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MAX SHACHTMAN
Editor.
HAROLD ROBERTS FRANK GRAVES
Associate Editors.
S. STANLEY
Business Manager.

Lovestone's Travels

The Lovestone group, now called officially the Independent Communist Labor League, has covered much rough ground during the past year and a half. This week-end the group meets in national convention, in order, presumably, to sum up for itself the results of its travels.

For eight years the Lovestoneites functioned as a faction of the Communist International, acting within the labor movement as the unrecognized, unrewarded, and unhonored attorneys of the hangman of the Kremlin.

For eight years, standing for the "reform" of the Communist International, the Lovestoneites were the most ardent defenders of the "main line" of the policies which were strangling the Russian and the international revolution.

For eight years they preached that "socialism in one country" was entirely correct—for Russia and for eight years they out-Stalinized the very Stalinists in the slanders and denunciation which they poured forth against the Trotskyists, against the revolutionary opposition.

Today they proclaim the hopeless bankruptcy of the Communist International and their own final break therefrom. They call for the creation of a new Marxist party of the workers.

Such a change is of course progressive. Whatever the motivation, whatever the reasons given for it, whatever the past, any such break—however inadequate or halting— from the poisonous orbit of Stalinism is so much to the good.

But, in every case, it is necessary also to understand the reason and causes, and the precise nature and implications of the given break.

The Lovestoneite leadership clung desperately to their past policy until the mighty waves of engulfing historical events smashed that policy to fragments. Even in the face of the trial of Zinoviev-Kamenev they continued, and as the Kremlin's unofficial attorneys they elaborated, their own foul lawyer's briefs to justify the massacre of the founders of the Revolution. Yes, even in the first period following the trial of Radek-Piatkov they continued this.

It was not until the enormity of Stalin's crimes and the work of the Commission of Inquiry had alienated from the Kremlin and its chief assassin the opinion of virtually the entirety of civilized mankind, including the overwhelming bulk of the militants among the Lovestoneite membership, that the Lovestoneite leadership began to seek a way out from the filth which they had piled around themselves.

To the militants in the membership that turn, however belated, meant and still means a march forward into the clear air of the road toward the new revolutionary party and the new revolutionary international.

To the leadership the turn meant and still means a frantic search for some more plausible substitute which will continue to give them an excuse for continuing "independent" clique existence and those "independent" slick maneuvers which Lovestone and Herberg identify with revolutionary politics.

Lovestone and Herberg have found their substitute just in time, and are ready to drop it, wrapped and ribboned, in the lap of their convention.

In place of the Comintern, they have, as their delicious surprise, the London Bureau! To make up for the loss of "so-

cialism in one country," they offer, in crisp bright ideological cellophane, the theory of American exceptionalism!

There are two main reporters at the convention: Lovestone on the international question, presenting the line of the February Congress of the London Bureau; Herberg on the national question, with the point of view summarized in his article in the June 25 issue of *Workers Age*.

Lovestone would build the new International by uniting with the stale and impotent centrists of the London Bureau, who can teach him from many years' experience how to be "against both the Second and Third Internationals" and yet sabotage and block any real move toward the new international; those anti-Popular Frontists who join the Popular Front whenever they are let in; those anti-Stalinists who cover up Stalin's crimes and cannot, at their congress, even put to a vote a resolution on the Soviet Union; those anti-imperialists who, like Pivert, take posts in the imperialist government until they are thrown out on their ears.

But any other kind of internationalism from Lovestone would prove too awkward for Herberg. For the real meaning of Lovestone internationalism comes out with full clarity in Herberg's article in *Worker's Age*.

After going to all the trouble and expense of sending a delegate to the congress, you would think out of mere politeness Herberg would have made some reference to it. But do not be deceived: Lovestone-Herberg internationalism is for holidays and European junkets; it is not meant seriously in the "maneuvers" of "realistic" politics on one's own home ground.

Not once is internationalism or any international perspective even so much as mentioned by Herberg. The whole article is a polemic in the old, old style, against looking "abroad for inspiration," against "mechanically 'translating' European approaches into American terms." For, you see, America is different. The European "isms" (and doubtless wars and crises also, for this is implied by the other) don't take on in America.

Not merely our tactics, but "our program, our strategic course, our policies... must be drawn"—not from where revolutionists find them, in the experience of the international working class, but where any good patriot finds them—"from our own social soil, from a systematic study of the conditions of the American class struggle" ("in the light of Marxism," piously adds Herberg, though it is hard to see where Marxism comes in when it yields neither program nor strategic course, nor policies nor tactics).

And Herberg goes on to argue that the role of the group must be to immerse itself in the labor movement "as it is," not "to remake the labor movement in our own image"... "we are part of the labor movement, an organic and inseparable part"... In such words, in their given context, does Herberg abandon the idea of the revolutionary vanguard, and provide the theoretical prop for a rank and flexible opportunism, a systematic exploitation of the shifting moods of the labor movement, which he hopes will be enough basis on which to keep his group alive.

There is no crime in change; rather is it a crime not to change when events and the interests of the working class demand it. But it is a crime also, in revolutionary politics, not to change cleanly, and to make the change only a new device for old deceptions.

The militant workers in the Lovestone group want a new revolutionary party and a new revolutionary international. But in the policy proposed to their convention by Lovestone and Herberg, that wish comes up against the blind and insurmountable wall of the London Bureau and American exceptionalism. If Lovestone and Herberg trap their entire organization along that road, it is as thoroughly doomed as if the last two years had never been. If the members are to translate their wish into reality, they must break firmly from that road onto the broad highway of genuine revolutionary internationalism. Whether or not they, or some of them, will do this is, in actuality, the one question before their convention.

"We Communists Disdain To Conceal Our Aims"



Unity Against The Union Wreckers!

The reactionary role played in the American labor movement by the Stalinist union-wreckers has been dealt with on more than one occasion in these columns. Like a cancer eating away at the vitals of a healthy organism, the Stalinist machine has been bent for years on a rule-or-ruin policy in the trade unions, calculated to capture and use them as part of the war machine of the Kremlin bureaucracy and American imperialism.

The Stalinists have registered unmistakable successes in their work. One union after another came under their control or at least their decisive influence; and where they did not dominate directly, they prevailed through stooges and innocents or in alliance with some of the most corrupt and reactionary elements in the labor movement.

Opposition Is Growing

In recent times, however, there has been a growing movement of opposition to Stalinist control, expressing the horror and indignation of the healthy and progressive rank-and-file at the broad trail of misdeeds which the Communist Party agents have hacked through the trade unions they penetrated. And especially where this rank-and-file movement has proceeded intelligently and not allowed itself to be lured into the trap of red-baiting, or to be used by forces just as black as the Stalinists, it has recorded gratifying progress. If it has not always been able to unhorse the Stalinist bureaucrats, it has not failed to be a painful thorn in their sides and to give promise of the resurgent left wing movement that will yet purge the American trade unions of its poisons and maladies.

A few instances will suffice to show the trend.

In the marine transport industry, the Stalinists, headed by Harry Bridges of the longshoremen, whom Lewis appointed boss of the West Coast C.I.O., were having their own way for quite some time, without encountering serious opposition. Now they have not only ended by getting into head-on collision with the A.F. of L., and with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (which is part of the C.I.O.), but have met with a stiff and conscious opposition from the ranks of the marine workers themselves.

Movement On Coast

The Sailors Union of the Pacific, speaking through its paper, the West Coast Sailors, and the left-wing militants of the Marine Firemen's union, through their paper, West Coast Firemen, have conducted a running fight which is so effective that the overwhelming majority has turned against the Stalinist gang in

these two unions, on the West Coast. To a lesser, but growing extent, this movement is finding roots in the other marine transport unions in the West and around the Gulf, and has even established substantial contacts with militants among the longshoremen who have had their bellyful of Bridges and his cohorts.

Nor is everything as rosy as it once was for the Stalinists on the Atlantic seaboard. Up to recently, Curran, lord high commissioner of the National Maritime Union, who, if he is not a C.P. member, acts just like one, has, together with his Stalinist aides, been undisputed master of the situation, that is, if we omit from consideration the mossbacked Ryan bureaucracy among the longshoremen, which the militants have been combatting for years.

Clarity Is Needed

Unfortunately, the Pilot, like the movement it speaks for, does not have the clarity of mind and purpose that characterizes the West Coast Firemen, for example, and this fact militates against the best interests of the struggle against the Stalinists and the future of the movement itself. Mingled with honest militant and progressive elements are not only conservatives, but confusionists who often do more harm than good.

A rank-and-file progressive, anti-Stalinist movement cannot make real headway and serve the cause of unity and militancy, by protesting its own "Americanism"—that can safely be left to the Browderian patriots—or by confusing the Stalinists with "Reds"—which they are not— or by condemning working class political action just because the Stalinist version of labor politics is a monstrous abomination. This defect, by the way, is often to be seen in the material published by the organ of the S.U.P. Understandable though syndicalist and anti-political prejudices may be as a working class reaction to the stench of reactionary Stalinist politics, the former is not a valid substitute for the latter, and can only end by doing irre-

parable injury to the progressive forces.

Among the Painters

Progress against Stalinist union-wrecking is also to be noted among the painters of New York, where, in District Council 9 of the Painters' Union, the Weinstein machine was swept into office two years ago on the wave of protest against Zausnerism. The record of the Weinstein machine, which promptly allied itself with most of the "ousted" Zausner gang leaders, has been dealt with adequately in these columns.

The revolt of the rank-and-file against Stalinist mismanagement, at first spontaneous, was given necessary organizational form and consciousness mainly through the medium of an excellent four-page tabloid paper, the *Progressive Painter*, a model in many respects of a fighting union journal. By means of it, the progressives polled 46 per cent of the vote in the elections, which makes the narrow victory obtained by the Stalinist machine something they cannot afford to be proud of.

Which brings us to a decisive point. Wherever the Stalinists operate, they work as an organized and disciplined machine, with vast resources at their disposal. That even this handicap can be overcome in time by the rank-and-file and the progressive movements, is shown by the vote in the painters union, where, with a very recently organized group and little funds at their disposal, the rank-and-file were able to get more than 3,000 votes for candidate Stevens and missed victory by only 600 votes.

A Lesson To Learn

But to overcome the handicap, the left wing, progressive and rank-and-file movements everywhere have a lesson to learn and, if you please, a leaf to tear out of the Stalinist book: *Organization and a Press!* A progressive group that forms on the eve of an election and disperses after the vote is counted, which relies on mouth-to-mouth agitation alone, cannot get very far. The militant firemen on the West Coast proceeded differently. They brought forth an excellent antidote to the Stalinist lie-machine: a fighting paper, issued regularly, and devoted to the simple idea that telling the truth, systematically and vigorously, will finally break the domination even of the powerful Stalinist machine.

In the old days, the communists set the pace for organizing and coordinating the efforts of the left and progressive movement in the trade unions, and giving them systematic, centralized and effective expression through regularly published papers. Nowadays, the C.P. is the vanguard and prop of bureaucracy and reaction in the unions,

Trotsky on Lovestone

No, It Is Not The Same!

The Workers Age of June 11 carries an article in defense of Lovestone and Company's long years of subservience to the Thermidorian bureaucracy. This article proves once again that these people are incorrigible.

The Difference Explained

We will explain briefly the difference to these gentlemen. The Mensheviks are a conservative, petty-bourgeois party, tied up with imperialism. In the October Revolution they united with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. During the Civil War, the right wing of the Mensheviks (Maisky, Troyanovsky and many others) stood on the side of the imperialists—some even with weapons in hand.

Trial of Mensheviks

The defendants in the trial of the Mensheviks in 1931 were little-known or completely unknown people, whose political past did not offer any guarantee and whose political views at the time of the trial remained entirely unknown.

If, in view of the stated circumstances, I admitted the possibility that these or other Mensheviks, or former Mensheviks, were really involved in imperialist intrigues and combinations, I did not at all, however, come out as the defender of the Stalinist bureaucracy and of Stalinist justice. On the contrary, I continued in irreconcilable struggle against the Moscow oligarchy.

The case was—with Mr. Lovestone's permission— somewhat different in the trials against the "Trotskyists." By its entire past, this grouping had shown that it was little inclined to friendship with the bourgeoisie and with imperialism.

Lovestone Knew the Truth

The literature of the "Trotskyists" has been and still is accessible to all. Zinoviev, Kamenev—were figures of international magnitude. I believe Lovestone knew them personally sufficiently well. The accusation against them was politically and psychologically preposterous.

The trials against the "Trotskyists" took place five years after the trial of the Mensheviks. During those five years, our literature succeeded in completely unmasking the Thermidorian bureaucracy with its methods of frame-up and amalgam.

Not to know and to see all this was possible only to those who did not want to know and see. Precisely in this category belong Brandler, Lovestone and their friends. They did not believe for a single moment that Trotsky,

the servitor of the old-line fakery (and their younger emulators!) in beating down any progressive opposition that appears.

For Unity Of Effort

The American labor unions, the C. I. O. particularly, contain thousands of militants, progressives, class-conscious workers—men and women who are for democratically-controlled unions, for class struggle policies, against bureaucratism and class collaboration. At present, their efforts are largely futile. United, centralized, given voice and direction, they would be a tremendous power. What has been done in a few unions shows what can be done in all of them, provided the progressives everywhere act with unity and determination.

It is high time the rank-and-file militants came together, first in their respective unions and then nationally, to constitute themselves a fighting bloc in the trade union movement of this country. It is high time that they started a counter-offensive against the union-wreckers. Unless the Stalinists and their allies are balked in time, they will not stop until the labor movement lies prostrate and ruined at their feet.

Action—speedy, unified, resolute—is the need of the hour,

Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov, Radek, Piatkov and the others were counter-revolutionary terrorists, allies of the fascists, etc.

Good-For-Nothing

Lovestone and Company are good for nothing as Marxists, but no-one considers them idiots. They knew very well that we were confronted with a gigantic frame-up. But since in their petty-bourgeois, cowardly and conservative policy they had firmly bound their reputation with that of the Thermidorian bureaucracy, they made an attempt to follow it to the very end, in the hope that Stalin would succeed in his violation of public opinion. In their hearts they hoped that for this service the Kremlin would finally "recognize" them and call them to "office." Only when they saw that the Moscow super-falsifier had failed ignominiously did they step aside and recognize in a half-voice their "slight" mistake.

In France, at the end of the last century, a Jewish officer, Dreyfus, was accused of espionage. Dreyfus was a figure unknown to anyone. One could be thoroughly sincere, a democrat, a socialist, an opponent of anti-semitism, etc., and still admit the possibility that Dreyfus might really be a spy: such cases are not at all infrequent among officers. But it is quite another thing to come out in defense of the French general staff, and of all kinds of reactionary scoundrels, and to take part in the anti-semitic newspaper campaign.

Mistakes and Mistakes

Between these two "mistakes" there is some difference, gentlemen of the Workers Age! One mistake has an episodic character; the other flows organically from a policy shot through and through with rottenness.

I am not writing this for Lovestone and his clique. These people are hopeless. For 15 years they were only shadows of different groups in the Soviet bureaucracy. Lovestone was a Zinovievite with Zinoviev, a Bukharinite with Bukharin, a Stalinist with Stalin. For 15 years he repeated all the slanders and falsifications against the so-called "Trotskyists." His fraternization with Vyshinsky and Yagoda in 1936 was a natural link in this shameful chain. Lovestone cannot be re-educated. But in the ranks of the so-called Lovestoneites there are undoubtedly entirely sincere people who are being systematically misled. For them, I write these lines.

LEON TROTSKY.

Coyoacan, D. F.
June 18, 1938.

Some 1,400 workers of the Long Island Lighting Company, members of six locals of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, A.F.L., have won a contract recognizing the union as sole collective bargaining agency for mechanical employees and providing for uniform sick benefits, a five per cent wage increase for those earning less than 60 cents an hour, and a six-months' limitation on probationary periods.

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Some workers of the Eagle Pencil Company, 710 East 14 Street, New York City, are on strike against a 10 per cent wage cut. Six professional strike-breakers, who had incited serious riots, were arrested last week. The workers are members of Local 1224 of the United Electric, Radio and Machine Workers Union, C.I.O.

HOW TO FIGHT WAR

Isolation
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by
JAMES BURNHAM

16 pp. 3c
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116 University Place
New York City

ASK FOR THE APPEAL AT YOUR NEWSSTAND

Workers of the business department of the Pittsburgh Press (Scripps) and the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph (Hearst), members of the Newspaper and News Distributors Office Workers Union, Local 2134L, A.F.L., have after a short strike obtained a contract providing for pay increases, paid vacation and sick leave. Closed shop was not obtained.

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