

Stanley Disappoints Lovestone

The current issue of the Lovestone sheet, under the title "S. P. Militants Collapse at City Meet; Fully Endorse Hillquit Stand", begins its comment by saying: "As foreseen in the columns of the Revolutionary Age (we shall soon see what this "foresight" consisted of.—S.), the failure of the 'militant' movement in the Socialist party to make a vigorous struggle along the entire front against the leadership of the S. P. and against its anti-socialist policies and for a policy of revolutionary socialism has led to a decided deterioration of this movement and to the success of the efforts of clever Hillquit bureaucracy to 'kill it with kindness'."

The article goes whimpering on to explain how the recent city convention of the S. P. adopted a disgracefully reformist resolution on the "city investigation" with the support of an alliance between the "militants" and Hillquit.

"The fact that the same individuals who voted for this resolution," continues Lovestone, "only a few months ago introduced a resolution criticizing the reformist character of the socialist party's election campaign, that they spoke openly of the proletarian dictatorship, of the development of socialism in the Soviet Union and of the necessity of ending [!] the reformist rôle of the socialist party, indicates the truth of the contention of the Revolutionary Age. Either a consistent and logical struggle against the reformist theories and practices as a whole and thus an approach to Communism or back to the swamp of Hillquit-Thomas reformism."

One can scarcely have imagined so rapid a denouement of the tragi-comedy staged by the leaders of the Lovestone group and the ridiculous disappointment of these Menshevik impresarios at the unexpected turn taken by the "militant" actors whom they had advertised so widely. From the Communist viewpoint, the Stanleys, the McAllister Colemans, the Leonard Brights and their stock company were dismissed at the very outset as frauds masquerading as radical politicians. From the standpoint of the Lovestoneites (i. e. of the epigones of Communism), the "militants" were played up as just a shade or two short of being perfect Communists.

How and what did the Revolutionary Age "foresee"? It foresaw nothing. It did not warn the Communist workers, and even worse, it did not warn the workers in looking for a way out of the reformist swamp, that the "militant group", composed of a clique of second and third class leaders would only keep the workers anchored in the swamp. On the contrary, the whole policy of Lovestone faction was calculated to keep the dissatisfied S. P. workers tied to the "Left" wing reformists by perpetuating their illusions about the latter. The Lovestone policy was calculated upon recruiting support for Stanley, Porter and Shapiro (who are in turn the props of Hillquit, Thomas and Lee), and not upon winning the workers away from them. For the Lovestoneites to speak of "foresight" and the "truth" of their contentions is a perfectly shameless gambling upon the short memories of their readers.

What did these chagrined and disappointed Mensheviks say about the "Militants" and their activities a brief three or four months ago? From Herberg: "The resolution [on Russia] introduced by the Stanley group was thoroughly pro-Soviet not merely in sentiment but in revolutionary class content . . . It is clear from a mere reading of both resolutions [Lee's and Stanley's] that on this question the differences have already [!] reached the point where they cannot remain within the bounds of one party . . . The Left group manifests as its chief feature a continuous ever changing dynamic character. This fundamental feature also distinguishes the Leftward movement from classical centrism" (No. 7, Rev. Age.)

From the editorial: "The Stanley resolution) 'basing itself on the proletarian character of the Soviet state very closely approximates a Communist position.'" (No. 6, Rev. Age.)

From Gitlow: "But the differences between the 'Militants' and the Oneals, Hillquits, Lees and Thomases are differences of principle of such a character that they cannot be reconciled within the realms of one party." (No. 9, Rev. Age.)

A bare four months ago, therefore, our "foresighted" politicians solemnly established the "militants" as: 1. Distinguished from classical Centrism by a "fundamental feature"; 2. Having differences which have "already" reached the point and are of such a character that "they cannot be reconciled with the standpoint of Hillquit"; 4. Having a position on the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union which is "thoroughly pro-Soviet" in its "revolutionary class" content, and "very closely

approximates a Communist position". Not a single word about how the minority leaders were abusing the discontentment of the workers following them; not a word of warning about the counter-revolutionary attack on Bolshevism for "exterminating" the Mensheviks, which Stanley made in his resolution; not a word to distinguish the workers from the leaders; not a word of criticism or warning, in short, of the whole reformist character of His Majesty Hillquit's Loyal Opposition. Just the opposite: a deliberate exaggeration of its "radicalism", a glowing embellishment of its "virtues".

Now, after weeks of tooting the horn for the "militants", the Rev. Age collapses like a pricked balloon. Overnight, the virile revolutionists of the S. P. have "decidedly deteriorated". In less time than it takes to tell, Hillquit has succeeded in killing it—no less. The difference that could not "be reconciled within the realms of one party" are . . . reconciled. Instead of approximating a "Communist position", Stanley and Co. are bitterly reproached by their eulogists of yesterday for adopting a . . . Hillquit position. Those fundamentally distinguished from classical Centrism turn out to be—to Lovestone's amazement—blood brethren to Hillquit and Co.

How could so monstrous a transformation take place within so brief a period? Nobody, least of all the Lovestoneites, can solve this conundrum, because it is falsely put. There has been no transformation—at least no radical one. The essence has remained the same. The actors are the

BROWDER GETS THE CALL

The upper circles of the party bureaucracy are once more aflutter and agog. In the circles of the second, third and fourth series, the turmoil is accentuated by the prevailing uncertainty. The realization is coming over them that a jump is soon to be made, but—Alas!—the uncertainty lies precisely in the fact that the willing and even anxious functionary does not know yet which way to jump, and guessing has become a hazardous business especially for those who guess wrong.

The facts of the situation available at this writing are far from promising any convulsive changes in the course of the party. The ideological struggles which were once a source of progress and clarity in the Comintern have been debased in recent years to the level of petty clique fights out of which he issues victor who guesses best what new wind is coming from Moscow. But even these faint squeaks in the apparatus are not without their instructive features, and the clique fights are not barren of amusement.

As has been known for some time now, the party leadership has actually been concentrated in the hands of the "Marxist Center" (or, as it is more popularly known in the party, the swamp), composed of Browder, Hathaway, Bedacht, and the doughty master of Marx and Joe Miller who is known as Harrison George. It has been functioning with benefit of clergy and the assistance of Foster as a subordinated, and therefore unwilling, window-front. Foster's position has thus been a mortifying one: humbly taking orders from those he considers unfit to be his own second lieutenants. In an endeavor to find some political basis for separating himself from the "swamp" and eventually rising above it, Foster has developed an "ultra-Leftist" position. Foster an ultra-Leftist? It will be asked in amazement. Isn't that impossible? Doesn't it fly in the face of all the laws of nature, of biology, of science? We will admit that these are hard questions to answer, but the fact remains that this is the position Foster has taken, to the vast amusement of the party members who are in the know. In addition to this trouble, the "swamp" is further tormented by the position of mild hostility taken by Johnstone, on the one hand, and Stachel, on the other. What they stand for is known by very few today, just as very few ever knew what these two stood for. But they are to be seen constantly in back rooms, along corridors, behind screens and similar safe places—shrugging their shoulders, lifting their brows, and whispering a cautious syllable or two about the source of all evil in the party coming "from the top".

To cap the confusion, the center of wisdom, Browder, has disappeared. Many will remember this name as the author of the "conquest of the streets" and the theory that we are on the eve of a revolutionary crisis in the United States—the only man who ever went Bittelman's "apex" one better. This same Browder, however, recently did a somersault with all the skill of a trained acrobat. From conquering the streets, he turned the party

same. Only the costumes are slightly changed. The only part played by our Right wing liquidators was to drum up trade for the reformist montebanks in the hope of making some political capital out of the affair for themselves. They foresaw nothing, or more accurately, they analyzed, foresaw and foretold incorrectly. They simply repeated on a small American scale the policy of Menshevism pursued by the Stalin-Bucharin regime towards the national bourgeoisie of China and the "Left" wing labor fakers of the British General Council of trade unions. The consequences of Lovestone's blunders in this field are less, it is true, but no slighter in their treacherous contempt for Communist principle.

Those who believe Lovestone has learned anything from the miserable debacle with the New York "militants" are doomed to the same disappointment as Lovestone himself suffered. In the same issue where Lovestone so pitifully bewails the "collapse" of his white hopes in New York, he published a laudatory footnote on a new set of "militants", this time in Virginia, where the S. P. state convention, following the Stanley policy of "dumping" their radicalism abroad at cheap prices and leaving none for domestic consumption, passed resolutions of pious praise for the Soviet republic. The real political caliber of these Virginia "militants" of the S. P. is known to almost everybody even slightly acquainted with the composition of Hillquit's party. But for Lovestone, it is any port in a storm. How many weeks will it take this time for the Rev. Age to "discover" that the Virginia port was a poor one, after all; in fact that it was no port at all, but rather another social democratic swamp?

on its head with the advocacy of soup kitchens, cheap meals, and charity relief for the unemployed — thus going Norman Thomas one better. So ardent in his advocacy of this immediate relief was Browder—who knows the meaning of hunger so well from the famine years he lived through under the Lovestone dynasty—that a stir of protest passed through the party ranks and even created a ripple in Moscow.

Result: Browder has received the call! He is on his way to Moscow to defend the soup kitchens as superior to the capture of the streets. What will happen on his return, if he returns, is open to conjecture.

Resolution of the International Secretariat on the Weisbord Group

The International Secretariat, after a study of the publications of the group organized in the United States by Weisbord under the name of "Communist League of Struggle", considers that this group does not stand on the platform of the International Left Opposition, although it makes use of its name and declares itself in agreement with it on the principled divergences which oppose it to Centrism (socialism in one country, Anglo-Russian Committee, Chinese revolution). Outside of this agreement in principle, the theses of this group, the points of view expressed by Weisbord are filled with confusion on questions no less essential for the Left Opposition.

The Weisbord group considers that there is no Communist party in the United States, that the one recognized as such by the Communist International is only another Communist group, favored over other groups by material advantages (better militants, greater numbers, better connected with the labor movement) but not by a different political situation, as a consequence of the support of the Comintern and the Russian revolution. The Weisbord group which declares itself in a general way as constituting a faction of the Communist movement refuses to consider itself a faction of the Communist Party of the United States.

2. The Weisbord group considers that the task of every Communist group is to do "mass work" and that if it knows how to do it and to extend it to every branch of activity, it then becomes the Communist party. It is immediately apparent that this group further, makes an abstraction of the existence of the Comintern and that it considers the Communist parties as having to form themselves outside of the revolutionary forces existing in our epoch. In addition, under the formula "mass work" which it defines as the work of a group which fights for the deep needs of the masses, the Weisbord group understands an activity entirely independent from that of the Communist party, deeming it necessary to address itself to all the workers with its own program, its own aims, its own methods. It reproaches the Communist League (Opposition) in the United States as being only a propaganda group, which

To make up for Browder's absence (and there is only one Browder, for which one may be thankful in these hard times), a "veritable shock brigade" has been mustered out of ambassadorial service and returned to the domestic front. Scanning the ship's lists, we find among the returned such lights as Bittelman, who is to take Browder's place on the secretariat; our long-lost friends Juliet Poyntz and Dunne, and it is said, Krumbein. With such a cast, one can look forward if not to drama, then to lighter forms of entertainment.

Is Foster's star all set for a rise? Will he henceforth be able to make a speech without submitting the outline for Harrison George's approval? Will Bittelman, who pushed the Canadian party a foot deeper into the morass on his way home, return to his compulsorily adopted home where he has been teaching the Kirghiz about American imperialism, or will he stay here with the hope of swimming in a smaller pond but in a bigger way? What, even though it doesn't matter much, will Johnstone and Stachel do, following their record of successively running to earth every job with which they were entrusted? And above all where is the luminary of yesterday, Weinstone, who is as lean and hungry as Cassius and as ambitious as Caesar?

But all these questions are secondary and tertiary in comparison with the question of Browder's future. He worked his way right up from the very bottom. Is he to be sacrificed just for the sake of soup kitchens? Such a course would be unworthy of Stalin who is himself as "pure and transparent as a crystal". Since Browder received the "call" we tremble for his fate. Is he to be made a scapegoat merely for doing what Stalin expected of him? Or if he is to be turned out in disgrace will he, like his predecessors, be the only one to bear the cross? Is he to pass into the great unknown from which there is no returning to the Stalinist apparatus? We shudder at the ghastly thought.

But after all, perhaps he has only himself to blame. He might have known that once he assumed power, he would have to run the risk of being caught up with by the inexorable juggernaut of the Stalinist apparatus. Should he fall into the list of Those Who Are Missing, we shall say sadly of him what the ancient Romans said: "Sic transit gloria mundi", which translated for the benefit and instruction of Jack Johnstone: 'You're here today and gone Monday.'

demonstrates the lack of understanding by the Weisbord group of the rôle of the Left Opposition, which consists of working as a faction of the Communist party with the aim of correcting the political line of the C. P. and of the C. I.

3. Proceeding from this idea of "mass work", the Weisbord group regards as Right wingers those who do not know how to do it and as "Left wingers" those who do. Consequently, he categorically denies the existence of Centrism, finding between the latter and the Right wing tendency only differences of quantity, and not of quality. From this fact, the Weisbord group not only does not act as a faction of the party but further places the latter on the same plane with the Right wing faction (Lovestone).

4. The Weisbord group extols the united front in order to realize "mass work". But as a consequence of the position of rival and not of faction which it adopts towards the party, it declares itself ready to realize the united front with any group whatsoever. This results in bringing him to realize not the united front but political blocs, for example, a bloc with the Right wingers against the Communist party (speech of Weisbord before the New York branch of the Communist League, January 1931). This tactic is contrary to the tactic of the International Left Opposition towards the Communist parties.

The confusionist points of view in the Weisbord group can only lead it into a blind alley, and use up the activity of the few militants which it has grouped around itself as a total loss to the working class. The Communist League (Opposition), which is THE ONLY ORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES ADHERING TO THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF THE LEFT OPPOSITION, will strengthen its work of persuasion among the revolutionary workers of the United States—party members, adherents to the Weisbord group, Communist sympathizers—in order to convince them of the correctness of the points of view of the International Left Opposition. In its turn, the latter will give its full cooperation to its American section (Communist League of America).

THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT