed by such sophistical methods.

It is only miserable bureaucrats and philistines who can keep silent about their views on principle questions. Revolutionaries advocate them. The issues of the Russian Opposition, and their indissoluble connection with our own specific problems will be discussed by the Party in spite of all. And it is our task to see to it that this is not a one-sided discussion, or rather distortion, of the questions, but a presentation of them to the Party as they really are. The regeneration of the Party and the reconstitution of its leadership on a proletarian Communist basis will proceed from this.

Yours fraternally,

J. P. CANNON.