

The League of Stalinist Agents for Social Patriotism

A Political Analysis of the Lovestone Group And its Reactionary Role

Question Box

By A. WEAVER

Some comrades are inclined to view the present Brandler-Lovestone group's whitewashing of Stalinist social-chauvinism as merely the latest of the long series of situations in which Stalinism has found a loyal attorney in this so-called "Communist Party (Opposition)..."

To those who take such a view, we wish to point out that all the necessary conclusions must be drawn from the fact that the 7th Congress was an open break with revolutionary principles, and particularly with a revolutionary principle tested on an international scale in 1914: the revolutionary struggle against war.

The Test of Events

It is true that the Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country" (and no other), which became the official doctrine of the Comintern, and sharply separated the Left Opposition from both the Stalinists and Lovestonites, was also a break with the revolutionary internationalism of Marx and Lenin. Nevertheless, the full practical consequences of this theory were not immediately apparent to even the most advanced workers.

Even after Germany, many advanced workers said to us: "Your analysis is still only a hypothesis. After all, the Comintern has not formally broken with those fundamentals of Marxism which are generally viewed as the revolutionary position—such as the revolutionary struggle against war."

The Seventh Congress

The official blessing given to social-patriotism by the Seventh Congress confronted the Lovestone group with an inescapable decision. The Seventh Congress was not merely another incident. They had to choose: Either break with the social-patriotic Comintern or capitulate to it. Capitulation meant, this time, capitulation on fundamental principles with no nonsense about "disagreeing but continuing our work for unity."

This all-important question produced a crisis in the Lovestone group. The proof of the significance which we attribute to the issue of the Seventh Congress for the Lovestonites, is supplied by their own testimony. For a few weeks, they teetered back and forth on the edge of breaking with Stalinism. In those few weeks, they clearly indicated what the issue was. Then—they turned back and, ever since, as we shall show, they demonstrated that to remain a "loyal opposition" after the Seventh Congress, requires an entirely new level of subservience to Stalinism; requires, in fact, nothing less than a whitewash of social-patriotism and to play the role of Stalinist agents for organic unity.

Lovestonites Caught Unawares

The Stalinist turn to social-patriotism caught the Lovestone group unawares. Their diagnosis of what was wrong with the Com-

intern was that it was ultra-leftist. We, on the contrary, have always contended that the ultra-left swing of the C. I. (1928-1934) was only one side of Stalinism, that Stalinism veers right or left in obedience to the temporary requirements of the Soviet bureaucracy. Witness the right-wing zigzag of 1924-1926. Denying our contention, the Lovestonites were left open-mouthed when the chauvinist actions of the Comintern began to pile up. The Lovestonite paper had, in fact, been full of gleeful items about the gradual improvements in the Comintern line when, overnight, they had to face the fact that the Comintern had gone over bag and baggage to social-chauvinism.

The first spontaneous reactions of the Lovestone group was to estimate the Comintern actions in fairly accurate terms. Even Lovestone himself gave a speech on July 12, 1935, entitled "Shadows of 1914 Hover Over the Comintern." The same title served for a report from Brandler. The difference in character between previous differences with the Comintern and the latest was put quite sharply by Herman D. Wolfe, on August 10, in an article entitled, "The Comintern in Danger of Degeneration." Under the heading, "A Question of Principles," Wolfe declared:

"Here are no mere tactical differences such as separated the Lovestonites and the Opposition till now. The International is actually in danger of breaking with revolutionary principles. . . . If it does not speedily, decisively reverse its path, it is headed for the gravest crisis in the history of the International, so grave that 1928-1935 will seem insignificant in comparison."

In the draft thesis for their national convention, the National Committee of the Lovestonites characterized the Comintern line in these terms:

"Such a policy would be open social-chauvinism no matter under what banner it would be conducted."

In the Workers Age of August 24, M. S. Mautner said:

"Dominant in the Comintern today is the Social Democratic (chauvinist) trend. This policy has not yet been sanctified by decision of the Seventh Congress, nevertheless all arrows point in that direction. . . . There is left no doubt but that this program of opportunism and social-chauvinism has become the line of the Comintern."

"The leadership of the C. I. is deserting the most elementary principles of class struggle," declared Barney Herman.

Presumably in consonance with these estimates of the social-patriotic degeneration of the Comintern, the National Committee of the Lovestonites proposed that the coming convention drop the name of "Communist Party Opposition" and, striking out independently, adopt the name "Communist Labor League."

Drawing the Conclusions

None of the leaders of the Lovestonites explicitly drew any conclusions from the situation. It remained for a younger member of their group to put the problem in clearer terms. After summing up what all the others had said, Jesse Lane declared (August 31):

"All of this is true but not one takes up the question of this desertion of principles in relation to the future of the C.P.O." Now, Lane pointed out, unity with the Comintern would first require that it repudiate chauvinism. If the Seventh Congress line is carried out, said Lane, "we will have to declare that the Communist International is no longer the revolutionary international."

But in the same issue in which Lane's article appeared, it was already clear that Lovestone himself had no intention of breaking with the Stalinist. In an article whose cynical legalism has seldom been paralleled in the labor movement, Lovestone began to build a bridge back to Stalinism over the unfortunate remarks about "chauvinist degeneration," "social-patriotism," etc. Naturally, after what he himself had said about "shadows of 1914," he had to retrace his steps slowly. But what he said was plain enough:

The Road Back

"To conclude that the beginning of this tendency, on the part of the Comintern, towards a Social Democratic position in regard to democracy is already the full adoption by the C. I. of the attitude of the Second International, would be the worst of folly."

There was a struggle in the Lovestone group, but Lovestone had his way at the convention, even the opposition voting for his shameful resolution on the Seventh Congress. This resolution explicitly denies that the Stalinists have become social-chauvinist, and in fact gives it a clean bill of health, saying that "there can be no talk of

1914 for the Communist International." As a face-saving device, there is a perfunctory remark in the resolution that if the Comintern line is continued it is "bound to lead to outright social-chauvinism and reformism." The convention also dropped the idea of changing the name of the group to Communist Labor League, and continued the old name.

If the remark that the C. I. line was "bound to lead to outright social-chauvinism" were seriously meant, rather than the main line of the resolution's defense of the Comintern, this would have expressed itself in systematic, sharp polemic against the social-chauvinist line, as it continued and deepened. Instead, however, the issues of the Workers Age published since the convention resolution appeared on September 14, have shamelessly continued to build the bridge back along the line that Lovestone began. A few examples must suffice.

Wolfe's Somersault

B. D. Wolfe, who, on August 14 had spoken of "chauvinist degeneration," has the brass, by November 30, to modify term the Stalinist line a "modification by the Communist International of certain aspects of its traditional position!" The same Wolfe declares, on Dec. 7, "Stalin's actual stature, if truthfully reported, is gigantic enough without falsification." Lovestone develops the theory that the "sole" deviation of the C. I. is on the question of "mixed wars," and that even this deviation arises from the laudable desire to protect the Soviet Union! As if every chauvinist did not declare that he supported capitalist governments from the laudable desire to protect working class organizations from the foreign enemy; and as if there could

MARCH OF EVENTS

By JACK WEBER

GERARD ON RADICAL "DOG-HUNT"

James W. Gerard, former U. S. Ambassador to the Kaiser's Germany, wants to introduce the terrorist methods of German Fascism into America. This agent of the capitalist ruling class sees the class struggle assuming more open, more sharpened form here too in no distant future. Hence he takes the opportunity in an address of "welcome" to some newly naturalized citizens in Jersey City to inject the proper note of terrorism against the militants of the working class into his speech. He warns that "those who will not conform to the institutions of this country, who seek to overthrow our government and substitute some foreign communism, will soon be hunted like mad dogs in our streets."

What the upholder of American capitalism means by "conforming" is obvious. He means that the employed workers shall submit to the wise guidance of the bosses when they deem it necessary to cut wages and lengthen hours; that they shall not attempt to better their lot by daring to organize into unions and to strike against the oppressors and exploiters. He means that the eleven million unemployed shall starve patiently on the miserable dole given in a spirit of Christian Rooseveltian charity, without making too much of an organized nuisance of themselves to disturb the parasitic upper crust of capitalist society. Gerard would exterminate the Marxists, he would spread the virus of revolt among the other "dogs" the working and toiling masses. Gerard's fears, needless to say, arise not because of any foreign importation of communism into America from abroad, but because the same struggle for power by the proletariat is inherent wherever the capitalist system exists, in the United States as well as in Europe. And when the struggle becomes clear to the workers, they will know how to defend themselves against the "dog hunters," how to answer the Fascist white terror of the Gerards. They will set up their own institutions and their own standards of conformity.

HOARE'S FAUX PAS

The ex-Foreign Secretary of Great Britain has been sacrificed by the reactionary Baldwin government to prolong the life of the present cabinet. Hoare failed to act with that proper savoir faire, that hypocritical ease in saying pleasant nothing while committing evil deeds that is the recognized hallmark of bourgeois diplomacy. The great crime of Hoare is to have revealed in brutal nakedness just what the Baldwin government meant all along. The elections having passed, Hoare felt it unnecessary to pretend any further that British imperialism has the

slightest interest in the Ethiopians or in anything but the power and the pocketbooks of English capitalists. The resignation of the Foreign Secretary does not mean in any sense that the intentions of Baldwin have changed or that the actual proposals to give Italy half of Ethiopia were "wrong." All it means is that the necessary amount of diplomacy, i. e., of sham and fraud, will have to be used to cloak these real designs and to cloud them in secrecy. The game will be played with greater astuteness by the left-over Edens and Chamberlains as a result of the fall of Hoare. He is symbolic of the power of British cant and hypocrisy whose roots extend deeply into the labor movement as well as into bourgeois circles. Only those who really represent the deepest interests of the masses are not interested in fooling the masses. Only, that is to say, the Marxist vanguard.

OUTER MONGOLIA

The visit of important officials of the Soviet government to Outer Mongolia to Moscow is but a sign of the ominous nature of the situation in the Far East. However extended the theater of war, when it breaks out, between Japan and the Soviet Union, Outer Mongolia will be an important part of it. The Japanese army has long declared its intention of strangling the Soviet maritime provinces by cutting off their communication with Russia and the Ural region. This could be best accomplished through means of a campaign through Outer Mongolia to cut the Trans-Siberian Railroad. In self defense against the Japanese bandits the Soviet government has been laying tracks parallel to those of the Trans-Siberian, but further north, in addition railroad lines are being laid by both Japan and the Soviets to be ready to pour troops into the Mongolian sector. The seizure of North China by the Japanese robbers has the two-fold aim of laying the basis for the further gobbling up of China, and for more extensive preparations for invading Siberia. War in the Far East seems only a matter of the briefest time. If Japan invades Outer Mongolia—and this seems to be the intention of the Japanese army—the incident will be provided that will set the world ablaze in a war of intervention against the Soviet Union. European repercussions would not be long in following. All the moves made by England with respect to Italy have as their dark background the next stage of developments, with Hitler Germany preparing to strike at the Ukraine. England would like to see a solid front of Germany, France, Italy and herself against the Soviet Union, with Hitler acting as the spearhead of conquest and reaction. Workers must be on the alert to aid in the defense of the Soviet Union.

Herberg's "Masterly" Contribution

The Tacit Admission

When we published an article exposing the political role of the Lovestonites as Stalinist agents, in which we emphasized the development of the line exemplified by Herberg's article, the Lovestonites hysterically denounced us. But their very denunciations provide additional proof of their role as Stalinist agents. They say the Trotskyists aim "to obstruct all efforts aiming at the unity of all class-conscious elements as a basis for a broad and all embracing united labor front." Since the second half of the sentence speaks specifically of a united labor front, presumably something else is meant by "unity of all class-con-

scious elements." The same idea appears several times. They speak of our "savage hostility to the Communist Opposition for its effective work in championing the cause of unity in the labor movement." It is clear that these are no mere references to united fronts! The Lovestonites tacitly admit our charge that they are championing the cause of organic unity between the C. P. and the S. P.

Who is served by such a "cause"? Not the Socialist Party, which has taken a position against the war-provoking sanctions which the Stalinist supporters, who slowly and haltingly but nevertheless definitely, are taking a course in fundamental opposition to the Lovestonite stand ready for the most nefarious services on behalf of Stalinism. This we can now prove to the hilt.

Explain This Away—Lovestone!

On June 15, in the period when the Lovestonites were undecided on what position to take toward the C. I. chauvinist line, a long article appeared in their paper, by George F. Miles, certainly an authoritative spokesman, on the question of organic unity. The article vehemently denounced the French Stalinist proposals for organic unity. It speaks of the principle of the organizational independence of the revolutionists, and will have nothing to do with those who wish to destroy this principle. It speaks passionately of the differences between revolutionists and chauvinists. "Principled differences which expressed themselves in veritable rivers of blood." It describes the fundamental gap between reformists and revolutionists, and concludes: "As long as this condition remains, he who comes before the proletariat and promises organic unity is a charlatan, is misleading the working class, for such is impossible."

Once the Lovestonites capitulated to the Stalinists on the question of the Seventh Congress line, however, the opposition to organic unity disappears, and instead, these gentlemen, who have so often in the past stressed the distinction between unity and the united front, and demanded precise terms on these questions, now are developing a barrage for "unity." "Working Class Unity is Need of the Hour," says Will Herberg (Nov. 9), and declares that "the movement for unity is forging rapidly forward, making great headway on every front." The article is a fantastic confusion of the problem of organic unity and the problem of united fronts; and deliberately so, since the Stalinist line on war makes it impossible to speak of a united front between pro-sanctions Stalinists and anti-sanctions Socialists. Herberg throws overboard the whole theory of principled united fronts on specific issues, and calls for united fronts on the war question between Socialists and Stalinists; and Herberg has the gall to do so without once mentioning the social chauvinism of the Stalinists! How is it possible for two utterly different lines on war to be reconciled in one united front? Herberg supplies an answer which deserves to be printed in acid on his brassy forehead; like the attorney for Stalinism that he is, he advises the Socialists that it is not necessary to unite on a correct or revolutionary program, and for this unprincipled position he offers as bait the backwardness of the masses.

Herberg's "Masterly" Contribution

In order to be really fruitful, Socialist-Communist cooperation must be cemented on such a basis and on such a program as will most effectively mobilize the organized labor movement for action. The question is not how "correct" or how "revolutionary" a program or a slogan may be but how reasonable an appeal it makes to the trade unionist who is beginning to feel keenly the need of doing something about the danger of war," etc. (Our emphasis.)

On the key question of revolutionary policy, the war question, Herberg does this! Who can he possibly be serving, except the Stalinists who, knowing that the backward workers, imbued with bourgeois ideology and otherwise unassisted, would move toward social-patriotism, desire to stifle the revolutionary Socialists in a "broad, united front" in which they could propagate their social-patriotism.

When we published an article exposing the political role of the Lovestonites as Stalinist agents, in which we emphasized the development of the line exemplified by Herberg's article, the Lovestonites hysterically denounced us. But their very denunciations provide additional proof of their role as Stalinist agents. They say the Trotskyists aim "to obstruct all efforts aiming at the unity of all class-conscious elements as a basis for a broad and all embracing united labor front." Since the second half of the sentence speaks specifically of a united labor front, presumably something else is meant by "unity of all class-con-

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Proved to the Hilt

On November 23 we published an article analyzing the Stalinist role of the Lovestone group. The Nov. 30 issue of the Workers Age replete with characteristic abuse but with no answer to our political arguments. Apparently, however, our article has created some sharp questioning within the Lovestone ranks and their contacts who became suspicious of the Lovestone leadership because of its perfidious behavior of three paragraphs. On December 14, therefore, the Lovestonites print a long article, hysterical in tone, denouncing once again our Nov. 23 article. Their second article is, however, no more illuminating than the first; it maintains a strict silence about all the political questions we have raised, and attempts to cover up this silence by its howling and yowling (except as we have pointed out above, that it tacitly admits the C.P.O.'s role as Stalinist brokers for an unprincipled marriage). In a familiar-enough method, which in law is termed "entering a general denial," that is, a method of denial which does not come to grips with the actual charges made, the Lovestonites demand that we reveal to them our sources of information on negotiations carried on by them with Comintern representatives and negotiations of Herberg and Zimmerman with Socialists. We have no intention of revealing to Lovestone our sources of information, who feel they can be more useful to the revolutionary movement by remaining for the present in the Lovestone group. Precisely because he knows that our sources are there, Lovestone raises his cry for proof, because if we reveal our sources he will be saved from future exposures, and if we do not, he can attempt to rest on his general denial. But, as we declared in our first article, one has only to read the Workers Age to find all-sufficient independent verification of our confidential information. Our present article, without going outside the boundaries of the Workers Age itself, has proved to the hilt our original contention: The Lovestonites are Stalinist Agents, to be treated with the same contempt and to be fought as intransigently, as Stalinism itself.

FRED B. BROOKLYN

Question: What principled argument is there against the slogan of a "labor party" if the latter is really composed of honest, militant elements?

Answer: Even were it possible to grant the abstract thesis concerning the "honest, militant elements" which contradicts the reality as to who would dominate a labor party in this country today, the slogan would still remain false.

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THEATER BENEFIT

Tickets are now available for "Let Freedom Ring," which has been moved to the Civic Repertory Theatre with the original cast. This means that you can see the best labor play yet produced, with an excellent cast, at reduced rates. Tickets can be purchased at the district office of the party, 55 East 11th St. The date is Monday evening, Jan. 13. Prices range from 30c up to \$1.50.

NEW MILITANT

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M.F., BOSTON— Question: Does not the granting of independence to the Philippines by the Roosevelt government show that there is a fundamental difference between American imperialism and European imperialism?

Answer: The question itself indicates that the Roosevelt strategy, which is that of deception, and is intended to aid him in the coming election, has a certain measure of success. What essentially is changed by the "independence" of the Philippines? Control of the island in both an economic and military sense remains as firmly entrenched as before in the hands of American finance-capital. The formal rights which have been granted the Philippines may be compared to the formal democracy which the workers have under capitalism: Every so often they cast their ballots for certain people, but nothing is essentially altered, regardless of how they vote; the real control remains in the hands of the masters, the finance-capitalists.

Because its economic and financial superiority and control is in itself sufficient to cope with competitors in its colonies, American imperialism is able to forego direct military and political control of such spheres of influence, e.g., Cuba. (A large navy deters other imperialist powers from attempting to offset their economic deficiencies by military means, and the same guns can be used against revolting masses.) This particular circumstance, the absence of American troops from certain of its colonies, permits Yankee imperialism to take on a liberal coloration which it attempts to use in its own interests. At the present time the strategy is to use the formal "independence" of its own colonies as a stepping stone towards advancing the slogan of the "independence" of the colonies of the other imperialists, particularly of those of Great Britain, i.e., to make these colonies independent of British but dependent upon American capital. "Independence" was thus granted the Philippines because American imperialism, attempting to establish a territorial base in China, is preparing to advance the slogan of the "liberation" of India in case of a conflict with Great Britain.

The weapons and methods may vary but there is no fundamental difference between Yankee and European imperialism: bandits remain bandits.

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Answer: Even were it possible to grant the abstract thesis concerning the "honest, militant elements" which contradicts the reality as to who would dominate a labor party in this country today, the slogan would still remain false.

Insofar as it would not stand for revolution but would fight for the interests of the workers, a "labor party" must necessarily be a political party which confines its struggles to the immediate demands of the workers, and to the achievement of reforms for the latter, within the framework which capitalism will permit. Such a party could realize its aims and justify its existence thereby, only if capitalism were still in its progressive stage, and thus capable of granting such reforms. To advance the slogan of the "Labor Party," therefore, is to put forth the concept that capitalism is still in its progressive stage and the international revolution a thing of the distant future.

We proceed from the Leninist thesis, however, that capitalism, imperialism in character, is in a state of decline; that the capitalists, far from being able to grant "reforms" to the workers, can exist only by increasing the latter's misery; and that even the "immediate" needs of the workers can be attained only by an overthrow of capitalism. From this flows the necessity, not of a party of "immediate demands" but, against the latter, a revolutionary party for the struggle for power.

The slogan of a "Labor Party" is the negation of the slogan of a "Revolutionary Party," and it is no accident, therefore, that the adoption of the "Labor Party" slogan by the Communist Party coincides with the latter's adoption of a reformist position generally, and correspondingly, a move for organic unity with the Socialist Party.

CANNON SPEAKS ON LABOR WAR IN MINNEAPOLIS

James P. Cannon, who has just returned from a stay in Minneapolis, will speak on the labor war in Minneapolis and the struggle in the A. F. of L. He will give a first-hand account of the heroic struggle of Local 574 against Green's "Red Purge."

The meeting will take place Sunday evening, Jan. 5, at Irving Plaza, Irving Place and 15th Street. We call to the attention of our readers in New York that there will be no public meeting held on Sunday, Dec. 29.