

The Struggle in the Y. W. L.

THE letter sent to the Young Workers (Communist) League of America after the Fifth Congress of the Young Communist International was not made available to the League ranks until an appreciable period after it was received. The agents of Lovestone who are in control of the League's national executive committee, in whose eyes the Y. C. I. document found disfavor, resorted to the simple expedient of withholding its publication and suppressing its circulation. Despite the protests of the minority, the right wing Polcom of the Party supported its League adherents, and it was not until the minority had appealed to the Executive Committee of the Y. C. I. and the latter had responded, demanding the immediate publication of the letter, that it was finally published.

The minority in the League is as jubilant over this letter and its "victory" as a condemned prisoner who has received three days of grace.

They seem to have forgotten entirely the lessons, as plain as a pikestaff, to be learned from the relations of the Y. C. I. to the struggle in the American League and Party in the past few years. It is necessary therefore to repeat them.

The Y. C. I. must follow, and has followed, the general political line of the C. I. on the American question which has been, unfortunately, "on the whole" for the political support of the Ruthenberg group. Every decision of the Y. C. I., which appeared to be favorable towards the present minority (even at a time when it was the majority of the N. E. C.) invariably ended its brief career by being transformed into support of the Lovestone (Zam) group in the League. This occurred even though the present minority in the League had, at every decisive point, a majority of the membership behind its policies and leadership. Each time this majority was mechanically routed either by a thunderbolt decision of the Y. C. I., by its representatives to the League here, or by factional gerrymandering by the Lovestone Central Committee of the Party. When the latter method was used, the Y. C. I. did not find a word of criticism to make.

We recall, for instance, the scandalous action of the Lovestone C.E.C. in the League convention at Chicago in 1925, where an established majority delegation for the present minority group was squeezed into a minority against the will of the membership and with the acquiescence of the Y. C. I. We recall the post-convention period when the policy of the Y. C. I. representative was the fraudulent "unity" line which consisted in driving the weak and spineless elements of the majority group into the Zam group and thus liquidating the factional fight! (Later on, it is true, a somewhat different song was sung after considerable damage had been caused.) We recall the fourth convention of the League, (New York, 1927). Despite a favorable previous decision of the Y. C. I. to the then majority of the N.E.C., the genuine unity group, both the representatives of the C. I. and the Y. C. I. turned the convention and the present N. E. C. over to the hands of the Zam group, on the basis of the fact that the Comintern had given its political support in the Party to the Lovestone group.

What is the political line followed in the present decision of the Y. C. I. that would lead anyone to believe that a new era has dawned? Absolutely nothing! Objectively analyzed, the political content of the letter of the Y. C. I.—once we discount the little bonbons it gives to the minority—is precisely that of the decision on the American question of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern; i. e., a denial of the main political contention of the minority that the Party leadership is a right wing which must be removed.

"Not one of the groups can claim the title 'real Left' or accuse the other of being 'Right.' So."

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called Right errors were committed by all groups. "One must CONDEMN THE REVIVAL OF GROUP STRUGGLE IN THE AMERICAN YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE. The Y.C.I. as well as the Communist Party of the United States have been guilty of a series of Right opportunist errors but both contending groups are responsible for them."

Not even Lovestone himself—although he may and does make a few grimaces at some of the formulations—could phrase it more satisfactorily. Is he not ready to say in the middle of the night that he has made some right errors also, that factional struggle is evil, that "the League be united on the line of the C.I. and Y.C.I. and that the League or any part of it shall endeavor not to be connected with either factional group in the Party?"

The League Lovestone group is preparing to maintain control of the organization by all means. The process of cutting the minority to pieces is proceeding right merrily. The functionaries of the minority have been either removed or wangled out of position throughout the country, (attempted removal of Mates in Pittsburgh; removal of Frankfeld as D. O. in New York; the squeezing down of the minority in Chicago and the mechanical usurpation of control by Plott and Lurye; the foisting of the two eastern statesmen, Shohan and Schaap, on two western districts; the removal of Don and Rijak from the New York D. E. C. etc., etc., etc.) The minority has further given shame-faced support to the expulsion for their views in support of the Russian Opposition of the two leaders of the Chicago League, Glotzer and Zalisko, of Carl Cowl in Minneapolis, of Morganstern, Lankin and Goodman in Philadelphia, of others in New York and elsewhere. Indeed the entire question of the issues raised by the Russian Opposition led by Trotsky now confronts the League minority with its full force and demands of them a clear-cut position which they have thus far not given. They are showing a vacillation which they never learned in any school of Bolshevism. They flutter about piteously between calling "Trotskyism" a "left danger" or a "right danger". They participate in the self-debasing campaign of heaping attacks upon Trotsky and the Opposition, and pour the official, newly warmed-over pap down the already raw throats of the young membership which tries to digest it between gasps and well-organized and well-timed cheers for the new revelations.

The League minority comrades continue to rely on, and be led by, elements whose most malicious enemies could never accuse of consistency. Their entire record has demonstrated that for them "dialectics" is construed as a license for "changing their minds" every forty-eight hours. For them mediocrity is placed at a premium. The minority must wake up every morning in a cold sweat and reach trembling for the latest paper to see whether or not the night has passed successfully without a new reversal of position by these shifting elements.

Neither the Lovestoneites in the League, nor the bulk of the minority comrades themselves, take the latter's protestations of anti-Trotskyism seriously. They cannot speak with conviction of Trotsky's "errors" on the questions of socialism in one country, the Chinese revolution, the Anglo-Russian Committee, and so forth, for the simple reason that they do not believe them to be errors. Some of them realize already that tomorrow they will themselves be confronted with their record of today's feeble huzzahs for expulsion of the supporters of the Opposition, since they must soon choose between the position of the right wing (Lovestone) and the viewpoint of the Russian Opposition, and the choice of that tomorrow is already on the agenda. They cannot continue with the poppycock of "educating" the Communist youth against the Russian Opposition's Platform which many of them hesitate to study and understand for fear of the consequences which inevitable conviction would bring. They should remember the admonition of Lenin, particularly to the Communist youth (in his speech at the 3rd Congress of the Russian Y. C. I.):

"A Communist who would dream of boasting of his Communism on the basis of the ready-made conclusions taught to him, without performing the most serious, the most difficult and persistent work without understanding the facts of which he should be extremely critical, would be a miserable Communist indeed."

The genuine Oppositionists in the League who have taken a principle stand on the basic questions of the International movement and suffered expulsion for their views are showing the way. Morganstern, Lankin and Goodman in Philadelphia,

Glotzer and Zalisko in Chicago, Cowl and others in Minneapolis, Gerry Allard in the mine fields, the League group in Akron—these are names of honor. They are showing the hesitant "leaders" how to adopt a principle position and stand up and fight for it as befits a Communist. They are setting an example for those who really want to lead. Around them and their example will be crystallized the Bolshevik nucleus of the League which not only in words but in deeds will struggle for the reorganization of its leadership on a proletarian-Communist basis and for the establishment of the League in its rightful place in the vanguard of the historic struggle now developing in the Party.—S.

Lovestone Smashes the Right Danger

The huge imposture which the Lovestone C.E.C. is carrying on in the name of a "fight" against the right danger in the Party is on in full swing. The bewildered observer who cannot understand how this faction can properly conduct a fight against opportunism without exterminating itself has apparently not yet even begun to fathom the resourcefulness and "ability" of our Party leaders. For them even such a superhuman effort is quite possible, and that by the simple method of discovering a right wing danger in quarters other than their own. What could be more convenient?

In the *Daily Worker* of November 23, 1928, John L. Sherman, one of the reporters, wrote a story on the Hoover three billion dollar "stabilization fund" proposal. It was neither brilliant nor correct, that is to say it was neither better nor worse than many stories, articles and editorials that appeared before and since, written by far more responsible spokesmen for the Party and but little improved by the "corrections" which usually follow them the very next day in a special column on the editorial page reserved for this purpose.

It was Sherman's misfortune to concoct his article at a time when a blood-sacrifice was necessary. No sooner had it appeared than the eagle eye of the sentinel on the beleaguered watch tower of the Polcom espied it. Immediately the agit-prop and organizational departments of the Party were mobilized for action. A special meeting of the Polcom was called to consider the menace of Sherman.

Who, it was asked, is John L. Sherman? All we know of him is that he came to the Party a short while ago from City College of New York, that alma mater from which so many of his inquisitors have leaped directly into leadership of the Party without any intermediary stops in the turmoil of the class struggle. But whom does he represent? Who follows him in the Party? Who, outside of a handful of comrades in the *Daily Worker* office, had even ever seen or heard the name of this terrible ogre before he broke into unwilling notoriety?

These doubters and conciliators who asked these questions, these objective supporters of the right wing, were quickly and mercilessly suppressed. All the 12-inch guns of the Lovestone group, Lovestone, Bedacht, Minor, Pepper and Wolfe, were wheeled into action. The breach was loaded, the range found, the muzzles trained, a barrage laid down, and when the smoke of the terrific detonation had cleared, the target was riddled to bits. On the battlefield, twittering and fluttering with pain, lay a tiny sparrow.

The next day, the somewhat stupefied Sherman, blinking his amazed eyes in the white glare of the unaccustomed and pitiless publicity, delivered his unconditional capitulation. He repented his shameless opportunist boldness, denounced himself for being (or having been) a menacing right winger, welcomed the sock in the jaw given him by the Polcom, and in turn delivered a sock at "this danger and Trotskyism which is its crassest form."

Thus ended the first big engagement in the war to make the Party safe for Opportunism. Fiercer battles are feared, however, in the near future.

NOTICE

Comrade Maurice Spector, former editor of the Canadian Worker and the Canadian Labor Monthly, who has been expelled from the Communist Party of Canada for his support of the Russian Opposition, has joined the staff of "The Militant" as Associate Editor and will contribute articles regularly.

Comrades wishing to communicate with comrade Spector should address him at 231 Palmerston Avenue, Toronto, Ont., Canada.

The Right Danger in the American Party

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE

VI. Insufficient Appreciation of Leading Role of Party and Failure to Build It

The political Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. found it necessary to state in its letter of April 13th to our Party that it "deems it necessary to call attention to... the tasks of the Party in the sphere of leadership of the growing workers' mass movement," the Secretariat further stated that our Party "has now as its major task to mobilize and to organize the workers under its banner against the capitalist offensive... it is immediately necessary to intensify the ideological and organizational preparation of the Party, especially the local Party organization, to enable it quickly to mobilize its forces and means and thus to make it ready for a leading role in the developing class struggle."

The insufficient appreciation of the leading role of the Party and the failure to build the Party to which this letter called attention is one of the main characteristics of the Lovestone group. This is shown by the following facts:

1. Overemphasis on labor party. Slowness and delay in deciding upon and announcing our own election campaign. (Lovestone article April "Communist.") Delay in acting on minority motion of February 29th for mobilization of Party for our own election campaign. Allowing SP to enter field first.
2. The Falken, Bearak and Milwaukee cases (support of Socialist Party candidates).
3. The tendency to make our Party into a mere instrument for organizing a Labor Party. (Minnesota), describing our election campaign as an "organic part of the Labor Party campaign." (Lovestone)

4. The tendency to look upon our own election campaign as of less importance than the labor party campaign.
5. The tendency to look upon our Party merely as the left wing in farmer-labor organizations (running party candidates in primary elections without statement that they are Communists). (Minnesota).
6. Resistance to Party leadership in trade union work (needle trades).

7. Absolute denial of Party leading role (Furriers' Union, and Workers' Delegation to the USSR).
8. Failure to carry on genuine Communist education and training—opportunist confusing of mass workers' education and the education of the Party membership and training of Communist cadres (Workers' School).
9. Failure to build Party in campaigns.

10. Failure to create Party apparatus for Women's work and permitting foreign language organizations, consisting of housewives, to take the leading role despite repeated demands of the International Women's Secretariat.
11. Sectarian approach to Party building (Bedacht—separation of Party building work from mass work).

12. Refusal to print Swaback's pamphlet on internal Party organization and Party building.
13. Non-recognition of Party role in Women's work. "The working women will march to power through trade unions, through clubs, housewives' organizations, through cooperative leagues, and through a labor party." (First issue New York Working Women, 1928.)

14. The official organ of the Party, the *Daily Worker*, affords a devastating example of the underestimation of the role of the Communist press as "the collective organizer of the Party and the masses" as described by Lenin. As an organ of a Communist Party, the *Daily Worker* is seriously deficient. There has been a systematic liquidation of Communist political writing in the *Daily Worker* to the point where its Communist character has been weakened. Comrade Minor, the editor, made a motion in the Political Committee on April 19th, 1928, to permit the publication of the establishment of anti-war department in the paper April 1st. Instructed to publish articles against Shipstead, Comrade Minor was obliged to make a motion to turn the work over to the Agit-Prop. On the ground "of the almost total deprivation of the *Daily Worker* of all political writers at the present time..." One of the chief political writers of the *Daily Worker* for the last five months has been Comrade Nearing, whose articles almost without exception, contain gross reformist and petty bourgeois errors. There has been a systematic liquidation of tried Communist journalists on the staff and their replacement by elements whose training has been acquired on the capitalist press. The line has been to try to make Communists out of journalists rather than to train Communists as journalists.

The *Daily Worker* today gives neither a picture of the class struggle in the USA nor any Communist analysis of even the main features of imperialist developments. The *Daily Worker* has been treated frivolously by the Lovestone group both in the editorial and management departments (the appointment of three separate business managers in less than two years—all of them incompetent and all appointed for factional reasons, and rejection of proposal to appoint Comrade Wagenknecht, the most competent comrade for the position.)

Building the prestige of the *Daily Workers* is a major task which now confronts the Party. Its editorial staff must be organized from among the best politically equipped comrades.

15. Failure to utilize the mass campaigns to strengthen the nuclei and build the Party, allowing a gradual and growing disintegration of the nuclei in many centers, New York, etc. to take place, are characteristics of the present leadership.

The following is the third installment of the document submitted by the delegation of the Opposition in the American Party to the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, in July 1928 and signed by James P. Cannon, William Z. Foster, William F. Dunne, Alex Bittelman, J. W. Johnstone, Manuel Gomez and George Siskind.

The statement in the *Daily Worker* of December 11, 1928, that "immediately upon request of the Opposition, the Central Executive Committee instructed the *Daily Worker* to print this document" is false. Even before the delegates returned from the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern, the Lovestone Polcom had defeated motions made by the minority to publish in the Party press the speeches and platform of the minority delegates to the Congress.

The document printed here had to be circulated surreptitiously by the minority, and when it was discovered by the Polcom majority, it together with other documents was officially denounced as anti-Party, and its circulation strictly prohibited. This document was written in July. Only after five months had elapsed, and after its publication had commenced in *The Militant*, did the Lovestone C. E. C. make the "generous" gesture of printing it in the *Daily Worker*. — Ed.

16. Extravagant financial programs which place unduly heavy burdens upon the membership and make it difficult for the lower paid workers to join and remain in the Party and fulfill the demands made upon them.

VII. OPPORTUNIST APPLICATION OF UNITED FRONT POLICY

The C.I. line against the United Front from the top with reactionary trade union, liberal and Socialist Party leaders, and for united front with the workers against them applies with special emphasis in America. The new objective factors making for the discontent of the masses and strengthening their impulse and will to struggle create increasingly favorable conditions for the application of the united front tactics directly with the workers and leading them in the fight against the reactionary leaders and the capitalists. The firm adherence to this basic conception is a prerequisite for the full utilization of the possibilities to broaden and intensify the fight of the workers and build the Party.

The complete degeneration of the Socialist Party and its incorporation into the capitalist—A. F. of L.—police machine puts before the Party as one of its essential tasks the smashing frontal attack against it and its entire leadership all along the line in order to destroy its influence over the workers.

The Lovestone majority has not understood the C.I. policy on the united front and has applied it in an opportunistic manner. This is demonstrated by a whole series of gross errors, many of which remain unacknowledged and uncorrected.

Examples which illustrate the opportunist line in this respect may be cited as follows:

1. False estimation of the Socialist Party and calculation on a "left wing" within it which would work with us for a labor party. This is indicated by the motion of Lovestone to send a number of comrades into the Socialist Party "for the purpose of working for our labor party policy in the Socialist Party", and the rejection of the motion by the minority declaring such tactics to be false and calling for a policy of frontal attack against the Socialist Party all along the line. (Polcom Minutes, December 14, 1927).

The same policy was executed in the support in the elections of the Socialist Judge Panken, an agent of the black gang in the needle trades who was likewise supported by the Republican Party and the New York World and New York Times. The majority stubbornly defended this decision in spite of the most energetic protest of the minority; the support of the Socialist Bearak in Boston; and the proposal to support Berger, the National Chairman of the Socialist Party in Milwaukee; (criticized in the letter of the E.C.C.I.).

The policy in the Panken case was not an incidental error; it proceeded from a false conception of the Lovestone group. It was proposed as a national policy in a program submitted to the Polcom by Comrade Lovestone, which contained the provision that our Party should run candidates on its own ticket only in those cases where it can be done "without endangering the election of candidates running locally on the tickets of other working class parties." (Point 22 of Lovestone's proposals on the Labor Party Campaign, Polcom Minutes, Oct. 7, 1927.)

2. The Open Letter to the Socialist Party, an error of the Polcom as a whole, which was pointed out in the letter of the E.C.C.I.
3. The united front made by the Party leaders

of the Furrier's Union, members of the Lovestone group in the Party, with the so-called middle group in the Union, under conditions which surrender the leadership to the latter and on the basis of a written agreement containing the unheard-of provision that "there shall be no Party or clique control of the Union".

4. Building united front in Anti-Imperialist work too much on top and with liberals and not from below among the workers. Concealing the role and face of the Party in Anti-Imperialist work. Removal of Comrade Gomez as Secretary of the Anti-Imperialist League in order to secure a "non-Communist or someone not known as a Communist". (Polcom Minutes, December 21, 1927—reconsidered at a subsequent meeting under pressure of minority). Failure to do serious anti-imperialist work as shown by refusal to send workers into the American forces in China and Nicaragua on the ground that it was necessary to proceed slowly and concentrate on work at home.

5. Failure to publicly criticize Brophy and other progressives in the Mine Workers' Union united front despite numerous record motions to that effect passed under pressure of the minority.

6. Wrong form of united front with so-called "Tolerance Group" and Shelly group in the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union; failure to criticize them, failure in the united front with them to build our own strength and forces in the I. L. G. W. U.

7. United front with Brennan in the Miners' Union under conditions which rehabilitated the prestige of this faker and brought discredit on the Party and weakened its forces in the Anthracite.

8. Liberal, legislative, constitutional and vulgarly "American" line in the "Council for the Protection of the Foreign Born".

9. Opposition to leading role of Negro proletariat in united front Negro race movement by Comrade Moore, Party leader of Negro work, corrected by Polcom on the initiative of the minority.

10. Persistence in organizing workers and farmers in one Party (Farmer-Labor Party) contrary to C. I. decision.

11. Wrong orientation in Women's work, basing it on housewives instead of devoting main attention to women in industry despite repeated letters from the International Women's Secretariat on this point. Failure to draw women industrial workers into leading activities; the entire leading committee for women's work in New York is composed of school teachers, with the exception of Comrade Worts, a leading right winger in the needle trades.

CONTINUED IN NEXT ISSUE

It Can and Will Be Done

Our opponents circulate two contradictory stories about us. They say one day that we are financed by the wealthy enemies of the Party and the working class. The next day they say we will never be able to publish another issue of *THE MILITANT*. Both these stories are like all their stories.

Complacent officials who stand aloof from the revolutionary workers and know nothing of their spirit and capacity for sacrifice cannot believe that a small group of them could dare to take such a burden as the publication of a paper on their shoulders. But we have been identified with many such proletarian enterprises in the past and know that we are only doing over again what has often been done before by convinced revolutionaries.

The generous contributions of a small group of Communist workers who have stood with us from the first, plus loans made on personal responsibility, plus voluntary work, has made possible the first two issues of *THE MILITANT*. The same resources, plus the help of a wider circle of supporters, will make possible the continued publication of *THE MILITANT* and its development into a weekly, the publication of the pamphlets and other necessary expenses of our principle struggle.

We say this because we are convinced that the Communist workers will increasingly support us as the issues are made clear to them. The comparative few who are beginning this historic struggle are unavoidably required to make heavy sacrifices in this respect and are doing so. It is now absolutely necessary to organize the financial support on a wider basis. Your help is also needed in this revolutionary work. The most dependable financial foundation for our great enterprise is the regular weekly or monthly contributions of sympathetic workers to the sustaining fund. The organization of this fund has already taken place. If you agree with the object it is your duty to help.

Join the Pledge Fund and send your contribution to *THE MILITANT*, Box 120, Madison Square Station, New York City.