

The Party is 'United' Again!

Latest 'Open Address' of the E. C. C. I.

The latest decision of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, which characterizes the leadership which it had imposed on the Party as representative of "petty bourgeois politicaldom" who practice "rotten diplomacy" and "unprincipled manoeuvring," and who are infected with "Opportunism" and "right deviations," is only a belated acknowledgement of truths established long ago. The proclamation of these well known facts, which anyone could have learned from reading *The Militant*, or from the most casual study of the party in recent years, has no more importance in itself than a new discovery of America by a Twentieth Century Columbus. The significance of the decision of the Centrist apparatus of the Comintern lies rather in the reasons which motivated it. It is there that the American Communists must look for an understanding of its meaning. Otherwise they will not yet see the way out of the morass of factional deception and unprincipled manoeuvring of which the miserable Lovestones and Peppers were only the American agents.

The Lovestone-Pepper leadership of the Party was an artificial and unnatural one and it never could have controlled the Party by its own means. The Stalin regime in the Comintern was directly and fully responsible for this factional excess which paralyzed the Party and dishonored it before the working class. Its whole career has been that of petty bourgeois adventurism and its character has been thoroughly and completely exposed time and time again before the Executive Committee of the Communist International. But each new exposure, accompanied by indisputable proof of the incalculable harm it was bringing upon the Party, was only the signal for reinforced support for these shoddy fakery from the Stalinist apparatus which saw in them its American replica. Why, then, do these two-by-four charlatans all of a sudden get the boot? Does it mean a new course and a new regime in the Party. Only the most credulous political infants can cherish this illusion. The decision itself is a factional manoeuvre to deceive the awakening proletarian wing of the Party and find a temporary way out of difficulties by those mechanical methods which characterize the present leadership of the International.

The Motive of the Decision

Its ostensible removal of the leadership of "petty bourgeois politicaldom" was motivated by internal factional considerations. It was the exigencies of the struggle against "Trotskyism" in the first place which made necessary a new front and a make-believe change in America. The rise of the American section of the International Opposition brought the fight against the petty bourgeois leadership of the Party out of the "factional underworld" where it had been smothered for years into the open before the whole party and the sympathizing workers, and exposed its inter-relation with the ruling faction in the Russian Party and the Communist International. The Lovestone-Pepper regime, the product of intrigue and manipulation and mechanical intervention from above, could not stand up in such a fight. These characterless adventurers could survive only in the "inside game" of degenerated factionalism. In the open struggle involving principle questions they were merely targets which drew the concentrated fire of the Opposition to the International regime which they represented and symbolized.

The proletarian revolt against them grew steadily in this open struggle and took two forms: first, the open adhesion to the Opposition on the part of the most advanced and conscious elements; second, the consolidation of a "legal" Opposition within the Party destined, by the logic of the struggle, to move toward us. The decision of the Stalin Executive was designed to counteract these processes by setting up a new "front," discarding the most dis-

credited and vulnerable persons and putting figureheads in their places. This is the role assigned to Foster; that of bond salesman—so to speak—of the old regime under a new name.

The second consideration for the pious disavowal of Lovestone and Pepper was the developing factional struggle in the Russian Party between the Stalin Centrists and the Bucharin-Rykov Right Wing. The ruling faction of the Russian Party and the C.I., since the death of Lenin has been a bloc between the Right and Center against the Left. The nature of this bloc was explained long ago in the Platform of the Russian Opposition and its collapse was foretold. The break-up of the Right-Center bloc is proceeding now with break-neck speed, as everybody but the Party member who relies on the Party press for information knows. Lovestone and Pepper were caught in this quicksand. Their closest relations had been with Bucharin and, being much closer in their ideology to progressive liberalism than to Leninism, their instincts were to support the Right tendency. Thus they shared the opportunist view of the world situation and the prospects of the American movement officially expounded by Bucharin at the Sixth Congress. This is not to say that Lovestone and Pepper were bound by any scruples of "loyalty" to principles or persons. The object of these political hi-jackers above all was to keep Party power on any basis—right, left or center, or what have you?

Their "mistake" consisted in their failure to guess quickly enough the way the wind was blowing in the Russian Party and they did not "repudiate" Bucharin in time. For this they got the axe and the American proletariat was notified by cablegram of a change in its leadership. Their sad fate is a warning to all who aspire to leading positions under the Stalin regime to guess quickly and guess right.

The New Leadership

Does the decision mean that the Party is now to be handed over to the Foster-Bittelman faction? Nothing of the sort. The banishment of Bittelman (Alas! Poor Aleck!) should be sufficient to dispel this idea. The object is to graft Foster and similars onto the present ruling faction, getting rid of a few of the most discredited leaders who had become "excess baggage" and squeezing out those with any strength to maintain a position of their own. The "new leadership" thus created will be without a trace of independence or ability to stand on its own feet. The collapse of this synthetic leadership is inevitable.

Leadership cannot be made to order. This is written in the ghastly experience of our own party and that of others since Stalinist machinations took the place of Leninist guidance and direction in the International. Leaders who get their authority by appointment have none. Cablegram leadership is not worth the price of the cablegram. All these artificial combinations, patched together arbitrarily and imposed from above only serve to discredit the party before the workers and undermine faith in Communist leadership in general.

Servility and hypocrisy are the by-products of bureaucratism. These odious traits, alien to a proletarian movement, are glaringly revealed in the flood of "endorsements" of the C. I. decision by the very functionaries who are denounced by it. Those who were closest to Lovestone and Pepper and bound up with them in all their practices casually plead guilty to crimes which merit expulsion from the workers movement and then try to pass off this cynicism as a virtue of "self criticism." The Communist worker who puts confidence in them is doomed to more disappointments. Proletarian leadership must have moral as well as political prerequisites.

Another Factional War

While many of the former lackeys of Lovestone and Pepper are quite "sincere" in renoun-

cing them now in order to save their own skins, it is quite obvious that the unanimous "endorsements" of the decision are a cover for a diplomatic factional game on the part of others. Juliet Poyntz, who always discovers the shortcomings of her leaders the minute they lose their power, explains this in a special letter to the *Daily Worker*. And John Otis, in an "Open Letter" to the Party members and to "the members of the National Miners' Union" explains that Pat Toohey, the National Secretary of the Union, is still working in behalf of Lovestone. The organization of a factional struggle against the C. I. decision and the new leadership it creates is proceeding with full speed. The latest "liquidation" of factionalism and "unification" of the Party, like the others, will only result in a fiercer factional war.

Deprived of further support of the Stalin machine and thus freed from the necessity of adapting themselves to its "left" manoeuvres, Lovestone and Co. will undoubtedly develop their struggle on a Right Platform and endeavor to connect themselves with the Right Wing on an International scale. They will quickly take issue with the insane "left" program of the Party on the trade union question and will wage war on the "new line" on all fronts. The question whether this fight will break out into the open in the immediate future or remain concealed for a period of preparation depends merely on tactical considerations. The struggle is already beginning and indications are that it will break into the open in the near future. It will result in a new split in the Party.

The Duty of the Opposition

This struggle will bring the great principle questions, which are rending the International, deeper into the Party ranks and will help to clarify the issues between the Right Wing, Stalin Centrism and the Leninist Opposition. The Party will be shaken to its foundation again. The Party members, wearied of factionalism and seeking to solve everything by shutting their eyes and raising their hands, will confront factionalism more rampant than before. Many of them will begin to think seriously over the situation and to search for a principle explanation of the factional fever that racks the party.

The extent to which the situation is clarified and a new proletarian nucleus in the party is educated and consolidated on principle lines depends to a very large extent upon the activity of the Opposition which has been excluded from the Party. The "Enlightenment Campaign" announced by the Party apparatus, which preaches salvation by simple mechanical measures backed by administrative power and subsidy, must be countered by a real campaign of education on Leninist fundamentals, explaining the inter-relation of the problems of the American Party, the crisis in its leadership and its degenerated factionalism with great world issues at stake in the struggle between the International Opposition, the Centrists and the Right Wing which is already leaving the proletarian path.

The Opposition, having stood up and developed under the first seven months of its open struggle, having consolidated its forces at the National Conference and having established closer bonds with the world movement of the Bolshevik vanguard has been given a great opportunity for further development and expansion by the new exhibition of Centrist bankruptcy. Intransigent struggle for Leninist principle is our watchword. We are confident that every Oppositionist will do his duty.

THE CAPITULATORS

A letter written from Constantinople to a Russian Oppositionist comrade, dealing with the news of the capitulation of Preobrazhensky, Radek and others, written by comrade

TROTSKY

Will Appear in the Next Issue