

Comrade Trotsky's Letter to the Weisbord Group

Comrade Weisbord: Your organization on its own initiative has delegated you to get an exchange of views on questions which separate you from the American League...

We are publishing herewith a letter by comrade Trotsky to comrade Weisbord, which was written as a conclusion to discussions held between them.

for its ideas and methods it has purified its ranks of foreign elements. The international conference can and must start from the ideological work already accomplished...

be very glad if your trip here and our discussion will contribute to the going over of your group to the camp of the Bolshevik-Leninists.

Postscript to the Letter to Comrade Weisbord

For the sake of better clarity I wish to add some remarks:

1. If I speak about the inadmissibility of direct or indirect support of the Lovestone group or the Brandlerites in general I do not wish at all to say by that, that these elements could not, under any circumstances, find for themselves a place in the Communist ranks.

Zinoviev and Kameneff represent highly qualified elements. Under the regime of Lenin they accomplished very responsible work in spite of their insufficiency which was well understood by Lenin.

However, it is necessary to take facts as they are in reality. The Brandlerites chased out of the Comintern, and their worst section (the Lovestone group) have proved themselves condemned to political degeneration.

2. The remark made above that the S. A. P. elements are more progressive than the Brandlerites must in no case be submitted to an enlarged interpretation.

Opposition and the S. A. P. with its actual obvious centrist leadership one cannot even speak. The progressive tendencies within the S. A. P. can be uncovered only by our implacable criticism against the leadership of the S. A. P.

We cannot put your American Left Socialists at all on the same plane even with the Centrist leaders of the S. A. P., who at least have broken with the Social-Democracy.

3. In the question of the Labor Party you refer to the decision of the Fourth Congress. The Left Opposition stands entirely on the basis of the decisions of the first four congresses but distinguishes the decisions of principles and program from tactical and episodic decisions.

4. The same thing applies to the question of Centristism. You refer to Lenin. But the task does not consist in referring to this or that quotation from Lenin which is concerned with other times and other conditions.

5. I do not wish to say at all that your group defended in the past the unworthy methods of the Landau group. However, you are in error in thinking that this question is an internal question of the Left Opposition.

English Opposition Expelled from Party

(Continued from page 1)

ter part of 1931. We hold that wrong party policy and bureaucracy in the party are responsible for its unsatisfactory position.

Answer to Threat of Expulsion Unless we give up our point of view, we are threatened with expulsion. But we joined the Party believing it to be the only party for the workers; we still think this, and we shall hold both to our point of view and to the party.

We do not want to return in order to "vote and keep quiet," we want to play our part in the struggle against wrong policy, against bureaucracy, and for the correct policy essential for Communist work for the revolution.

We are, comrades, yours fraternally, THE BALHAM GROUP

Table listing members of the Balham Group: Steve Dowdall (11 years' membership), Jim Barrett (8), D. Groves (6), F. Chalcraft (8 months), I. Mussi (8), C. Whiting (8), Harry Wicks (11 years' membership), Henry Surra (9), Reg. Groves (5), N. Dowdall (6), M. Simmons (8 months), W. Pyne (9).

MILITANT BUILDERS

Well, the August contest is over. At the head of the staff stands a new name—comrade Weber of the New York branch. He tops the list with a total of four dollars in subs.

Close behind him was a Minneapolis standby, comrade H. Schwartz; and close behind him were a number of comrades who usually score bullseyes in these contests.

Table listing names and amounts for Militant Builders: J. Weber (4), H. Schwartz (3), A. Weaver (2 1-2), W. Wynne (2), H. Mashow (2), M. Abern (2), R. Sacharow (2), J. Keller (2), L. Goodman (2), J. Edwards (1), C. Cowl (1), P. Schulman (1), R. Karsner (1), R. Ruskin (1), L. Schlossberg (1).

The record by branches finds New York away out in front with 15 1-2 dollars in subs. In second place, displacing Minneapolis, comes Chicago.

Table listing cities and amounts: New York (15 1-2), Chicago (6), Minneapolis (5 1-2), Philadelphia (3), Cleveland (2), Boston (1), Miscellaneous (7 1-2).

In a week or so we will be back at you comrades with a brand new idea. It will put all of you on your toes and have you up early and late getting subs. While you are waiting breathlessly for our announcement suppose you run around and get new bundles orders.

REVOLUTIONARY LESSONS AND WHITHER ENGLAND

The first of these two works by comrades Lenin and Trotsky is out. We have on more. But we still have a few of Whither England. This will probably be the last call on this book.

ner, that is to say, upon the basis of participation in all the life of the proletariat. I am not able to admit that anyone of the leaders or of the members of the American League denies this principle.

Let us admit, for a minute, that the American League lacks this or that possibility in mass work. I am ready to admit that your group would be able in that respect to complete the work of the American League.

5. Above, I have called the position of your group eclectic. By this I do not wish at all to express any condemnation as a whole which bars the possibility of a future rapprochement.

6. Your group has raised up the slogan of an international conference with the participation of all the organizations and groups who count themselves with the Left.

2. Your group has rejected up to the present the definition accepted by us of the International Socialist fraction as Bureaucratic Centristism.

That the Lovestone group does not represent a purely reformist organization is incontestable, but the question is in its tendency and political orbit.

Certainly, in a number of partial questions, the Lovestone group has taken a position more correct than the official party but to conclude a bloc with the Lovestone group would mean to augment its general authority and by that to help it to fulfill its reactionary historic mission.

3. Your criticism of the American League starts to considerable degree from wrong premises (the most important of which are given above).

Upon the bases of criteria which are partly false, partly insufficient and arbitrary, you deny, as I have said, the existence of differences in principle between the American League, the Lovestone group and the official party.

4. You stress with special energy the necessity of active participation on the part of the Left Opposition in general in the movement and the struggle of the working masses.

It is true that the program lists in its "basic" demands the "seven hour day without reduction in wages" which it

The Left Opposition is not a mechanical sum of vacillating groups but an international fraction created on the granite basis of the principles of Marxism. A rapprochement and a fusion with the International Left Opposition is not able to be obtained through organizational manipulations or through adventurist combinations a la Landau.

Before everything you must keep clearly in mind that the road to the International Left Opposition leads through the American League; a second road does not exist. Unification with the American League is possible only on the basis of unity of principles and methods which must be formulated theoretically and verified by experience.

The most important extracts of your article could be printed in the International Bulletin as information material. Naturally the question will be decided by the American League.

It is not necessary to say that I shall

Unemployed Activity in Retrospect

(Continued from last issue)

We do not mean to create the impression that it is incorrect to fight for these demands wherever they are issues. But by an almost exclusive concentration on these demands the larger objectives of the movement are lost sight of and these demands do not become steps leading toward the development of class consciousness and the raising of the struggle to a higher plane, but ends in themselves.

This can best be seen from the text itself. The program is based on "a recognition of the fact that those who own and control the wealth and government are willing to allow millions to suffer hunger and want in order that their great wealth shall not be drawn on for relief."

It is in keeping that such "theoretical" opportunism should find its counterpart in the schema of fighting methods. Under the heading, How to Formulate and Fight for Immediate Demands, there is to be found the following axiom of opportunism: "It should be obvious that if we constantly appear in a given relief agency to dispute over the contents of every basket—the authorities will soon find it more convenient and safer to grant the demand for cash relief or more adequate relief as the case may be."

What working class content do these formulations and methods have? What is there in them to which a well-meaning, Christian clergyman cannot subscribe? Have the Stalinist authors of the program, like the Socialist Party, forgotten the class struggle? Who are the "all" who are responsible for mass unemployment? This is degeneration to liberalism. It makes of the occasional militant phraseology of the program a ghastly masquerade.

It is true that the program lists in its "basic" demands the "seven hour day without reduction in wages" which it

the movement the united fronts which the program projects must become united fronts of workers sympathetic to Communism, which is to say, no united fronts at all. More than this, because of the movement's orientation on relief unemployed workers for the most part, are drawn into the movement and the united fronts will be, are composed of unemployed workers sympathetic to Communism.

What remains is another milestone on the road to the opportunist swamp. The program in practice cannot bring us closer to our revolutionary goal. It leads in another direction. It will not serve to develop class consciousness through struggle because the struggle which it will conduct is conducting, is based on reformist premises.

One Step Forward

Against this opportunist course the Opposition has repeatedly warned. It has done more than that. It has offered a program in place of the ideological mess of porridge the Stalinists have served up. In its Open Letter to the C. C. of GPUSA, issued early in 1931, it enumerated six basic points of a Marxist program upon which to build a fighting working-class movement for relief.

It predicated its program on the absolutely correct assumption that the fight for relief must be a general class fight embracing both employed and unemployed workers. It rested its program on the obvious truth—for Marxists—that, for revolutionists, a relief program had to be linked up with the final revolutionary goal as a step toward that goal.

On this basis it placed in the forefront of its program the slogans of the six-hour day, five-day week with no reduction in pay; unemployment insurance at the expense of the capitalist class and its government; and long-term, large-scale credits to the Soviet Union. It called for a fighting movement around these central slogans and stated that such a movement could be built only on a genuine united front basis.

That this program was not accepted by the party ever—one knows. That, how-

ever, did not make it incorrect. Today it is as correct as it was when issued. The party's failure to build a movement around its program emphasizes the correctness of our program in a negative sense.

The class struggle will yet force the adoption of our program. But we cannot wait while unparalleled opportunities are being wasted by the Stalinists. It is time now to make a step forward. The party should adopt our program now. It should begin by opening up a discussion in its ranks on the entire question of unemployment and the fight for relief.

Pioneer Publishers Notes

LITERATURE RUNNING OUT We want to sound a serious note of warning to all our propagandists and comrades. For some time we have, all of us, been speaking of a wave of membership coming over to us from the inevitable smash-up of Stalinism.

Orders are pouring in from every corner of the globe. Our stocks are dropping. Whoever is lacking a copy of this or that work by comrade Trotsky had better order it at once. Whoever is busy propagandizing workers had better lay in a supply now before some of the titles are unavailable.

The great interest in our literature can be seen in part from what comrade Buehler writes from Kansas City. It is quoted in The Militant Builders Column. This is not an exceptional instance. The daily mail brings evidence after evidence of our growing influence.

BOOKS BY TROTSKY: PROBLEMS OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION, HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, THE SPANISH REVOLUTION, THE TURN IN THE C. I. AND THE GERMAN SITUATION, WORLD UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN, DRAFT PROGRAM OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, THE REAL SITUATION IN RUSSIA, PIONEER PUBLISHERS.

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