

the international faction which is undermining the Comintern and weakening the position of the Soviet Union. This faction of Lovestone-Pepper is a combination of the old ultra-Left and "Goose caucus" elements of the underground Party (who fought the formation of the legal Party) and the Centrist leaders of the "Workers Council" group (who fought the underground Communist Party). The Lovestone-Pepper group of intellectuals balanced between them, "reconciled" their differences and shifted the leadership of the combination to the petty-bourgeois, intellectual and careerist elements. This faction was patched together for the purpose of securing and holding "power" in the Party at all costs and under all circumstances. It has no roots or traditions in the working class and no firm or definite line of policy. Its course is an opportunist-adventurist shifting from day to day according to factional and inner-Party exigency to which its external policies are always subordinated. In the struggle against the Opposition Communists the Party leadership has already resorted to methods of a pronounced fascist character (gansterism, burglary).

The personal records of the leaders of this faction are so malodorous as to render them absolutely ineligible for leading positions in a Communist Party which must gain and hold the confidence of the workers to such a large extent through its leaders. Pepper, the Moscow representative of the faction, was a social patriot during the war, a war correspondent of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Prior to the Hungarian Soviet Republic he was a Minister in the bourgeois government who arrested Communists, denounced them as "Left counter-revolutionaries" and advocated mass terror against them. Lovestone, while a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Party in 1920, testified for the State of New York in the trial of Harry Winitzky, securing thereby the dismissal of two indictments against himself while comrade Winitzky went to prison. Wolfe ran away from the Party during the Palmer raids in 1919 and disappeared for two years. After the Bridgman raid in 1922 he again deserted the Party and went to Mexico against Party instructions, returning in 1925. Wicks made a renegade speech before a body of business men in Gary, Indiana, in the winter of 1920, during the height of the terror against the Communists, as a "reformed red" and "exposer" of the Communist movement and the steel strike. Olgin fought the Russian Revolution and the Communists in the columns of the yellow Jewish Daily Forward. Minor attacked Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution in the capitalist press. Trachtenberg, Engdahl and Kruse fought on the side of Berger and Hillquit against the Communists during the split of 1919 and for two years afterward. At the Socialist Party convention in 1921 Kruse protested against and branded as a "lie" the accusation that he wanted to join the Communist International without reservations. Kruse expelled Communists from the Socialist Party and the Young People's Socialist League—and is expelling some of the same comrades from the Party in the Chicago District today.

Almost the entire editorial staff of the Freiheit was trained in the school of the Forward and the reactionary Zionist press and conducted there the same kind of a campaign against the Communist Party which they now conduct against the Opposition. An examination of the records of many of the lower and district functionaries of the present regime will reveal similar facts. The Lovestone-Pepper faction leaders are a distinct type of adventurers in the movement. These are the people who expel and calumniate us.

The Foster-Bittelman group represents a section of the forces organized in the beginning of the struggle in 1923 which signalized the crystallization of the proletarian tendency. It is now dividing itself into two parts—the Foster wing and the Bittelman wing—and this process will go deeper as a result of the contradictions in its position. Its attempt to struggle against the ruling faction on purely "national questions" while supporting the regime in the International which this faction represents, renders its whole position untenable.

Lack of principle, characterlessness, intellectual and political cowardice on the part of the Foster-Bittelman group of "leaders," so clearly and so disgustingly revealed in the whole pre-convention and "anti-Trotsky" campaign, are the manifestations and the result of their contradictory and impossible position.

The support these leaders have received in the pre-convention struggle represents in the main the effort of the proletarian tendency within the Party

to find a "legal" expression for its opposition to the Lovestone-Pepper regime. These proletarian elements who have not yet developed the full implications of the struggle and do not yet understand its international character have mobilized around the Foster-Bittelman faction. The leaders of this faction exploit these proletarian tendencies for picayune factional aims and the struggle for organizational positions. They thus play the part of a shield for the opportunist-adventurers who control the Party. Their role is to restrain and confuse the proletarian tendency; to muddle up the issues and hold back the struggle into channels prescribed by the international Stalin regime; to prevent an understanding of the great world questions which are bound up with the conflict between the proletarian and the petty bourgeois tendencies in our Party.

This faction of inner-Party opportunists, lacking firm principle, has a deep internal conflict between the impulse for struggle against the Party regime, which comes from below, and the mood for capitulation in the top circles, and is constantly staggering back and forth between them. Their frequent and contradictory "statements" and "declarations" reflect this antagonism from which the faction cannot escape and which it cannot reconcile. Their difficulties grow from day to day and a collapse of the faction, foreshadowed by the Foster-Bittelman split, is by no means improbable at the Party Convention.

An attempt to continue the faction struggle after the convention will bring new blows from the Communist International and organizational persecution. The leading circles of the faction, strongly bureaucratized, stand in deadly fear of this and they are preparing to capitulate and withdraw their thesis that the Lovestone-Pepper leadership constitutes the Right Wing and the main danger to the Party. On the other hand the proletarian supporters of the faction demand a continuation of the struggle and will revolt against a capitulation, and move closer to the Opposition which fights on a principle line.

The "politics" of the faction leaders consists of the search for an expedient formula to reconcile this conflict. But the whole situation excludes and prohibits such a reconciliation. In any case, further splits and disintegration of the faction which has based itself on temporary expediency are inevitable.

The Opposition is a nucleus of Communists who have participated in the founding of the Party and who have played a decisive and progressive part in all the work and struggles of the Party since its inception. Most of them were active in the revolutionary movement for years before the Party was organized. They constitute a group of comrades who have worked together on a common line for a longer time than any group that ever existed in the Party.

The present Opposition was in the forefront of the Party struggles against underground sectarianism. It formulated and fought in the front ranks for the correct trade union policy, for the legal Party and for the Labor Party. Four of the expelled Communists—Cannon, Swaback, Aberg and Edwards—were delegates to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International and lead the successful fight there on these questions after a protracted struggle in the Party. They were the first to take up the fight against the Federated Farmer-Labor Party and the adventurist politics connected with it in 1923. They were the organizers of the revolt against the Pepper regime and the movement which began then to form the proletarian tendency into a group. The present Opposition lead the fight in 1925 against the narrow base of our trade union work and thereby helped the Party to again break its isolation and get the miners' mass movement under way. The Opposition as at present constituted has worked together as a unit for a consistent line of policy which has been in the main correct and works today along the same line.

The decisive role of the present Opposition in the historic struggle against underground sectarianism and trade union "Leftism" is in no way contradictory to our present stand. We see no more virtue in "Left" radicalism now than we saw then and we offer no ultra-Left panaceas to the Party. Our main fight now is on another front because the circumstances have placed the danger of Centrist and Opportunist in the foreground (although sectarianism, particularly on the trade union and Labor Party questions, is by no means liquidated.)

The present struggle in our Party and in the entire International is before all a struggle against

opportunism and bureaucratic corruption which are undermining them. The struggle against these deadly perils takes precedence over all others. The struggle facing the Communist vanguard in all Parties today is the struggle to preserve the Communist movement. This is the historic mission of the Opposition on an international scale. The task of the Opposition is to fight with all its power against the opportunist and bureaucratic degeneration of the Party, without slipping onto the side-track of sectarian isolation. This requires first of all firmness of principle and a realistic line of tactics based on fundamental principles.

This, the actual line of the Opposition, is perfectly clear to the Social Democrats as well as to those elements within the Party who stand farthest to the right. The whole Centrist group of the Workers' Council which joined the Party as late as 1922, the opportunist trade union leaders in the needle trades, the entire bureaucracy of the Finnish section—all these have unanimously and enthusiastically denounced the Opposition. Those elements of the Finnish section in New York and Massachusetts who have come into conflict with the Party regime, on questions of the Finnish movement, have likewise rejected the platform of the Opposition. All these facts are known.

The attempt of the Party leadership in its statement in the Daily Worker of Feb. 15, to make the Opposition responsible for alleged combinations with reactionary and anti-Party elements against the Party ("The American Trotskyists, the renegade Cannon group, have now formed openly an alliance in the Finnish co-operatives with the fascists, with the white guardist followers of Mannerheim, the bloodhound of the Finnish proletariat, with the fakery of the salvation army and with the social democrats gathered around the Raavaij against the Workers (Communist) Party of America") is a deliberate slander worthy only of the school which invented the infamous tale about the "Wrangle officer" and the Russian Opposition.

All tendencies to break away from the Party to the right, to moderate the struggle against the Socialist Party or to form an indiscriminate combination of opportunist and anti-Party elements against the Party have nothing in common with our views or aims. Our line is a principle line. We fight as a detachment of the International Leninist Opposition for the regeneration of the Communist movement in the struggle against opportunism from without as well as from within the Party. While excluded from the Party we carry on our revolutionary work in the class struggle on the basis of our platform.

The Stalin-Bucharin regime converts the faction struggle into a game of be-fuddling the Party membership and pulling wires in Moscow. The Opposition in the American Party, uniting with the line of the Russian Opposition, breaks through this disgraceful and corrupting game. It brings clarity into the Party struggle and gives the proletarian tendency a firm guiding line. It elevates the struggle to an international principle basis, gives it a revolutionary content and begins the education of the Party in struggle for Leninist fundamentals on the great world questions of the period.

Our fight as a part of the International Opposition for the Leninist line on a world scale is at the same time a fight to preserve the Communist movement in America and to build it into a working class power able to fulfill its great historic mission.

The present Opposition fought for the Russian Revolution since 1917 and for the Communist International since the first day its banner was raised. Our fight today is a continuation on the same line and for the same basic principles.

We raise before the Party convention the question of restoring the Party membership of the expelled comrades of the Opposition on the basis of the foregoing statement of aims and views. We also propose to the Convention that it take a stand for the re-establishment of the Unity of the Communist International by calling for the re-instatement of the Russian and International Opposition, and for the immediate cessation of those measures which especially undermine the Party and the Proletarian Dictatorship and strengthen the enemies of the working class—the arrests, exile and banishment of the Russian Opposition.

NOTE

The sections of our Platform dealing with the Party Organization, the Agrarian Questions and the Young Worker's League, which are not included here on account of lack of space, will appear in the next issue of The Militant.

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