

GOOD-BY PEPPER! Letters from the Argentine and from England

The Passing of an Adventurer

After considerable negotiations, delay and hesitation, the International Control Commission has decided to expel from the Communist Party John Pepper. The manner in which he was expelled and the accusations made against him are characteristic of his whole career in the revolutionary movement and of those who made him the "great" figure that he was in the American Party and in the Communist International.

Months ago, we told the story of how he excused himself for not coming back to Moscow upon decision of the Executive of the International by concocting a Munchhausen story of his attempted dash to the Kremlin via Mexico which was allegedly foiled by Hoover and Calles. Now our report is officially confirmed by the charges of the Control Commission. We are further enlightened by the charge that Pepper was supposed to have gone to Corea for the Comintern, never went, and presented a bill for expenses never incurred. It may puzzle the novice to think why Pepper should be confronted with his Corean escapade at this late date; for it is more than a year ago that he was sent there, and of all things, to straighten out a factional squabble. But all the charges dissolve in the face of his major unforgivable sin: his support of Bucharin. Had he come out for Stalin, all would be forgotten and concealed—of that there can be no doubt. Pepper's record for the last 15 years has been worse than it is today, but he was not only tolerated by Stalin and Bucharin and Zinoviev—each in his own day—but raised to the highest commanding positions. So that he shall not be lightly forgotten, we recapitulate some parts of the astounding career of Pepper:

Before the war, a pillar of the Hungarian yellow social democracy. During the war, a jingo of the blackest dye who served as paid war correspondent of Emperor Franz Joseph and toasted the imperial generals in their camp. After the war, war minister of the Karolyi government, during which time he imprisoned Bela Kun, threatened to mow down the Communists with machine guns, and denounced them as "Left counter-revolutionaries". On the eve of the Soviet revolution, he turned Bolshevik and became a Soviet commissar. A denouncer of Communists to the Viennese police during his exile there, and a manufacturer of fantastic anti-revolutionary theories. Then his re-appearance in Germany with Bela Kun as the light-minded organizer of the ill-fated "March action" of 1921.

Under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, he was virtually banished by the International to the United States to become a writer on the Hungarian Party paper, Uj Elore. On his arrival here he posed as the representative of the E.C.C.I. and for years took in the Party. Overnight he became the leader of the American Party, injecting an evilly poisonous stream into its blood, spinning theories out of his imagination which led the Party from adventure to debacle. He played with imaginary masses, toyed with millions on paper, organized and dispersed movements with a Napoleonic sweep of the hand. With the victory of the Foster-Cannon group in the Party at the 1923 Convention, he was virtually run out of this country too.

Back in Moscow, he became the loudest barker for the obscene show against Trotsky. No Plenum, no Congress, no meeting of any kind took place, but that Pepper disgraced it with his venomous denunciations of Trotsky and the Opposition as "counter-revolutionaries". None excelled him in villification. A Zinovievist of the wildest type, he fell into momentary bad grace with Stalin for failing to jump on the bandwagon soon enough. But he paid his way back into the apparatus by howling louder than the rest of the pack for Trotsky's blood. His last prominent act in the United States was when he acted as Party spokesman in a shameful speech made when we were expelled. His latter day activities are too recent and well known to require elaboration.

Now he has joined again in Lovestone's camp, and this is quite as it should be. But he will yet be heard of. He is made of vile stuff and he will end in a more remunerative and larger camp, where his peculiar "talents" can be utilized to the utmost. No one can regret his expulsion. Belated though it was, it is welcome. Regret lies only in the thought of how the international Communist movement had to bear Pepper for so many years as a leader, and of the many Peppers still in its ranks.

Adventurer of three continents, demagogue of the meanest type, careerist and charlatan, man without character or principle, self-seeker and alien element in the body of the working class, Pepper brought only chaos, corruption and poison into our movement. It would be strong by his expulsion were it not for the other Peppers of varying stripe, who rise automatically to fill his vacancy. We who fought Pepper from the day we came in contact with him bid him farewell. The revolutionary workers will meet with him again, but only on opposing sides of the battle.

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(Hungarian Opposition)

Martin Abern,

Dear Comrade:

Yours of the 27th. to hand and I thank you for much for the "Militant". A few days ago there arrived from New York a comrade who gave us a report about things in the States, but it wasn't up to much.

I should like to let you know about the state of affairs here, yet I am not sure how much you do know and how much you don't know. Anyhow, here goes.

Our trouble started about 2 years ago. Seven members of our E. C. began to work against the other five members; these seven had the support of the delegate of the Comintern and nothing would have mattered much had their fight been in a clean, manly way, as should be a fight between comrades, between Communists. Curiously enough, these seven were all of them of the "intelligentsia", of the middle class, and the other five were men from the working class.

No doubt about it, the majority of the E.C. did some dirty work. They suppressed some telegrams from the Comintern, destroyed some letters, sent lying telegrams to the Comintern, assaulted houses and libraries of the members of the Opposition, wrote a letter to the Chief of Police asking aid of the Police in order to take possession of the houses and libraries of the members who weren't approving their proceedings, arrested, of course with the help of the police, some of our comrades—among them Penelon, our best man, and in the opinion of many, the best man in South America.

Things went so far that we had to separate and form another Party, 18 months ago. Then came a delegation from the Comintern with a resolution of the C. I. which was so plainly in favor of our enemies that we wouldn't have anything to do with it. Then this delegation went away and now there is another here, but there is no sign of settlement.

Our terms are plain and simple. The Comintern must in some way punish 3 or 4 members of the old E.C. men who have shown themselves to be scoundrels or fools or agents of the bourgeoisie. If the Comintern is mad enough—or in other words, if Stalin is pig-headed enough—to sacrifice the whole Communist movement of South America in order to save 3 or 4 men who are not worth saving, then we can't help it. As we are, so we'll continue to be. In the meantime there is another Bolshevik Party against the official Party in Montevideo, Uruguay, and another division in the Communist Party in the Republic of Paraguay. Here there is a fight between the two parties on all sides—in the press, in the unions, in the Sports Federation, etc., etc. It is a pity—but what's to be done?

As regards the Russian Opposition it is only quite lately that the members of our Party have been able to learn some truth about it. We used to see something about it in the capitalist press and in the Russian "Pravda" and, of course, couldn't make head or tail of it. Lately, we've been reading "The Real Situation in Russia" and "Where is Russia Going" etc., (in Spanish), and it seems that the best men in the Party believe Trotsky to be right. Our E.C. has decided that in this question every member may think as he pleases, but it's best not to make public propaganda of it just now. It is understood, more or less, that in our present situation, waiting as we are to see which way the cat

Buenos Aires, Argentine.

will jump, it is better for us to say as little as possible, not to compromise ourselves too far, not to get Stalin's back up too much by proclaiming ourselves to be on the side of the Russian Opposition.

What will happen in the future—of course, we don't know. We are still waiting for the final word of the Comintern. It is rather a long time coming—but let it come whichever way it likes, I am sure we won't budge. We are ready to unite with the rank and file of the official Party; we had no disagreement with them, but with the 3 or 4 men of the E. C. who called in the police to arrest our comrades, we refuse to work with them again.

Speaking for myself, I don't care much if I never join an official Party of the Comintern—Comintern as it is just now. I believe in an International of Lenin, but don't care much for an International of Stalin. I respected the Communist International, but just now it seems to be more like a Jesuit International. So there you are.

Along with this I am sending our first proclamation and the first number of our journal "Adalante". You may be interested in it.

You may make whatever use you like of this letter. I am 62 years of age, born in England, brought up in St. Petersburg at the time of Alexander II, having known men like Kropotkin, William Morris, Tom Mann, Stepniak, Chernischevsky and others; a Socialist all my lifetime, 7 years now in the Communist Party. If you feel that way inclined, please write and let me know if there is anything I can do to help along the good cause. As said Danton, "The cause alone is great and shall not perish, but live forever!"

Wishing you the best of luck, I remain,

R. GUINNEY.

Helston, Cornwall, England.

Dear Comrade:

Enclosed find the right sum for what I owe for Militants . . . I find that propaganda in England is very expensive work. Some of the most intelligent workers, and of the unemployed, could not pay the price of a book or a newspaper if their lives depended on it. Everything has to be done at one's own expense.

The effect of the Militant in the Tyneside area has been excellent. In North Shields, which is the headquarters of my reading circle, the official Communist Party is broken up (though in the last letter I received there was not of a rumor that it was starting again). If this is true the members only number two or three, I think. The Militant readers are steadily on the side of the Opposition. With comradely greetings,

M. S.

(NOTE:—Confirmation of Comrade M. S.'s letter on the Party situation on the Tyneside, comes from the official organ of the British C. P., "Workers Life" of August 1, 1929: "A specially summoned joint meeting of the Tyneside District Party and the D. L. C. met on July 12 to consider a written statement on Party policy and leadership. The statement points to the serious decline in Party forces . . ." Tyneside is only a replica of the rest of the Party under the leadership of the British jumping-jacks of Stalin.—Editor.)

COMMUNIST LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

The fall period witnesses an impetus to the activities of the branches of the Communist League of America (Opposition) throughout the country. In summary, the branches are working to maintain and build a WEEKLY MILITANT, organizing study classes, getting new members, participating in the campaign to free the Gastonia frame-up victims, holding street meetings, working in the labor unions and generally developing a broader activity inside and outside the Communist League.

TORONTO, CANADA. The Toronto branch is getting on the job in earnest for the Militant; Comrade Maurice Quarter, Secretary, reports the branch is arranging an affair for its benefit. An educational program for the fall and winter period is being mapped out.

NEW HAVEN, CONN. Comrade S. Gendelman, Secretary, writes that after a quiet summer for the League in which the Party has been even more quiet, if not extinct, good working branch is being organized. Funds are being raised for The Militant.

PHILADELPHIA, PA. This branch although not very large at present, is alert in spreading the Militant, and is raising a special fund to ensure a Weekly Militant. Comrades Leon Goodman, Bernad Morgan, K. Whitten are the live wires here.

SPRINGFIELD, ILL. Joe Angelo writes that more can be expected from now on in Springfield and vicinity for the Opposition movement, and reports on prospective members.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. Subscriptions continue to come in for The Militant from Minneapolis. The Minneapolis League, very active in the labor unions, had a delegate at the recent Minnesota State Federation of Labor Convention. This Branch functions in every phase of the working class movement as a genuine revolutionary movement should.

CHICAGO, ILL. Chicago has been active on behalf of the Gastonia defendants, for the drive for the Weekly Militant and in the trade unions. Its

branch meeting was the best attended meeting to date, and new members were added. Among the active forces there are Arne Swabeck, Albert Glotzer, both members of the National Committee of the Communist League. Helen P. Judd, John Mihelic, John Edwards, R. Booth, Mike Zalisko, Bob Garver, Bill Edwards, Rebecca Sacherow, and many others.

A class in the "History of the Communist International" with comrade Arne Swabeck as instructor, has been organized by the Chicago branch.

KANSAS CITY, MO. The Kansas City comrades, writes comrade A. A. (Shorty) Buehler, are very well pleased with the Militant, and are raising a quota for its maintenance. Many workers are getting in touch with the Communist League through the book shop maintained there by comrade Buehler.

NEW YORK, N. Y. Street meetings continue to be held with great success by the New York Branch. New speakers, among them George Clarke, Joe Friedman, Sol Lankin, have been developed to aid the more experienced comrades. A mass meeting (see other columns) is being planned for October 22nd. At the recent open branch meeting of the New York Communist League, four new members were admitted, including two active seamen, a former member of the Communist Party of Germany and another active worker.

A study class in the Fundamentals of Communism, instructors, Max Shachtman and Martin Abern, is to begin in early October.

BOSTON, MASS. A number of subscriptions for The Militant have come in from Boston. Comrade Schlosberg informs the National Office that there is renewed and added stimulus and vigor among the members with the prospect of a Weekly Militant before them.

All signs point to a vigorous activity by the Communist League of America and its branches. Clarity of principle and the conviction to carry these principles into action animate the members throughout the country.