

For the Program of Expansion

Taking everything into consideration, the American section of the Opposition gave a good account of itself in the two years that have gone by since its expulsion from the party. The achievements of those two years—modest as they are when measured in the gigantic scale of the proletarian revolution—will undoubtedly have a place of honor in the history of American Communism. Their significance consists in the fact that they represent a beginning. And beginnings always have an historic importance. Our militant fight during these two years has signified the appearance of a counter-current against the stream of retrogression in the Communist movement of America; a small one, but a real one.

Those who have contributed in any way to this historic work may well take pride in it. But the satisfaction which we justly feel with the accomplishments of the first two years does not give us the right to view them as a completed task. Their importance, as has been said before, is the importance of a beginning. Their real vindication will come only if we remember that, if we build on them and multiply them in the coming months.

The pioneer work has accumulated for the Opposition some resources in the form of supporters, sympathizers and experiences. This capital, as it may be called, justifies a program of expansion for the coming year. We have grounds to plan for a leap forward in 1931; and if we work wisely and harmoniously the plan will surely be realized in life. Such is the considered opinion of the National Committee, as expressed in the resolution adopted at a recent meeting and published in the *Militant* for February 15th.

THE TWO THOUSAND DOLLAR FUND

On the one side the resolution asks for a special fund of two thousand dollars, of which the New York branch has already pledged to raise one-half. On the other side, with this special fund, the National Committee will undertake to guarantee the holding of our national conference; to establish a publishing concern which will expand and systematize our publishing activities; to return the *Militant* to weekly publication; to found a theoretical magazine; to strengthen the staff of the national organization and provide for a field organizer; to organize at least two national lecture tours; and to bring out the *International Bulletin* in English regularly. These are all tasks which cannot be postponed.

To many people this argument may appear, at first glance, as an impossible bargain. But it isn't so, as we will prove when the fund is provided. Every item on the side charged to the responsibility of the National Committee will be made good. The items in the program do not stand separately. They dovetail into each other, and the realization of one will help the realization of the others.

No one should dismiss this resolution lightly as a mere gesture made in a fit of temporary enthusiasm. We have never been inclined to leap over the barriers of circumstance and to promise the unattainable; and the experience of the Opposition struggle have not been calculated to nurture such a tendency. The difficulties of the fight and the hard blows we took have beaten a sterner realism into our heads. The resolution of the National Committee is not a mere paper resolution. It is a realistic plan of action which can be fulfilled in every point. And, unless we sadly miscalculate the actual possibilities and the spirit of our movement, it will be realized without imposing an undue strain on the members and sympathizers of the Communist League.

For some months now it has been evident that the Communist League has been turning the corner and overcoming the slump which took place in our activity after the first big push. For a time we suffered from a certain stagnation which was not without internal difficulties and symptoms of crisis in the organization. The weight of objective circumstances pressed down upon us and our movement seemed to progress at a snail's pace. In such conditions frictions are always accentuated, and difficulties assume abnormal proportions. Isolation puts endurance to the test. Only those groups which have a firm base in principle, which are bound together by uniform conceptions can hold out against it.

It is thanks to the vitality of our principles in the first place, and to the habit of collective work which we brought with us from the struggles of the past, that we were able to emerge from this stagnant interlude without fatal convulsions and splits. Other sections of the International Left Opposition have not been so fortunate, as we know, and for reasons inherent in the concrete conditions which surrounded them. Nor are we insured against such convulsions for the future. But

By JAMES P. CANNON

with all that, it is quite manifest that the elements of cohesion are uppermost now in our organization; that we are definitely on the upward grade. Our last Plenum marked the beginning of this turn. The period which has intervened since that time has registered some advances, and most of all it has prepared the ground for others.

THE PROGRESS IN NEW YORK

The strengthening of the forces engaged in the national direction of the League, and the improvement of its functioning generally, has already shown positive results. As was to be expected, the New York branch, which works in the most intimate contact with the National Committee, reflects the improved situation first. The activities of the New York Branch have been multiplied at least four-fold in the past six months, and its Communist character has been strengthened on all sides. If the fact that Weisbord's pitiful maneuvers could cause a flurry in the Branch was evidence of a remnant of its earlier weakness, the vigorous and emphatic manner in which it repulsed them when the issue became fairly joined was a sign of its progress towards political stability.

The branch consists in large part of comrades who are new in the movement. They have to assimilate the A B C's of Communism at the same time that they wage a fight over the complicated problems involved in the work of the Opposition. This presents difficulties, but they are not insurmountable. Ignorance is fatal only for those who are unwilling to learn. One of the first things revolutionaries must learn, if they do not want to disgrace the name, is that speculation over the great tasks of the future is not sufficient. It is necessary to understand the task of the moment, the accomplishment of which will lead us a step nearer to the bigger ones of tomorrow, and to attack it resolutely. Not to pass a resolution on it and then forget it; but to pass a resolution, and mean it, and do it. In this respect we have already seen a great

progress in the New York branch in the past six months. And this record gives us the confidence that the promise of the branch to raise one half of the two thousand dollar fund needed for the program of expansion will be fulfilled to the letter.

From the National Committee and the New York branch the spirit of accomplishment will spread to the other branches. The organization nationally will soon begin to gird itself for another advance. Everything argues for this confidence. The part assigned to the various branches to make this advance possible is simple, and comparatively easy. The theory that the members of the Communist League have been overloaded with responsibilities and duties is absurd. Up to now only a handful have really exerted themselves in a manner worthy of Bolshevik-Leninists, and nobody has been hurt. The program outlined in the resolution of the National Committee only calls on the membership to move one step faster. The real march is still to come.

THE SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Second National Conference, already definitely scheduled for the summer, will meet—if we are not greatly mistaken—under the sign of a tightening up of the organization all along the line. "Platonic" members who have fallen into the habit of wearing the proud badge of the Opposition without doing anything to deserve it will be called to order. The Conference should tell everybody that enrollment in the Opposition means not a release from party obligations but the assumption of double ones. The Opposition has assumed a great historic task which cannot be trifled with. What we want and what we must have is a body of militants for whom the revolution is the most serious concern in life; for whom the demands of the movement stand first and above everything.

The Communist League is not yet such an organization, and it cannot become such over night. It will be the task of the Conference to say resolutely that we are going to move in that direction. The program of expansion adopted by the National Commit-

What the London «Worker» Won't Print

(The following letters were written by a prominent member of the British Communist Party to the editor of the *Daily Worker* of London. That the letters did not succeed in passing through the Stalinist censorship does not affect their validity in the least; on the contrary, it indicates the bureaucratic fear of criticism which fills the British representatives of Stalinism, when confronted by the first voices of discussion emanating from Left Oppositionists in England, who are beginning to advance in the necessary strength and clarity required for the constitution of a firm core of British Marxism which has been made a mockery of by the Murphys, Pollitts, Bells and the other "leaders" who, under instructions from the International Stalinist apparatus, have reduced the promising Communist Party of England to a shadow. The letters of comrade Davis follow.—Ed.)

The Editor, *Daily Worker*
Dear Comrade:

I ask you to publish the following:
In the central organ of the party, the *Daily Worker* of today's date, appears a short résumé of comrade Pollitt's activity.

The article purported to show that comrade Pollitt could maintain his claim to be the only workers' candidate in the Whitechapel by-election—which of course he is.

But, how did the party organ try to demonstrate to the workers that Pollitt was really a revolutionary worker?

By pointing to his trade union activity and NOT ONCE mentioning his rôle as a leader of the Communist Party!

This is an ultra-Right line. A hiding from the workers that leadership of the Communist party constitutes the highest claim to be representative of the workers. The article is an open denial of the leading rôle of the party.

Fraternally yours,

David Davis

Just in this period, when the working class is in a trough of depression, just when the working class is going through a period of bitter disappointment and realizing the treachery of the trade unions and the Labour party, just at the very crucial moment when the workers need the tonic effect of a call to vigorous action against the bourgeoisie, Pollitt comes forward with his reformist program!

Pollitt is deliberately leading the party into "tail-endism". He has sunk into the mood of the masses and is dragging the party with him. Hence his sneers: "In the past, we have thought it treachery if we ever put forward demands that did not go the whole hog and include everything

under the sun, culminating with frantic calls for a revolutionary workers' government."

If comrade Pollitt ever "frantically called for a revolutionary workers' government" we can be sure that it was only when he was so instructed. We have not forgotten the "frantic" calls for street activities on August the First! What is the basis for this sudden about-turn? Distrust of the workers! The Pollitts argue: "The workers did not respond to our 'frantic' calls in August, therefore they want a reformist Charter and we, the leaders of the working class, must give it to them."

The Left trade union reformists of the Pollitt class do not learn from the history of the working class (though of course they are very susceptible to changes taking place in the policy of the International, being ready to jump this way and that at the slightest hint from above!).

It is only in periods of ascendancy, or, just after such periods, when the masses are flushed with successes and the repression is only just beginning, that the workers spontaneously make strong economic demands. But after a long series of defeats, with capitalism, also in a period of deep depression, the working class needs and responds to calls which may be termed "frantic" by the Pollitts but which give expression to the class hatred of the masses for the bourgeoisie. This does not mean Stalinist adventurism and ultra-Left zig-zags, but steady propaganda in the factories and among the unemployed. Propaganda which lays bare and exposes the cause of the workers' oppression, which sharpens the class hatred of the workers and at the same time gives assurance of ultimate victory.

The propaganda of international solidarity and final aims among the masses, the encouragement of discussion in the party of fundamental problems around present affairs in the International. These are the tonic needed.

This has nothing in common with August the First adventurism! To take part in the daily struggle of the workers means a daily struggle against pessimism, but this has nothing in common with the reformist Charter of Pollitt which springs from the womb of pessimism.

P. S. It might be remarked that after the August First adventure followed the "Charter" of pure reforms, **unlinked with any political issue**. Then, after this article was written, the British C. P. issued, a few weeks ago, a manifesto which ended in a call for a Soviet Britain! Slaps from the Left, slaps from the Right. Zig-zag!

tee calls for the first step only. But it is the next step, and therefore the most important at the moment. Let us concentrate on this campaign and finish it before the Conference! Bigger things will follow.

On the «Sectarians»...

"As a result of the situation (in the French trade union movement) a strong movement for trade unity has developed in the ranks of labor. Recently this movement reached organizational expression. A committee has been established, made up of representatives of Left wing elements in the reformist C. G. T. and of opposition elements in the revolutionary C. G. T. U. (revolutionary syndicalists, supporters of the Workers and Peasants Party, etc.), for the purpose of developing the movement to amalgamate the two trade union centers and establish one trade union federation in France. This movement has already made considerable headway. It is significant that this movement has met with the determined resistance of the 'Unitary Opposition' in the C. G. T. U. which is the shadow of the French Trotskyites. These people always prate of 'united front' and of 'unity' but when it comes to concrete questions they take a position absolutely indistinguishable from the official R. I. L. U.—*Revolutionary Age*, 12-20-1930.

"The *Revolutionary Age* of December 20, 1930, reported on the appeal recently issued by a group of members of the C. G. T. (reformist trade union federation), of the C. G. T. U. (Red trade union federation), and of autonomous union organizations for trade union unity, the formation of one united trade union federation in France. Whatever may be the errors contained in this appeal (a syndicalist non-political orientation), the course towards trade union unity is certainly correct and corresponds to the interests of the French working class. The old leadership of the Trotskyist group 'hesitated' a little on this question and seemed about to give way in the direction of trade union unity. But Trotsky discovered this deviation from Trotskyism in time!"—*Revolutionary Age*, 2-14-1931.

So much for Lovestone, who so frequently over-reaches himself in his anxiety to find allies for "mass work", for "unity",—and for the liquidation of Communism. We learn from him that the new movement for surrender to French reformism is following a course which is "certainly correct"—despite a trifling error or so—while the infernal Trotskyists who always "prate of unity" are the only fly in the sweet ointment of unity. Now let us hear from Herr Brandler, Lovestone's German colleague, who, if he is not less anxious to liquidate Communism in the interests of reformism, is at least a good deal more cautious than Lovestone, especially since he has more than half an eye cocked towards a possible reconciliation with the Stalinist apparatus. In the German Right wing organ, we read the following about this same French movement which inspired Lovestone to such praise:

"If the theoretical basis of the trade union unity agitation of the 22, as they are generally called, is thus thoroughly false and indistinct, then its action in the present situation leads to nothing less than a **capitulation before the reformism** of the majority of the C. G. T. leadership and to the enlistment in the anti-Bolshevik front of imperialism together with the whole Second International. The struggle is only one-sidedly conducted against the leadership of the Communist Party of France and the C. G. T. U., but in no case against reformism in the C. G. T. . . . It is not only the wrong manner of intervention of the present Comintern and R. I. L. U. leadership in the affairs of the organizations, that is attacked, but in reality the conceptions of Communism. . . . The French working class must have its attention called to the fact that the road of Monatte and his comrades leads to reformism, to anti-Bolshevism and by that to the struggle against the proletarian revolution in France and other countries." *Gegen den Strom*, 2-14-31.

The contributor to *Gegen den Strom* has his own reasons for taking the position he does. For the moment it does not concern us here, except to remark that the German Right wing's observations on the French situation reek with hypocrisy, when one considers its fervid flirtations with the French P. O. P., which is such a staunch supporter of the "new movement" towards reformism. What does concern us here is the characteristic attitude of Lovestone, which is in no essential different from that of the Right wing slides back another pace from Communism towards reformism, it covers this retreat to the social democracy by barrage of criticism of . . . the Trotsky sectarians. In truth, it is now axioms that whenever you read an attack upon Left Opposition's "sectarianism" in the Right wing press, you may be certain that the Right wing is seeking to conceal a new step in the liquidation of Communism.—S.