

Pollack Case: A Statement of Fact

The Daily Worker of November 15, 1930, prints a statement by the Party Control Commission which announces the expulsion of comrade Sylvan A. Pollack on the grounds that he acted as an agent for the police when, together with four other Party comrades, he was arrested for sedition in Scranton, Pa., last July. An accusation of this kind involving the integrity and membership of a comrade in the movement, must be considered and answered.

Comrade Pollack has been a supporter of the Opposition for about a year now, and a member of the New York branch of the Communist League for almost the same time. The accusation made against him, as an aftermath of the Scranton police raid, was reported to the national committee, which forthwith instructed him to demand of the Central Control Commission of the Party a hearing of the charges and an immediate decision. This was imperative in the case, since it is impossible to have such a question hanging fire for any length of time. If the individual in question is a police agent, every day of his membership is injurious to the movement; if the charge against him is false, every day that it stands without being wiped out impairs the ability of the comrade to function in the movement, and, therefore, is equally injurious to the latter.

Following the publication of the Control Commission statement, the national committee of the League once more considered the question and decided that absolutely no credence could be placed in the charges made against comrade Pollack, for the following reasons.

1. His previous record in the movement, membership in the Socialist party, foundation member of the Communist Party in 1919, active speaker, writer and organized for the Party for 11 years entrusted with numerous posts of importance and responsibility.

2. Previous arrests: during the Palmer Red Raids in 1919, during the needle trades strike in 1925, during the picketing of the Hungarian Consulate, etc., and his conduct in these arrests which was irreproachable and never met with any criticism.

3. Despite the fact that the first and second hearing of the case before the Control Commission occurred at the end of July and beginning of August, no action was taken against him until December. Since July no new material was presented to the Commission to warrant either the delay or the expulsion almost four months afterwards. The Commission, in other words, did not take the charges seriously, knowing that they were made for ulterior motives in the first place. This is demonstrated further by the fact that comrade Pollack was not only allowed to retain membership in the Party, but was permitted to occupy important and responsible posts, as editor of *Solidarity*, official organ of the Workers International Relief, and agit-prop director of that organization.

4. The Control Commission resurrected the Scranton charges only after comrade Pollack was accused of "Trotskyism" through the intermediary of a disreputable individual named Eisenman previously expelled from the Y. C. L. as a degenerate and a white chauvinist. The Commission immediately demanded Pollack's suspension from the post of W. I. R. editor until the "Trotskyism" charges were investigated, a demand it did not make when Pollack was accused of being a police agent.

The national committee of the League therefore declares the scurrilous statement of the Party Control Commission to be a disgraceful attempt at a frame-up to discredit the Opposition as a whole and comrade Pollack as an individual militant. His membership in the Opposition, now of a year's standing, remains unaffected, and he is entitled to the full confidence of revolutionists.

We append here a statement on the simple facts in the case, made before our committee by comrade Pollack.

National Committee of the Communist League of America (Opposition).

COMRADE POLLACK'S STATEMENT

The Control Commission charges that I led the police to the rooming house of Slinger and Little. On whose say so are these charges made? At the hearing held in Scranton on July 12, when we were held for the Grand Jury, the Deputy Sher-

iffs who arrested us without warrants so testified. The word of the police is believed in preference to a communist.

It came about this way: The defense attorney had made the police witnesses admit that the arrests were made without a warrant. To justify their actions the police stated they did not need any warrants because when Joe Tash, was arrested the night before the rest of us, he gave them the key to the headquarters where I was taken into custody when I came there the following morning about 8 o'clock. If Tash, gave them the key, they were his "guest", was their argument. To continue their line of reasoning I was hustled into the police car and forced to accompany the police when they went to the rooming house and arrested Slinger and Little. Here they claimed that they were my "guest" and did not need any warrant. At the Control Commission hearing, in an effort to prove that I told the police where the rooming house was located, I was asked what conversation, if any, took place between the police and myself when driving from the office to the rooming house, which is only a distance of about three blocks. I told the C. C. that the only conversation that took place was that one of the deputy sheriffs asked me if I wanted a cigarette and I refused. In the C. C. statement, in an attempt to show that I was friendly with the police it is turned around and made to read that I offered the cigarettes to the police.

After my arrival in Scranton in July to take over the post as International Labor Defense district organizer, I found out for the first time that before my arrival Frankfeld, district organizer of the Party, had the local Party Bureau pass a motion against my being given that position. This was sent to the national bureau of the I. L. D., which refused to give it any consideration. When I arrived in Scranton, Frankfeld was antagonistic from the start, the local functionaries of the Party and Union all being resentful that their protest

was not acted upon favorably. Frankfeld has had a personal dislike for me since 1925 when I was an active supporter of the Ruthenberg group and he as now, a supporter for the Foster group. Therefore, when the arrests took place, Frankfeld saw an opportunity to get revenge. After we were arrested, Slinger, and Little were among the first released on bail. They got out the next morning while Tash and myself stayed in five days. On my release on bail I was informed by Frankfeld that the local Party Bureau, had, on his motion, gone on record that I should be brought up on charges. I went to New York and appeared before a meeting of the National Bureau of the I. L. D., and stated that due to the fact that the local comrades were antagonistic towards me I preferred not to continue to work in that field, especially if I was to be brought up on charges in the Party. Jakira and Darcy laughed at the charges and tried to persuade me to return to the anthracite as organizer. Little also attended this meeting and told of the charges, as representative of the Scranton Party Bureau. He was not taken seriously. This was quite logical. Then I was not known as a Trotskyist.

The next week comrade Gibarti, international representative of the W. I. R., persuaded me to become the agit-prop director of the W. I. R., and in that position I continued until I was brought up on the charges of "Trotskyism."

If it were not that I wish to limit this statement to a simple declaration of the facts in my case, it would be instructive to describe the conduct in this whole affair of such comrades as Freeman Thompson and Dan Slinger, and it would not rebound to their credit. However, this can be reserved for some future and more appropriate date.

—SYLVAN A. POLLACK.

If the number on your wrapper is

59

then your subscription to the *Militant* has expired. Renew immediately in order to avoid missing any issues.

Weisbord's Proposals

Continued from page 4

urgently needed machinery here, but, by setting a number of industries in motion and thereby providing jobs, will clearly establish the direct community of interests of the jobless workers and the proletarian state.

Finally, we are totally at variance with Weisbord's views on relations with the Lovestone group, stated in his original declaration, and repeated in the articles in question. His insistent demand for a bloc with the Right wing vitiates all his claims of adherence to the tested standpoint of the Communist Opposition. The fact that this demand is carried out in practice by him (bloc with Lovestone in the liquidationist "textile committee") only makes the matter worse. This proposal will continue to meet with as intransigent opposition from us as any attempt to establish it as a platform, or part of a platform, for the Marxist section of the movement.

A DANCE IN CHICAGO

The Chicago branch of the League has arranged a proletarian entertainment and dance to be held Saturday night, December 13, at 1118 W. Madison St. Among the features on the program will be a reading of his poetry by Ralph Chaplin, piano and violin selections by Ernest Moeller and David H. T. Kahn, singing by Miss Edna Kunin, recitals, dancing, etc., etc. It will be, say the Chicago comrades, one of the best entertainments held in the city for long time. In addition, there will be music and dancing, and refreshments for all. Admission is twenty-five cents and all friends and comrades are cordially invited to be present on time so that a full evening's comradely entertainment may be had.

CHICAGO STUDY CLASS

Chicago workers interested in the study of Marxism are urged to attend the class in that subject conducted by the Communist League branch. It meets every Wednesday, at 8 p. m., at 1214 Washtenaw, with comrade Hugo Oehler as director of the class. The question method is the one followed. All are invited.

STALIN AS A THEORETICIAN - : - by LEON TROTSKY

Continued from Page 7

ther development of economy on the very foundation of the contradictions between city and village, upon which capitalism reached an immeasurably higher level. In America, gigantic industrial trusts develop even today, side by side with the farmer regime in agriculture. The farmer economy created the foundation of American industry. It is precisely on the American type, by the way, that our bureaucrats, with Stalin at their head, orientated themselves openly until yesterday: the powerful farmer at the bottom centralized industry at the top.

The ideal equivalent of exchange is the basic premise of the abstract formulae of the second volume. Nevertheless, planned economy of the transition period, even though based upon the law of value, violates it at every step and creates mutual relations between different branches of industry and primarily between industry and agriculture on the basis of unequal exchange. The decisive lever of compulsory accumulation and planned distribution is the government budget. With a further development, its role will have to grow. Financial credits regulate the mutual relations between compulsory accumulation of the budget and the processes of the market in so far as they retain their force. Not only the budgetary, but also the planned or semi-planned credit financing which insures the extension of reproduction in the U.S.S.R., can in no way be summed up in the formulae of the second volume, the whole force of which lies in the fact that they ignore budgets or plans or tariffs, and in general, all forms of governmentally planned influence that establish the necessary regulations over the play of blind forces of the market, which are disciplined by the law of value. No sooner would we "free" the internal Soviet market and abolish the monopoly of foreign trade, than the exchange between the city and village would become incomparably more equalized, accumulation in the village—it is understood, Kulak, farmer-capitalist accumulation—would take its course and it would soon reveal that Marx' formulae apply also to agriculture. On this road, Russia would in a brief period be transformed into a colony upon which the industrial

development of other countries would be based.

In order to motivate this same complete collectivization, the school of Stalin (there is such a thing) has made use of the stark comparisons between the tempo of development in industry and agriculture. Crudest of all, this operation is performed, as usual, by Molotov. In February 1929, Molotov spoke at the Moscow district conference of the Party: "Agriculture in recent years has noticeably lagged behind industry in the tempo of development. . . For the last three years, industrial production increased in value by more than fifty percent and the products of agriculture—all in all—by seven percent." The comparison of these two tempos is economic illiteracy. By peasant economy they include, in reality, all branches of economy. The development of industry has always, and in all branches, taken place at the expense of the reduction of the specific gravity of agriculture. It is sufficient to recall that metallurgical production in the United States is almost equal to the production of farmer economy at a time when, with us, it is one-eighteenth of agricultural production. This shows that in spite of the high tempos of recent years, our industry has not yet emerged from the period of infancy. In order to eliminate the contradictions between city and village created by bourgeois development, Soviet industry must first surpass the village to an incomparably greater degree than bourgeois Russia did. The present breach between state industry and peasant economy did not proceed from the fact that industry surpassed agriculture too greatly—the advanced position of industry is an internationally historical fact and a necessary condition for progress—but from the fact that our industry is too weak, that is, it has gone ahead too little to have the possibility to raise agriculture to the necessary level. The aim, of course, is the elimination of the contradictions between the city and the village. But the roads and methods of this elimination have nothing in common with the equalization of tempos of agriculture and industry. The mechanization of agriculture and the industrialization of a series of its branches will be accompanied, on the contrary, by the re-

duction of the specific gravity of agriculture as such. The tempo of the mechanization we can accomplish, is determined by the productive power of industry. What is decisive for collectivization is not the fact that metallurgy rose in recent years by a few score percent, but the fact that our metal per capita is negligible. The growth of collectivization is only of equal significance to the growth of agriculture itself in so far as the first is based on the technical revolution of agricultural production. But the tempo of such a revolution is limited by the percent specific gravity of industry. The tempo of collectivization must be combined with the material resources of the latter and not at all with abstract statistical tempos.

"Capital" and Socialist Reproduction

In the interests of theoretical clarity, it should be added to what has been said, that the elimination of the contradictions between city and village that is, the raising of agricultural production to a scientific-industrial level, will mean the triumph not of Marx' formulae in agriculture, as Stalin imagines but on the contrary, the elimination of their triumph in industry. Because socialist extended reproduction will not at all take place according to the formulae of "Capital", the central point of which is the pursuit of profits. But all this is too complicated for Stalin and Molotov.

Let us repeat in the conclusion of this chapter that collectivization is the practical task of eliminating capitalism and not the theoretical task of its development. That is why the Marxian formulae are not applicable here from any point of view. The practical possibilities of collectivization are determined by the productive-technical resources at hand for large scale agriculture and the degree of readiness of the peasantry to pass from individual to collective economy. In the long run, this subjective analysis is determined by the very same material-productive factor: the peasant can be attracted to socialism only by the advantage of collective economy, supported by advanced technique. But instead of a tractor, Stalin wants to present the peasant with the formulae of the second volume. But the peasant is honest and does not want to deliberate over what he does not understand.