

# Manifesto to Seventh Convention of the C. P. U. S. A.

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(We do not speak here of the bluff and exaggerations of the Party leadership, or of their incompetent direction which resulted in the frittering away of these gains) and the alarm of the American bourgeoisie at the "specter" of Communism, are signs of the changing situation. In addition, sections of the workers are moving from acquiescence in the leadership of Green, Woll and Co. to participation in the various "progressive" movements, the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, and to a certain extent the new "Left wing" of the socialist party. For the workers; this is a movement towards the Left. Muste, Thomas and Co. form the ideological and organizational curb on this movement, a "safety valve" against Communism, a rut for the harmless canalization of the forward movement of the ranks.

## American Reformism

There is no foundation for the idea that the half-way house of reformism, or its "Left" variety, must be occupied by the American workers for a long time. There is no fatalistic analogy between the development of the German or British working class and that of the American proletariat. The unevenness of social struggles and development, and the abrupt changes inherent in the imperialist epoch, speak against this analogy. That decades elapsed between the bourgeois and proletarian revolutions, in let us say, Germany, was not at all an absolute precedent for the interval between them in Russia. The British and German workers went through their long period of reformist domination during the upward swing of world imperialism.

The American working class is developing to maturity after the world war, in the period of the collapse of world imperialism of violent wars, of proletarian and colonial revolution, of the existence of an international Communist movement which concentrates within it enormous experiences. These facts, and America's involvement and dependence upon a declining and anarchical economy, make probable a situation in which the reformist experiences of the working class here can be traversed with unprecedented rapidity.

This process and its speed are not automatic. Their acceleration depends largely upon the Communists. It is the task of the Communist Party to reduce to the smallest minimum the "reformist period" of the American workers, to paralyze the power of the Left and Right wing reformists, to fight for every worker whom they still influence. But it is precisely here that the present course of the Party and the leadership foisted upon it demonstrate their impotence. The great opportunities are allowed to pass by entirely, or else they are misused and ruined to the detriment of our movement and the advantage of its enemies.

## Fruits of the "Third Period"

The weaknesses and the defeats of the Party, and conversely, the growth of reformism, are traceable to the policies pursued by official Communism for the past six years, and more recently, to the theory and practise of the "third period". The theory of the "third period" with its thoroughly opportunist motivation, officially inaugurated the present ultra-Leftist zig-zag of the Comintern.

The arbitrary proclamation of a "third period" was intended to serve as the theoretical foundation for explaining away the past crimes and blunders of the Right-Centrist bloc in the International (Stalin-Bucharin). The fatal subordination of the Chinese Communist Party to the bourgeois Kuo Min Tang, which enabled the Chiang Kai-Sheks to mount to power over the corpses of the Chinese proletariat and peasantry, was and is justified by its occurrence in the "second period". The bureaucratic protection which the Anglo-Russian Committee gave to Purcell, Hicks, Swales and Co. after they had stabbed the British workers in the back, was and is explained away by the "second period". The course based upon the Kulak in the Soviet Union, the reactionary struggle against the industrialization proposals and the rest of the program of the Leninist Opposition, is similarly excused. There is, however no change in the practical consequences of the "third period", which, like the practise of the "second" results in reality in the strengthening of reform-

ism in the working class.

## The United Front Policy

From united fronts exclusively at the top, with bureaucrats like Purcell, Fimmen, and their ilk, or with reactionary militarists and national bourgeois like Chiang Kai-Shek or Calles, the official policy has been changed today to no united front at all, that is, no united front with non-Communist workers who are still under the influence of the reformists. The ruling apparatus and its spokesmen in all the Parties have changed from their conception of the "progressive" leaders as fighters against imperialism to a conception of the progressive workers as "social fascists". Both conceptions have a common base: the surrender of the non-Communist workers to the control of the reformist leaders.

However, the labelling of reformists as "social fascists" does not result in the decline of their strength and influence. Social reformism is growing in the U.S.—not a little of which is attributable to the policies of official Communism. The petty bourgeoisie, heavily hit by the industrial and stock market crises, is seeking political expression manifest in the tendencies towards a "third party", and in the increase of the socialist party vote and organization, to which the desperate middle class so largely contributed (Thomas vote in New York).

The socialist party is gaining not only among the middle class, but also among the workers: in the new miners' unions of Howat-Fishwick-Brophy-Germer-Ameringer, and in partial reestablishment of socialist strength in the needle trades unions. In the South, the sectarianism and blunders of the Communist Party have made it easier for both the A. F. of L. bureaucracy to play its ordained role of labor agent for capitalism and the Mustettes to play the role of shock absorber for Green and Co. against the militancy of the workers.

The sectarian, ultra-Leftist line of the Party, its failure to apply the tactic of the united front, its refusal to penetrate and work within movements, not under the direct control of the Party has enabled Green to have a free field in the South (and in the A. F. of L. as a whole), has enabled the Mustettes to play their treacherous game in Marion and Elizabethton without the Left wing having any chance to intervene, has enabled the Muste-Fishwick combination to establish their control in the Illinois mine field without effective challenge from the Left wing.

The Party must change its course and adopt instead the tactic of the united front. Applied in a revolutionary sense, and not in its pro-Purcell, pro-Chiang Kai-Shek interpretation, it is a most effective instrument for separating the workers from their reformist leaders, and helping to speed the movement of the American proletariat along the revolutionary path. The present line of the Party is a brake on this movement.

## International Roots of Party Crisis

The crisis in the American Party is not an isolated phenomenon; it is a part of the crisis in the U. S. S. R. and the Communist International. That crisis developed under the reactionary banner of the struggle against an alleged "Trotskyism", that is, in reality against the fundamental principles and strategy of Marxism and Leninism. The "Left course" has not alleviated this crisis. It has only brought it to full bloom. The Parties of the International are everywhere incapable of measuring up to their tasks, and are paying with defeats for the past years of Stalinist corrosion.

In India, with a revolutionary situation, there is no Communist Party in existence, and the mass movement is threatened with complete strangulation by Gandhi, Nehru and other representatives of the national bourgeoisie. In Great Britain, the hostility of the workers towards the monstrous treachery of MacDonald and the Labor Party is being transformed into support for the "Left" wing of the Independent Labor Party; the official Communist Party is virtually out of the picture. In Austria, Italy and Spain, where there are powerful or potential mass movements against fascism, the Communist Parties are reduced to unimportant sects with no substantial influence. There is hardly a Party in the International that is not torn by a

crisis or rendered impotent by stagnation and passivity. That is the balance sheet of Stalinism in the Comintern.

This condition is part and parcel of the crisis in the Soviet Union and the Russian Party. The attempt to bridge the gulf between an isolated proletarian state and the retarded world revolution with the utopian, reactionary theory of "socialism in a single country" has failed in two different ways. Proceeding from this theory the Stalin-Bucharin regime proclaimed that socialism would be built "at a snail's pace" by the "kulak growing into socialism".

This perspective of decades-long capitalist stabilization was accompanied by resting upon and mobilizing all the anti-proletarian elements in the Soviet Union in the campaign against the Left Opposition. The course towards the Kulak culminated not only with the organizational crushing of the Leninist group in the Russian Party, but also with the "bloodless Kulak uprising" of 1923. The pressure of the Opposition's ideas and the proletarian core of the country compelled the rupture of the Right-Center bloc and the commencement of the zig-zag to the "Left" of the Stalinist faction. But just as the Stalinist faction abandoned—with one foot—the positions of the Right for those of adventurism, so surely is it now preparing to return to its former position and to heal its temporary breach with the Thermidorian elements of the Right wing. This movement backward, foretold by the Opposition, is now in the process of realization. The serious situation engendered by the adventurist course of Stalinist Centrism in Soviet economy, which brought about a virtual rupture of the bonds between the proletariat and peasantry, which tightened the bureaucratic stranglehold that stifles the Party and reduces it to an automaton, demands the active intervention of every Communist worker.

The predictions and the program of the Left Opposition have been confirmed a thousand times over. For that "crime" it has been subjected to the foulest slanders, to imprisonment, exile, deportation and even assassination. In exile, in the factories, in prison and in the Party, the Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists) stand on guard for the revolution and its conquests. It is the revolution's reserve of gold. The American Opposition proudly re-affirms its solidarity with the Russian comrades. Their reinstatement into the Party, like our own, is the principal guarantee for the advancement of the movement and the solution of its crisis.

## The Right Wing and Stalin Factions

The pre-convention "discussion" up to now, the fact that the "theses" were officially and finally adopted long before the discussion commenced, and all Stalinist precedents, are sufficient indication that the convention will be another meeting of the functionaries of the Stalinist faction, with a purely formal and decorative attendance of workers-delegates. The convention will prove incapable of solving the urgent problems of the Party. Our appeal is therefore directed primarily and essentially to the worker-Communists in the Party.

Our warning against, and designation of the character of the Lovestone group, made while it was still the American representatives of the ruling regime in the Russian Party and the International, have been more than confirmed by subsequent events. We characterized the Lovestone faction as a Right wing group, which was leaving the positions of Communist principle, at the moment when half of the present leadership of the Party was an integral part of the Lovestone group (Minor, Bedacht, Stachel, Weinstein) and the other half was in a bloc with that group to expel us from the Party (Foster, Browder, Hathaway). All the noise and "predictions" of the "uniting" of the Right and Left Oppositions—is designed to conceal the damning fact of the unity between the Lovestones and Fosters in the fight against us.

The Right wing has turned its back upon internationalism, and applied the Stalin-Bucharin theory of "socialism in one country" to the United States. It has crystallized its opportunist conceptions of Communist work among the masses, which, while it led the Party under Stalinist dispensation, was always so thoroughly im-

bued with timid conservatism, dragging along behind the masses, bureaucratic "maneuvers" and "united fronts" at the top with all varieties of reformist leaders, exaggerations of the omnipotence of American imperialism, faith in the capture of the official trade union apparatus as a substitute for the struggle to win over the workers in the ranks. Its whole line of thought and action fitted it eminently to lead the reactionary campaign against "Trotskyism", which the present manufactured leadership is seeking so vainly to continue.

We stamped the nature and course of this group correctly and in time. We fought against its liquidationist tendencies instead of uniting with it to expel the Left Opposition. The official leaders of the Party have now undertaken a belated struggle against the Right wing but they are incompetent to conduct it. In reality, they have helped to strengthen it, and that in three ways: by uniting with it against us; by carrying out such an adventurist, sectarian, ultra-Leftist policy that they play into the hands of the Right wing and drive many Communist workers in its direction; by methods of hooliganism and "strong arguments" which discredit the Party and only create an artificial sympathy for the Right wing. The Centrists, bound to the Right wing by a hundred theoretical threads, are incapable of conducting a serious Marxist struggle against it. The smashing of Centrist impotence and theoretical confusion will be the heaviest blow against its former and future ally, the Right wing.

As in our struggle against the Right wing, the course of events has more than sufficiently justified our opposition to the present Centrist regime in the Party. The latter has only deepened the crisis engendered by the previous rule of the Lovestone faction. It has weakened the Party, paralyzed its activity, cut down its influence and prestige among the militant workers. It has driven away hundreds and even thousands of workers from the Party; it has been unable to hold the thousands of workers who have recently come to the Party; it will continue to be incapable of holding the many others who move towards Communism under the impulsion of the struggle.

## Solution of the Party Crisis

The pre-requisite for the solution of the crisis is clarity and understanding of its nature and its source. To attain this clarity and understanding, the Party requires a genuine, a free discussion, which we have not had up to now because it is officially prohibited. For such a discussion, the Party requires the re-establishment of workers' democracy. For workers' democracy, the Party requires an intransigent struggle against the Party bureaucracy appointed from above and against the regime which it represents and by which it lives.

The Party must be returned to the Party membership!

The Left Opposition, since its existence as a separate group formally outside the Party as a result of bureaucratic expulsion, has continued to fight for its principled viewpoint and to defend the foundations of Communism, even under the extreme provocations of the apparatus. It is pledged to continue this struggle. The Centrist regime's deformation and discrediting of fundamental principles upon which our Party and our International were built, only necessitates a firmer and more relentless struggle in our Party since the whole future of our movement is involved. The great problems with which the whole movement, particularly the American, are confronted demand the re-incorporation of the Opposition into the Party. Our fight for Communism must of necessity be conducted in fraternal solidarity, shoulder to shoulder with the Communist workers in the ranks of the Party. It is they, and not the miserable, blind bureaucrats, who will decide in the end. It is to this end that we are working. It is for the clarity needed to attain this end that we address ourselves—now, in the past, and in the future—to the Communist workers.

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