

The MILITANT

SEMI-MONTHLY ORGAN OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF AMERICA (OPPOSITION)
"It is necessary that every member of the Party should study calmly and with the greatest objectivity, first the substance of the differences of opinion, and then the development of the struggles within the Party. Neither the one nor the other can be done unless the documents of both sides are published. He who takes somebody's word for it is a hopeless idiot, who can be disposed of with a simple gesture of the hand."—Lenin.

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Conference of the Opposition Communists Formation of the Communist League of America {Opposition}

The National Conference of the Opposition Communists was held in Chicago on May 17, 18, and 19 and culminated in the formation of the Opposition forces into a National organization. The name of the organization is the Communist League of America (Opposition). The Conference adopted the Platform printed in the February 15th issue of *The Militant*, proclaimed its full solidarity with the Russian and International Opposition under the leadership of Trotsky and undertook the task of organizing American Communists, inside and outside the Communist Party of the United States, on the Platform of the Opposition. A constitution for the Communist League was adopted embodying the principle of democratic centralization as laid down in the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International. A National Committee of seven members was elected to direct the work of the organization. The following constitute the National Committee: James P. Cannon, Maurice Spector, Martin Abern, Max Shachtman, Arne Swaback, Carl Skolund and Albert Glotzer. Membership cards are to be issued and the monthly dues rate was fixed at 50 cents with an initiation fee of the same amount. The chartering of local branches will begin at once. For the time being Canadian branches will be directly affiliated and will function as a part of the single organization.

The Communist League will carry on a program of independent activities in the class struggle and will also continue to work as a faction within the Party.

The Conference consisted of 31 delegates with voting rights and 17 alternate delegates with voice but no vote. Twelve cities were represented as follows:

	Delegates	Alternates
New York	5	4
Philadelphia	2	2
Cleveland	1	0
Detroit	2	0
Youngstown	1	0
Chicago	5	4
St. Louis	3	1
Kansas City	1	0
Springfield, Ill.	2	0
Minneapolis	5	5
St. Paul	2	0
Toronto, Canada	2	1
Total	31	17

Groups in a number of other cities which were unable for financial reasons to send delegates sent greetings and pledges of support. A letter from comrade Trotsky was read to the conference amid great enthusiasm. Letters were also read from comrade Malkin in Comstock Prison, from the Opposition groups in France, Czecho-Slovakia and other countries.

The conference was permeated through and through with the pioneer spirit of self sacrifice and determination in the struggle for principle. The delegates were almost entirely workers who came direct from their jobs. A large percentage of them beat their way to the Conference; others came crowded together in battered automobiles borrowed for the occasion; three or four only paid bus fare and one delegate rode a train—on a railroad worker's pass. Lodgings for the out-of-town delegates were provided at the homes of Chicago comrades and sympathizers. Many of the delegates paid their own expenses for meals and in-

By James P. Cannon

cententials. None of them received wages or per diem.

The entire Conference was thus carried through with an unrivalled maximum of economy. This revolutionary capacity for hardship triumphed over the handicap of the meager financial resources of the Opposition, which works without subsidies of any kind, and made our National Conference possible. For a movement less vital and less confident of its future, the circumstances would have completely prohibited such a National gathering.

The sessions of the Conference were conducted throughout with a business-like efficiency and precision in sharp contrast to the desultory, dragged-out and time-wasting affairs which have become the rule in recent years under the regime of "petty bourgeois politicianism". Being firmly united on main lines of principle and free from the factional intrigue which arises from the lack of it, there was no need for the Conference sessions to be held up and delayed for the deliberations of rival caucuses. It began promptly, on time the first day and conducted all the following sessions precisely according to schedule.

The Conference was marked by a freedom of discussion on all questions which enabled all points of view to be brought fully and fairly before the body. Collective judgement, not caucus manipulation, was the aim sought and achieved. Conflicting opinions which arose over secondary questions were brought out in-

Opposition Progress in Minneapolis Vote

C. R. Hedlund, candidate for mayor of the Communist Opposition, now the Communist League of America (Opposition), received a vote of 896 to 827 for the Communist Party candidate in the mayoralty election campaign held in Minneapolis, Minn., on May 13th. The Communist Opposition and Party candidates were the only ones running on a labor ticket; all others were out and out supporters of the capitalist class. The Minneapolis Opposition group campaigned for comrade Hedlund on the platform of the International Opposition led by comrade Trotsky and espoused the fundamental principles of the Communist movement and the Comintern founded by Lenin. (The local platform of the Minneapolis Opposition was printed in the previous issue of *The Militant*.) In seven of the thirteen wards, comrade Hedlund (a railroad worker, expelled by the Stalin bureaucrats for supporting the Opposition platform) defeated the Party candidate. Meetings were held throughout the campaign and special leaflets were distributed among the workers, as well as *The Militant*.

The Minneapolis Opposition unquestionably commands leadership over the majority of the revolutionary and Communist workers of Minneapolis. Their steadfast allegiance to the principles of revolutionary Communism and their fight on behalf of the workers in the daily battles in the shops, trade unions, etc., has won them that support by the class conscious working men and women. It is the Minneapolis Opposition comrades who built and gave prestige to the Communist Party there. And it is the healthy tradition of the Party built by our comrades before their expulsion which enabled the candidate of the Party bureaucrats to receive even the votes he did. Despite slander by the Party officialdom and the advantage of the Party in running on the official ticket, with its greater resources, press, the Opposition candidate received the greater vote. The Minneapolis elections testify to the firmness and determination of the Communist Opposition to hold aloft the banner of Communism under the leadership of the greatest living teacher of Bolshevism, Leon Trotsky. The Minneapolis comrades intend to conduct a sticker campaign for comrade Hedlund in the general elections on June 10th. All class conscious and revolutionary workers in Minneapolis are urged to write in the name of C. R. Hedlund, on the ballot then. The Minneapolis comrades by their work are putting a spoke in splitting tactics of the Stalin bureaucrats and are working for the unity of the Communist movement and the development of a revolutionary working class movement.

to the open. Earnestness without diplomacy characterized the discussions and put upon the decisions finally arrived at the stamp of real conviction. The final results of the discussion showed a complete unanimity and solidarity of the entire Conference on all the main questions, and the Opposition Communists face the heavy tasks before them as a firmly united body.

The agenda of the Conference was as follows:—

1. The Situation in Russia.—Reporter Comrade Shachtman.
2. The Crisis in the Communist International.—Reporter comrade Spector.
3. The American Situation and the Tasks of the Opposition Communists.—Reporter comrade Cannon.
4. Trade Union Questions.—Reporter comrade Swaback.
5. The Organization of the Communist Opposition.—Reporter comrade Abern.
6. Youth Questions.—Reporter comrade Glotzer.
7. Press and Literature publication program.—Reporter comrade Shachtman.

All the reports were expositions and elaborations of the various sections of the Platform which represents the settled view of the Oppositionists on all the important questions confronting the American Movement. The nature of these tasks has not changed since the Platform was drafted for submission to the Convention of the Party a few months ago and, consequently, the Conference saw no necessity for the writing of a new one. After the discussion on all the main reports had been concluded the Platform was adopted by unanimous vote. Editorial revision and reformulation of some sections were made in order to express the decision of the Conference to pass over from the stage of a purely internal faction of the party to a National Organization also conducting independent activities and recruiting non-party communists, without altering the line of the document. The Youth section of the Platform was also rewritten to deal more comprehensively and concretely with the problems of the Communist Youth.

The Conference adopted resolutions on the Class War prisoners of America, on the imprisoned and exiled Bolshevik-Leninists of the Soviet Union, and messages of greetings to comrade Trotsky and to comrade Malkin.

The report and discussion on the trade union question were a prominent feature of the Conference. A constructive line of Communist policy on this question, restating fundamental conceptions derived from American and world experience and sharply opposing the present false line of the Party, was unanimously demanded. The policy outlined in our Platform on the Trade Union Question, as concretely elaborated in a number of articles in *The Militant* and in the report of comrade Swaback, was supported by all the delegates. The discussion on this point was enriched by the speeches of comrades from all parts of the country and from Canada who have years of experience in the trade union struggle behind them. The "new line" of the Party, outlined in the preparation for the T. U. E. L. Conference and in its recent activity, was refuted and condemned on theoretical and practical grounds.

It was clear to all that the future activity of the Opposition is indissolubly bound up with its organization form and, consequently, great

CONTINUED ON PAGE EIGHT

Tasks of the American Opposition *A Letter from Comrade Trotsky*

To the American Bolshevik-Leninists
(The Opposition)

Editors of "The Militant"

Dear friends:

I follow your journal with great interest and am delighted with its fighting spirit. The history of the origin of the American Opposition is itself highly characteristic and instructive. After five years of struggle against The Russian Opposition, it required a journey of members of the Central Committee of the American Party, and even of its Political Bureau, to a Congress in Moscow in order for the first time to find out what so called "Trotskyism" is. This single fact is an annihilating indictment against the regime of Party police rule and poisonous falsification. Lovestone and Pepper did not create this regime but they are its staff officers. I convicted Lovestone of a foul ideological falsification (see my book "Europe and America.") Under a fairly normal regime that alone would have been enough to bury a man for a long time, if not for good, or at least to make him confess and repent. But under the present regime, to reenforce their positions, the Lovestones need only stubbornly repeat the falsifications that have been exposed. They do this with utter shamelessness, imitating their present teachers, or rather their administrative bosses. The spirit of the Lovestones and Peppers is fundamentally opposed to the spirit of the proletarian revolution. That discipline towards which we strive — and we strive towards an iron discipline — can be founded only upon consciously won convictions which have entered into the flesh and blood.

I haven't had an opportunity of close contact with the other ruling elements of the American Communist Party—except, to be sure, Foster. The latter always seemed to me made of more trustworthy material than Lovestone and Pepper. In Foster's criticisms of the official leadership of the Party there was always much that was true and acute. But as far as I understand him, Foster is an empiricist. He does not want to, or is not able to, carry his thinking through to the end, and make upon the foundation of his criticisms the necessary generalization. For that reason it has never been clear to me in what direction Foster's criticism is pushing him: to the left or to the right of the official Centrism. We must remember that besides the Marxist Opposition there exists an opportunist Opposition (Brandler, Thalheimer, Souvarine and others.) This same empiricism apparently suggests to Foster the whole form of his activity, which consists of struggling against the little devil with Satan's support. Foster tries to conceal himself with the defensive coloration of Stalinism in order by this contraband route to move toward the leadership of the American Party. In revolutionary politics the game of hide-and-seek never yet gave serious results. Without a general principle position upon the fundamental questions of the world revolution, and first of all on the question of socialism in a single country, you cannot have permanent and serious revolutionary victories. You can only have bureaucratic successes, such as Stalin has. But these temporary successes are paid for by the defeat of the proletariat and by the falling apart of the Comintern. I do not think that Foster will achieve even those second class aims which he is pursuing, for the Lovestones and Peppers are much better fitted to carry through a policy of bureaucratic centrism, having no real character, and being ready in twenty-four hours to put through any zig-zag whatever according to the administrative necessities of the Stalinist staff.

The work to be achieved by the American Opposition has international-historic significance, for in the last historic analysis all the problems of our planet will be decided upon American soil. There is much in favor of the idea that from the standpoint of revolutionary order, Europe and the East stand ahead of the United States. But a course of events is possible in which this order might be broken in favor of the proletariat of the United States. Moreover, even if you assume that America which now shakes the whole world will be shaken last of all, the danger remains that a revolutionary situation in the United States

may catch the vanguard of the American proletariat unprepared, as was the case in Germany in 1923, in England in 1926, and in China in 1925 to 1927. We must not for a minute lose sight of the fact that the might of American capitalism rests more and more upon a foundation of world economy with its contradictions and crises, military and revolutionary. This means that a social crisis in the United States may arrive a good deal sooner than many think, and have a feverish development from the beginning. Hence the conclusion: **It is necessary to prepare.**

As far as I can judge, your official Communist Party inherited no few characteristics from the old socialist party. That became clear to me at the time when Pepper succeeded in dragging the American Communist Party into the scandalous adventure with the Party of LaFollette. This low-grade policy of parliamentary opportunism was disguised with "revolutionary" chatter to the effect that the social revolution will be achieved in the United States not by the proletariat but by the ruined farmers. When Pepper expounded this theory to me upon his return from the United States I thought that I had to do with a curious case of individual aberration. Only with some effort I realized that this is a whole system, and that the American Communist Party had been dragged into this system. Then it became clear to me that this small Party cannot develop without deep inner crises, which will guarantee it against Pepperism and other evil diseases. I cannot call them infantile diseases. On the contrary, these are senile diseases, diseases of bureaucratic sterility and revolutionary impotence.

That is why I suspect that the Communist Party has taken over many of the qualities of the socialist party, which in spite of its youth struck me with features of decrepitude. For the majority of those socialists—I have in view the governing strata—their socialism is a side-issue, a second-class occupation accommodated to their leisure hours. These gentlemen consecrate six days of the week to their liberal or commercial professions, rounding out their properties not without success, and on the seventh day they consent to occupy themselves with the saving of their souls. In a book of my memoirs I have tried to outline this type of socialistic Babbit. Evidently not a few of these gentlemen have succeeded in disguising themselves as Communists. These are not intellectual opponents, but class enemies. The Opposition must steer its course not on the petty-bourgeois Babbits, but on the proletarian Jimmie Higginses, for whom the idea of Communism, when they are once imbued with it, becomes the content of their whole life and activity. There is nothing more disgusting and dangerous in revolutionary activity than petty-bourgeois dilletantism, conservative, egotistical, self-loving and incapable of sacrifice in the name of a great idea. The advanced workers must firmly adopt one simple but invariable rule: Those leaders or candidates for leadership who are, in peaceful, every day times, incapable of sacrificing their time, their strength, their means, to the cause of Communism, will oftentimes of all in a revolutionary period become direct traitors, or turn up in the camp of those who wait to see on which side the victory lies. If elements of this kind stand at the head of the Party, they will indubitably ruin it when the great test comes. And no better, are those brainless bureaucrats who simply hire out to the Comintern as they would to a notary, and obediently adapt themselves to each new boss.

Of course the Opposition—that is the Bolshevik-Leninists—may have their traveling companions, who, without giving themselves wholly to the revolution, offer this or that service to the cause of Communism. If would of course be wrong not to make use of them. They can make a significant contribution to the work. But traveling companions, even the most honest and serious, ought to make no pretence to leadership. The leaders must be bound in all their daily work with those they lead. Their work must proceed before the eyes of the mass, no matter how small that mass may be at the given moment. I wouldn't give a cent for a leadership which can be sum-

moned by cable from Moscow, or anywhere else, without the masses ever noticing it. Such leadership means bankruptcy guaranteed in advance. We must steer our course on the young proletarian who desires to know and to struggle, and is capable of enthusiasm and self-sacrifice. From such people we must attract and educate the genuine cadres of the Party and the proletariat.

Every member of the Opposition organization should be obliged to have under his guidance several young workers, boys from 14 to 15 up, to remain in continual contact with them, help them in their self-education, train them in the questions of scientific socialism, and systematically introduce them to the revolutionary politics of the proletarian vanguard. The Oppositionist who is himself inadequately prepared for such work should hand over the young proletarians recruited by him to more developed and experienced comrades. Those who are afraid of rough work we don't want. The calling of a revolutionary Bolshevik imposes obligations. The first of these obligations is to struggle for the proletarian youth, to clear a road to its most oppressed and neglected strata. They stand first under our banner.

The trade union bureaucrats, like the bureaucrats of false Communism, live in the atmosphere of aristocratic prejudices of the upper strata of the workers. It will be tragedy if the Oppositionists are infected even in the slightest degree with these qualities. We must not only reject and condemn these prejudices; we must burn them out of our consciousness to the last trace. We must find the road to the most deprived, to the darkest strata of the proletariat, beginning with the Negro, whom capitalist society has converted into a Pariah, and who must learn to see in us his revolutionary brothers. And this depends wholly upon our energy and devotion to the work.

I see from comrade Cannon's letter that you intend to give the Opposition a more organized form. I can only welcome that news. It wholly follows the line of the views expounded above. In the work which you are doing well-formed organization is necessary. The absence of clear organizational relations results from an intellectual confusion or leads to it. The cry about a second party and a fourth international is merely ridiculous, and should be the last thing to stop us. We do not identify the Communist International with the Stalinist bureaucracy, that is, with the hierarchy of Peppers in different degrees of demoralization. At the foundation of the International there lies a definite group of ideas and principles, conclusions from the whole struggle of the world proletariat. That group of ideas we, the Opposition, represent. We will defend it against the monstrous mistakes and violations of the 5th and 6th Congresses and against the usurping apparatus of the Centrists, who upon one flank are wholly going over into the ranks of the Thermidorians. It is too clear to any Marxist that, in spite of the enormous material resources of the Stalinist apparatus, the present governing faction of the Comintern is politically and theoretically already dead. The banner of Marx and Lenin is in the hands of the Opposition. I do not doubt that the American division of the Bolsheviks will occupy a worthy place under that banner.

With hearty Opposition greetings,

L. TROTSKY.

Constantinople.

THE MILITANT

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Editor
James P. Cannon

Associate Editors
Martin Albert
Max Shaotman
Maurice Spector

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The Party is 'United' Again!

Latest 'Open Address' of the E. C. C. I.

The latest decision of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, which characterizes the leadership which it had imposed on the Party as representative of "petty bourgeois politicaldom" who practice "rotten diplomacy" and "unprincipled manoeuvring," and who are infected with "Opportunism" and "right deviations," is only a belated acknowledgement of truths established long ago. The proclamation of these well known facts, which anyone could have learned from reading *The Militant*, or from the most casual study of the party in recent years, has no more importance in itself than a new discovery of America by a Twentieth Century Columbus. The significance of the decision of the Centrist apparatus of the Comintern lies rather in the reasons which motivated it. It is there that the American Communists must look for an understanding of its meaning. Otherwise they will not yet see the way out of the morass of factional deception and unprincipled manoeuvring of which the miserable Lovestones and Peppers were only the American agents.

The Lovestone-Pepper leadership of the Party was an artificial and unnatural one and it never could have controlled the Party by its own means. The Stalin regime in the Comintern was directly and fully responsible for this factional excrement which paralyzed the Party and dishonored it before the working class. Its whole career has been that of petty bourgeois adventurism and its character has been thoroughly and completely exposed time and time again before the Executive Committee of the Communist International. But each new exposure, accompanied by indisputable proof of the incalculable harm it was bringing upon the Party, was only the signal for reinforced support for these shoddy fakers from the Stalinist apparatus which saw in them its American replica. Why, then, do these two-by-four charlatans all of a sudden get the boot? Does it mean a new course and a new regime in the Party. Only the most credulous political infants can cherish this illusion. The decision itself is a factional manoeuvre to deceive the awakening proletarian wing of the Party and find a temporary way out of difficulties by those mechanical methods which characterize the present leadership of the International.

The Motive of the Decision

Its ostensible removal of the leadership of "petty bourgeois politicaldom" was motivated by internal factional considerations. It was the exigencies of the struggle against "Trotskyism" in the first place which made necessary a new front and a make-believe change in America. The rise of the American section of the International Opposition brought the fight against the petty bourgeois leadership of the Party out of the "factional underworld" where it had been smothered for years into the open before the whole party and the sympathizing workers, and exposed its inter-relation with the ruling faction in the Russian Party and the Communist International. The Lovestone-Pepper regime, the product of intrigue and manipulation and mechanical intervention from above, could not stand up in such a fight. These characterless adventurers could survive only in the "inside game" of degenerated factionalism. In the open struggle involving principle questions they were merely targets which drew the concentrated fire of the Opposition to the International regime which they represented and symbolized.

The proletarian revolt against them grew steadily in this open struggle and took two forms: first, the open adhesion to the Opposition on the part of the most advanced and conscious elements; second, the consolidation of a "legal" Opposition within the Party destined, by the logic of the struggle, to move toward us. The decision of the Stalin Executive was designed to counteract these processes by setting up a new "front," discarding the most dis-

credited and vulnerable persons and putting figureheads in their places. This is the role assigned to Foster; that of bond salesman—so to speak—of the old regime under a new name.

The second consideration for the pious disavowal of Lovestone and Pepper was the developing factional struggle in the Russian Party between the Stalin Centrists and the Bucharin-Rykov Right Wing. The ruling faction of the Russian Party and the C.I., since the death of Lenin has been a bloc between the Right and Center against the Left. The nature of this bloc was explained long ago in the Platform of the Russian Opposition and its collapse was foretold. The break-up of the Right-Center bloc is proceeding now with break-neck speed, as everybody but the Party member who relies on the Party press for information knows. Lovestone and Pepper were caught in this quicksand. Their closest relations had been with Bucharin and, being much closer in their ideology to progressive liberalism than to Leninism, their instincts were to support the Right tendency. Thus they shared the opportunist view of the world situation and the prospects of the American movement officially expounded by Bucharin at the Sixth Congress. This is not to say that Lovestone and Pepper were bound by any scruples of "loyalty" to principles or persons. The object of these political hi-jackers above all was to keep Party power on any basis—right, left or center, or what have you?

Their "mistake" consisted in their failure to guess quickly enough the way the wind was blowing in the Russian Party and they did not "repudiate" Bucharin in time. For this they got the axe and the American proletariat was notified by cablegram of a change in its leadership. Their sad fate is a warning to all who aspire to leading positions under the Stalin regime to guess quickly and guess right.

The New Leadership

Does the decision mean that the Party is now to be handed over to the Foster-Bittelman faction? Nothing of the sort. The banishment of Bittelman (Alas! Poor Aleck!) should be sufficient to dispel this idea. The object is to graft Foster and similars onto the present ruling faction, getting rid of a few of the most discredited leaders who had become "excess baggage" and squeezing out those with any strength to maintain a position of their own. The "new leadership" thus created will be without a trace of independence or ability to stand on its own feet. The collapse of this synthetic leadership is inevitable.

Leadership cannot be made to order. This is written in the ghastly experience of our own party and that of others since Stalinist machinations took the place of Leninist guidance and direction in the International. Leaders who get their authority by appointment have none. Cablegram leadership is not worth the price of the cablegram. All these artificial combinations, patched together arbitrarily and imposed from above only serve to discredit the party before the workers and undermine faith in Communist leadership in general.

Servility and hypocrisy are the by-products of bureaucratism. These odious traits, alien to a proletarian movement, are glaringly revealed in the flood of "endorsements" of the C. I. decision by the very functionaries who are denounced by it. Those who were closest to Lovestone and Pepper and bound up with them in all their practices casually plead guilty to crimes which merit expulsion from the workers movement and then try to pass off this cynicism as a virtue of "self criticism." The Communist worker who puts confidence in them is doomed to more disappointments. Proletarian leadership must have moral as well as political prerequisites.

Another Factional War

While many of the former lackeys of Lovestone and Pepper are quite "sincere" in renoun-

cing them now in order to save their own skins, it is quite obvious that the unanimous "endorsements" of the decision are a cover for a diplomatic factional game on the part of others. Juliet Poyntz, who always discovers the shortcomings of her leaders the minute they lose their power, explains this in a special letter to the *Daily Worker*. And John Otis, in an "Open Letter" to the Party members and to "the members of the National Miners' Union" explains that Pat Toohey, the National Secretary of the Union, is still working in behalf of Lovestone. The organization of a factional struggle against the C. I. decision and the new leadership it creates is proceeding with full speed. The latest "liquidation" of factionalism and "unification" of the Party, like the others, will only result in a fiercer factional war.

Deprived of further support of the Stalin machine and thus freed from the necessity of adapting themselves to its "left" manoeuvres, Lovestone and Co. will undoubtedly develop their struggle on a Right Platform and endeavor to connect themselves with the Right Wing on an International scale. They will quickly take issue with the insane "left" program of the Party on the trade union question and will wage war on the "new line" on all fronts. The question whether this fight will break out into the open in the immediate future or remain concealed for a period of preparation depends merely on tactical considerations. The struggle is already beginning and indications are that it will break into the open in the near future. It will result in a new split in the Party.

The Duty of the Opposition

This struggle will bring the great principle questions, which are rending the International, deeper into the Party ranks and will help to clarify the issues between the Right Wing, Stalin Centrism and the Leninist Opposition. The Party will be shaken to its foundation again. The Party members, wearied of factionalism and seeking to solve everything by shutting their eyes and raising their hands, will confront factionalism more rampant than before. Many of them will begin to think seriously over the situation and to search for a principle explanation of the factional fever that racks the party.

The extent to which the situation is clarified and a new proletarian nucleus in the party is educated and consolidated on principle lines depends to a very large extent upon the activity of the Opposition which has been excluded from the Party. The "Enlightenment Campaign" announced by the Party apparatus, which preaches salvation by simple mechanical measures backed by administrative power and subsidy, must be countered by a real campaign of education on Leninist fundamentals, explaining the inter-relation of the problems of the American Party, the crisis in its leadership and its degenerated factionalism with great world issues at stake in the struggle between the International Opposition, the Centrists and the Right Wing which is already leaving the proletarian path.

The Opposition, having stood up and developed under the first seven months of its open struggle, having consolidated its forces at the National Conference and having established closer bonds with the world movement of the Bolshevik vanguard has been given a great opportunity for further development and expansion by the new exhibition of Centrist bankruptcy. Intransigent struggle for Leninist principle is our watchword. We are confident that every Oppositionist will do his duty.

THE CAPITULATORS

A letter written from Constantinople to a Russian Oppositionist comrade, dealing with the news of the capitulation of Preobrazhensky, Radek and others, written by comrade

TROTSKY

Will Appear in the Next Issue

What the T.U.E.L. Conference Should Do

The national conference of the Trade Union Educational League scheduled for Cleveland on June 1st has been postponed for three months to August 31st. The reason for the postponement is a cable of instructions received from Losovsky, general secretary of the Red International of Labor Unions (Profintern) which says in substance:—

The preparations and response to the conference thus far are unsatisfactory. The Profintern is tired of fake journalistic successes and achievements which have no genuine content. Either the conference is to represent broad masses of workers that can form a real basis for a new center of the left wing—which is not the case thus far—or else no new center should be built at all.

This is a timely warning to which others of equal and greater importance must be added. The delay gives the Communists and the left wing militants additional time to reflect upon the tasks confronting the movement and act with sober consideration. Whatever action is taken at Cleveland must be taken without self-delusion or deception of the workers who follow the left wing. Mistakes made at so critical a period as the present will surely have such serious consequences as may retard the development of the left wing for a long time to come.

The conference must state definitely that it is a center of the left wing whose aim is to unite the whole labor movement on the basis of a militant class policy, a center of the new unions formed up to now with the left wing minorities in the old unions. The center must not be set up as a national trade union federation that parallels the A. F. of L. and the conservative independent unions. The implications contained in all the articles of the Stalinite leaders in this country are that Cleveland will see the formation of another De Leonist Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance under Communist control. It is true that none of these writers state this precisely and avoid the question as to precisely what is to happen at Cleveland like a cat avoids a bowl of hot porridge. But the militants must reject this pernicious custom of confronting its supporters with accomplished facts without discussion or enlightenment.

The conference must resist the growing tendency to give up the reactionary unions as a bad job, to withdraw the militants from them on the slightest pretext and set up brand new "class unions" which are perfection itself and have only the slight defect that they are sects without mass following. This is no abstract warning. Meetings and conventions of the reactionary unions in the last year or two have seen an almost absolute minimum of left wing representation.

The conference must put the banner of "Unity of the Trade Union Movement" in the front ranks of the left wing. The movement has been shifted off the rails of correct class policy to such an extent in recent times that it very virtuously refuses to have anything to do with anyone or anything that does not accept every tenet of the Communist or left wing program. The left wing must be the first to propose and fight for unification of the ranks of the trade union movement on a minimum program of action. The fact that the corrupt union bureaucrats do not want such a unification does not invalidate this plan in the least; it merely helps to increase the number of workers who turn away from the influence of the fakers and follow the leadership of the left wing.

The conference must reject the spurious "leftism" and sectarianism characterized by the prevalent attitude towards the progressives. The development of such broad progressive oppositional movements is vital in the struggle against the labor reactionaries and the employers. Every forward surging current, every difference in the ranks of the bureaucracy, should be utilized to organize, temporarily or permanently, such opposition movements . . . the left wing, organized in and around the T. U. E. L., make joint movements with the progressive groups upon the basic elementary and burning issues . . . A basic

condition for building and strengthening the trade union movement is the defeat and overthrow of the present ultra-reactionary controlling bureaucracy and the establishment of a militant fighting leadership. The main strategy to accomplish this is by united front movements between a well organized left wing and the progressive group, carrying with them the masses of the organized workers, and putting through such fundamental propositions as the organization of the unorganized, the formation of a labor party, etc. In such combinations the progressives will often waver and fail, and it will always fall to the left wing to be the determined driving force, but these movements constitute the correct strategy at this stage of the American labor movement."

William Z. Foster, "Misleaders of Labor," pages 311-312. (Our emphasis.)

This was correct 18 months ago when it was written and remains correct today. Here also, its validity remains unchanged despite the fact that the Progressive group just organized has a number of S. P. fakers in it, despite the fact that Foster is singing in a different tone today because of the change in his factional relationships with the Comintern and Profintern, despite the invention of the Bucharinist "third (or is it now the fourth?) period."

The conference must sharply condemn the actions of the Stalinites in control of the T. U. E. L. who have expelled members of the Communist Opposition from the organization with-

out as much as charges being preferred, a trial being held or notification given the victim—solely because of political differences in the Party. The T. U. E. L. call appeals for democracy in the trade unions, and correctly so. But it will not have a scrap of value and arouse no faith in the masses if it begins this fight by abolishing democracy in the T.U.E.L. The removals of comrades Swabeck, Hedlund and Skoglund from the T.U.E.L., and the attempt to wangle George Voyzey out of his position in the National Miners Union of Illinois must be condemned out of hand. This kind of work only delivers weapons to the reactionary trade union fakers who seek to justify their expulsion of militants from the unions by pointing to the Stalinites who expel Communist Oppositionists from left wing organizations. These are not the methods of the class conscious left wing movement. They are the methods of "petty-bourgeois politics" existing in the Party. The left wing has had enough of Lewisism and Sigmanism.

The intolerance of the Stalinites to all criticism except that which they are forced to swallow by force pump in Moscow only makes it all the more necessary for the serious workers in the movement to turn their attention to these problems. In coming issues of the Militant we will yet return to the question of the T.U.E.L., conference and deal with other phases that have not been thoroughly treated.

—M. S.

BITTELMAN ON THE CROSS

A Hard Luck Story

"Before he set out upon his great expedition, Alexander settled the affairs of Macedon, over which he appointed Antipater as viceroy, with twelve thousand foot, and near the same number of horse. He also enquired into the domestic affairs of his friends, giving to one an estate in land, to another a village, to a third the revenues of a town, to a fourth the toll of a harbour. As all the revenues of his demesnes were already employed, and exhausted by his donations, Perdicas said to him, 'My lord, what is it you reserve for yourself?' Alexander replied, 'Hope.'" — DR. GOLDSMITH, GREEK HISTORY FROM THE EARLIEST STATE TO THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT, VOL. II.

The difference between Alexander the Great and Alexander the Bittelman is simple. The former, who wept because he had no more worlds to conquer, reached his Apex only after the then known world lay at his feet. The former not only reached his Apex but even passed beyond it into decline before he had conquered as much as a single American cruiser. Such is the conclusion one must draw from the mean fate doled out to Bittelman by the latest, brand new Open "Address" of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. And every impartial observer will perforce admit that the treatment meted out to Bittelman is decidedly shabby and more than a little insincere.

We have come upon sad days indeed when the E.C.C.I., (read: Stalin) presumes to denounce anyone in the Comintern for "petty-bourgeois politics." Has not the whole course and career of Stalin and company in the recent history of the International been that of unprincipled combination, chicanery, intrigue and back-stairs diplomacy? Why should the same dish be called sauce for the Russian goose and apple? sauce for the American gander? And we can hardly believe our eyes when we read that Stalin, the hero of the Menshevik adventures with Chiang Kaishek and Feng Yu-Hsiang, the companion-in-arms of Purcell, Hicks, Citrine, Cook et. al., the partner for years of Bucharin-Tomsky-Rykov, the room-mate of the Peppers, the Neumanns, the Thaelmanns, the Semards, the Smerals, the Rafeses, the Murphys, the Lovestones and the rest of the riff-raff and bobtail of the movement for the past years—that this same Stalin should dare to speak indignantly about Bittelman's opportunism!

What right has the Master to scold his pupil for trying to show up in his image? We will say in Bittelman's defense that no one in the

American Party tried more earnestly or with greater devotion to become a little Stalin than he. He read the speeches and articles of the Master in Pravda and Izvestia with the fascination of a rabbit snared by a cobra. When Stalin called "Trotskyism" a right danger, Bittelman shouted in chorus that it was an ultra-right menace. When Stalin did a fiop and called it a left danger, Bittelman (who was the first one in the States to get a copy of Pravda) yelled hoarsely that it was an ultra-left danger. When Stalin found that there was a growing differentiation among the Russian peasantry, Bittelman immediately discovered the American Kulak and all but proposed the establishment of Collective Farms for all Minnesota farmers having only two tractors and Soviet Farms for the expatriated farmers in camps controlled by the Party, with the hope that socialism might be built in Camp Nitgidaiget.

And when Stalin signed the Kellogg Pact as a piece of "realistic Bolshevik diplomacy" Bittelman thought that he too would become a high-powered statesman and at least demand from the American government that it build "no more cruisers." Poor Bittelman thought that this slogan was the genuine McCoy and came straight from the horse's mouth. Hadn't the German Party carried on a big national campaign against the building of the German Cruiser "A"?

Why, then, in the face of all these obvious facts should Bittelman get such a raw deal? It is true that he was somewhat factional, but who among his colleagues is ready to cast the first stone? It is rumored that even Stalin carries on a bit of factional fighting in his spare moments. The answer to this puzzle does not lie in an examination of the Third Period, or the relations between Inner and Outer Contradictions. It is much more simple.

Stalin is putting the various Parties of the Comintern through the process of dumping the most obviously discredited fakers who no longer have even an inch of standing in the movement: the Peppers and Lovestones of the world; and he is trying to put in their place those whose veneer has not yet been entirely scraped off. In the United States his choice is William Z. ("Win-the-war-Bill") Foster with Wobbling Will Weistone to furnish the heavy theoretical guns. With such a newly manu-

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Stalinism in the Canadian Communist Party

By Maurice Spector

Canada affords yet another illustration of the fact that under the best of all possible Comintern regimes, nothing is changed—there is only one unprincipled faction fight the more. The Canadian Party, within the living memory of mankind, has always been what Zinoviev in his palmy days would have called a "monolithic" party. Having barely survived the "Bolshevizing" measures of the Fifth Congress of the C. I. (1924), the sections of the Comintern are now revelling in the "consolidating" effects of the Sixth Congress, on the heels of which, faction fights and expulsion epidemics have broken out in the Soviet Union, Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, the United States; and even Canada at the periphery has not escaped punishment. The Canadian Party whose portion in the Comintern hitherto has been the fate of "those wretched souls" Dante sings about, who "lived without praise or blame"—has achieved the dignity of those other elect whose conventions are mysteriously postponed in deference to cablegrams from "Moscow". Meanwhile the air is thick with theses, counter-theses and mutual accusations of opportunism and "dishonest political intrigue". Isn't this the "Third Period"?

It is only a few months since the Canadian "Trotskyites" scandalously put forward the demand for a sincere discussion of the fundamental problems raised by the Russian Opposition and the crisis in the International. The best attended membership meetings in party history attested to the interest of the rank and file in the issues at stake. But in their fear, the party officialdom countered with bureaucratic repression to stifle this interest, while their machine worked overtime to lull the membership with a "broad ideological campaign" of bulls and encyclicals, threats and rich slander. A Party of Action, the mem-

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factured leadership—"beneath this corduroy shirt there beats an honest proletarian heart, sir!"—in prospect, it is obviously necessary to give the Lovestones, Peppers and Gitlows the works. And to satisfy the ruling faction for the slaughter of their erstwhile leaders, they were thrown the bones of Bittelman. A heavy sacrifice, it is true, but apparently an unavoidable one. Our throat thickens when we think of how Foster, who was only yesterday" an humble worker in the vineyard of comrade Bittelman," must today take the scepter of power without the presence of his faithful Borodin, almost never-failing Colonel House, and think tearfully how he, Foster, who was only yesterday denounced publicly by Bittelman as one who "liquidates everything connected with Communism" today sits with the mighty while his best friend and severest critic must eke out a miserable existence in Russian exile.

As for Alexander himself, he has damned little consolation, but he has some. As he travels the cold wastelands of the Buriat-Mongolian Soviet Republic or shifts to fabled Samarkand to lecture the Uzbecks on the Apex of American imperialism, he can reflect that all is not yet lost, that there may yet be a Fourth Period, and that Time is a great healer. Let him bear in mind the solacing words which the Spanish philosopher, Unamuno, reports were inscribed on a tombstone of the Mallona cemetery in his native town of Bilbao:

"Aunque estamos en polvo convertidos,
"En Ti, Señor, nuestra esperanza fia,
"Que tornaremos a vivir vestidos
"Con la carne y la piel que nos cubria."

Which can be literally translated by Bittelman and repeated to Stalin as follows:

"Though we are become dust,
"In thee, O Lord, our hope confides,
"That we shall live again clad
"In the flesh and skin that once covered us."

In the meantime let him wait, with the patience of all faithful believers in the inevitable coming of the Resurrection. Personally, we feel sorry for the exiled Aleck and we fully intend to drop a salty tear into the next bowl of Russian Borscht our straitened circumstances allow us to order.

bership was informed, could not indulge in the "luxury of discussion" or of groupings. "Trotskyism" was variously defined as a Right Wing deviation, a Left Wing deviation, a petty-bourgeois deviation, an anti-middle peasant deviation and finally a counter-revolutionary anti-Soviet plot.

With the expulsion of the comrades of the Opposition it might be expected that all original sin had been uprooted, and henceforth and forever only bliss and the oldest Old-Bolshevism would prevail. But alas, the expulsions were the prelude to the outbreak of the present prize-fight in the ranks of the stalinized officialdom, who have also initiated a fake discussion to divert the membership from contamination by dangerous thoughts.

Already before the Sixth Congress discontent was beginning to manifest itself among the younger elements, with the organization conservatism and political inertia of the party secretary, J. Macdonald. In the December Plenum of the American Central Committee, Lovestone attempted to saddle responsibility for the leadership of the Canadian Party on the present writer ("the leader of the Canadian Communist Party, unfortunately, used to be an ex-comrade by the name of Spector"—The Communist Jan.-Feb. 1929). Not mere modesty but the interests of historic truth, however, and the fact of the actual balance of forces in the Canadian C.E.C., compel me to disclaim this honor. J. P. Cannon was as little the leader of the United States Party under the regime of Jay Lovestone. Macdonald's base was a tacit but none the less effective majority bloc of the Finnish and Ukrainian sections, who regarded everything with an eye on their property interests, plus opportunist elements like Buck, F. Custance, Shoesmith, Moriarty, the peerless M. Buhay, the 'umble proletarian Roberts, etc. Macdonald himself is the limited type of trade union-I.L.P. er with the most er equipment of Marxism imaginable in a party leader. He has consistently been a barnacle on the ship in every situation the party could have utilized to its advantage by bold initiative. In the current discussion, he is correctly enough accused of being a "Right Danger", of failing to read the economic position, of covering-up the tail-end role of the party in the Oshawa Strike and many other things.

But who are his accusers of the "Left?" Our enthusiasm suffers a slump when we recognize the bland countenance of our old-time acquaintance Tim Buck of the Foster caucus. He has become the big chief of the discontented younger group that had begun to crystallize before the last Congress, and which lacked the courage in the test to face the fact that the Macdonalds, the Peppers, the Lovestones, Thaelmanns, Fosters are all either part and parcel or aspirants of the Stalin regime. All they envisage is the perspective of a long-drawn out see-saw struggle between the ins and outs, garnished with cablegrams and "supplementary decisions", plenipotentiaries and Open Letters. Under the incompetent direction of Buck, his opportunist personal united fronts, the T U E L has become an empty shell and the trade union work of the party came to a stand-still. A supporter of Macdonald writes "the director of the Industrial Department, Comrade Buck enumerates in the Trade Union Thesis about twenty-five failures, most of them having to do with his own department (F. Peel, "The Worker April 13th") The Buck faction's "ideological leader" is a half-baked Bachelor of Arts recently graduated from the Stalin Academy misnamed the "Lenin School", who less than two years ago was still of the OBU and SP of C persuasion and had to be bribed with a secretarial post to enter the Young Communist League.

Incidentally, the revolutionary records of some of the other "old bolsheviks" who denounce L. D. Trotsky as a "menshevik" make edifying reading. One Halpern who vociferously edits a party organ was a Zionist three

years ago, the older Smith who heads the Labor Defense is a Methodist parson in holy orders. Alderman Kolysnik of Winnipeg, the party's only "parliamentary representative" is a successful businessman. Wallace, the "collyerist" of the Worker, who describes the writer as an "intellectual" and a "deserter" is a university graduate, a practicing Churchman, who impartially disposes publicity to the capitalistic parties at election time for a consideration. Limitations of space prevent us from enlarging this list of stone-throwing denizens of glass houses.

The condition of the Canadian Party is at low ebb and unprincipled faction fighting will not improve matters. It will only confuse the real issues and further poison an already poisoned atmosphere. The present leadership has proven incapable of organizing any resistance to the expulsions from trade unions and trade councils, has failed to counter the disintegration of the Canadian Labor Party with other forms of the political united front. The TUEL exists on paper only. The organization of the unorganized has proceeded by fits and starts. The Dress-makers Union is a shadow. The automobile organization campaign in which the Buck faction were "active" in the shape of an irresponsible adventurer who became Secretary of the Union, is estimated by the Macdonald faction to amount to a "row of beans". The officialdom has proved impotent to organize any resistance to the police suppression of free speech and the Free-Speech Conference, in which the Macdonald faction were active, is described by the other as a fiasco. The Labor Defence has failed to organize any nation-wide mass drive for the release of A. Vaara, the Finnish party editor in jail for "sedition". The membership of the party is declining, the English-speaking section is down practically to zero. The bulk of the membership is Finnish and it is held in the Communist party by compulsion. The Finnish Organization of Canada is a social and cultural society but every member is also compelled automatically to take out a card in the Party or be blacklisted or expelled. It is a unique basis for a communist party. The Ukrainian membership claims to influence the Ukrainian Labor Temple Association, but in the course of the "Free-Speech" fight in Toronto the Temple refused to place its hall at the disposal of a demonstration on the plea that it would endanger their financial investment.

There is no need to minimize the objective difficulties in the path of building up the communist movement, the defeats in the big miners struggles, the "prosperity" and the democratic illusions connected with it, etc. The Communist Opposition does not pretend that Central Committees can shake mass parties out of their sleeves in six months. But there are also considerable opportunities for the development of the Communist party under current conditions which embrace rationalization, bitter exploitation and low wages for masses of the unskilled, organization of the unorganized, and so on. But the pre-requisite for a conscious militant party is a correct regime. The Communist International is a product of the Russian revolution. The regime in the Comintern and its sections is determined by the regime in the Russian Party. Under the Stalin regime in the Comintern, the rank and file of the parties are not being educated but drilled into mechanical obedience in a barracks. The leaders of the national sections are trained to bureaucratic submissiveness and not to critical and independent revolutionary thought and judgement. They rule the membership by demagoguery and Lenin held that demogogs were the worst enemies of the working class. The function of the Opposition will be to rouse to revolutionary consciousness that section of the membership which is not actuated simply by primitive Russian patriotism or sterilized against revolutionary thought by their property interests.

READ AND SUBSCRIBE TO THE MILITANT

The Draft Program of the Comintern

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE

The Soviet appears mostly and primarily in connection with strikes which have the perspectives of revolutionary development, but are in the given moment limited merely to economic demands. The masses must feel and understand while in action that the Soviet is THEIR organization, that it marshals the forces for a struggle for resistance, for self-defense and for an offensive. They can feel and understand this not on a one day experiment and in general not through one act, but on the experience of several weeks, months and perhaps years, with intermissions or without. Therefore, only an epigonian bureaucratic leadership can restrain the rising and mutinous masses from the creation of Soviets in conditions when the country is passing through big and revolutionary upheavals and when the working class and the poor peasants have before them the prospect of capturing power, even if only in one of the later phases and even if that prospect can be appreciated in the given phase only by a small minority. That was always our conception of the Soviets. We valued the Soviet as that broad and flexible organizational form which is understood by the masses who have just awakened in their very first phase of revolutionary action and which is capable of uniting the working class in its entirety, regardless as to how large a section of it has in the given phase already grown to the point of understanding the tasks of capturing power.

Is any further documentary evidence necessary? Here, for instance, is what Lenin wrote about the Soviets in the epoch of the first revolution:

"The R. S. D. L. P."—that was then the name of the party—has never refused to utilize at MOMENTS OF GREATER OR SMALLER REVOLUTIONARY UNREST certain non-party organizations such as Soviets of workers' deputies for the strengthening of the influence of the Social Democrats on the working class and the consolidation of the Social Democratic labor movement". (Volume 13, page 217. [Our emphasis].)

One could cite such quotations from Lenin without number.

In contradistinction to this the epigones have converted the Soviets into a parading organizational uniform which the Party puts on the proletariat on the eve of the capture of power. But here we find that Soviets cannot be improvised in 24 hours, by order, with the direct object of an armed insurrection. Such experiments must unavoidably become of a fictitious character and the absence of the most necessary conditions for the capture of power be masqueraded by the external ceremonial of the Soviet system. That is what happened in Canton where the Soviet was simply appointed to perform the ritual. That is where the epigonian formulation of the question leads to.

In the polemics on the Chinese events the Opposition was accused of the following alleged crying contradiction. Whereas at the beginning of 1926 the Opposition advanced the slogan of Soviets for China, its representatives spoke against the slogan of Soviets for Germany in the Autumn of 1923. On no other point perhaps has scholastic political thought been expressed so glaringly as on this. Yes, we demanded for China a TIMELY start for the creation of Soviets as INDEPENDENT organizations of workers and peasants, ON THE BASIS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY UNREST. The chief significance of the Soviets was to be that of SETTING UP THE WORKERS AND PEASANTS AGAINST THE KUOMINTANG BOURGEOISIE and its Left Kuomintang agency. The slogan of Soviets in China first of all meant the break-up of the suicidal, shameful "Alliance of Four Classes" and the withdrawal of the Communist Party from the Kuomintang. The center of gravity consequently lay not in vague organizational forms, but in a class political line.

In the Autumn of 1923 in Germany it was a question of organizational form only. As a result of the extreme passivity, backwardness, and tardiness of the leadership of the Comintern and the Communist Party of Germany, the moment for a timely call for the organization of Soviets was missed and the factory committees had occupied in the labor movement of Germany by the Autumn of 1923 the place which, provided there had been a correct and daring poli-

A Criticism of Fundamentals

By L. D. Trotsky

cy on the part of the Communist Party, would have no doubt been much more successfully occupied by Soviets.

The acuteness of the situation had at the time reached its highest degree. It was clear that to lose further time would mean definitely to miss the revolutionary situation. The uprising was finally put on the agenda with very little time left. To advance the slogan of Soviets under such conditions would have been the greatest doctrinarism conceivable. The Soviet is not a talisman which has the power to save everything. In the situation such as had then developed the creation of Soviets in a hurry would only have duplicated the factory committees. It would have become necessary to deprive the latter of their revolutionary functions and to pass them over to the newly created Soviets which would have been absolutely without any activity. And when? In conditions when each day counted. This would have meant to substitute for revolutionary action a vicious and most harmful game in organizational gew-gaw.

Max Comes Clean

"My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me . . . My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart . . . If I wait, the grave is mine house. I have made my bed in the darkness. I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister. And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it? They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is the dust."—THE BOOK OF JOB, CHAP. XVII.

We have no special objections to any one of the Party bureaucrats going to Canossa in bare feet, following the "open address" of the Comintern. We don't protest even when a humble sinner wallows himself on the hind quarters from time to time as he drags his calloused belly along the ground. But the way in which it is being done by Max Bedacht in the Daily Worker, is a bit too much for the most hardened stomach and should be suppressed by the authorities as an obscene public display of masochistic self-flagellation inclined to arouse lewd and lascivious tendencies in the youth and in general present a menace to law and order. Between groans, Bedacht manages to gasp:

"Whenever and wherever a consciousness of this monstrous reality dawned upon us, we put our Party conscience to sleep with a soothing argument of identity of group and Party interest in our case.

"Spurred on by my factionally corrupt logic, I have there helped to embody in document after document, in speech after speech, the monstrous idea that the Comintern plans to break up our Party because it is determined to break up 'my' faction.

"The feeling gradually grew in me that to put my will against the will of my World Party is a presumption not growing out of revolutionary, but out of petty bourgeois logic.

"The source of our error certainly was petty bourgeois opportunism. Was the Comintern justified in condemning us for our unprincipled factionalism, and is the conscious eradication of this factionalism a necessary prerequisite for the preparation of the Party for its serious tasks in this period? Of course it is.

"Thus the corruption of our own logic, wrought by six years of factional strife led us to a systematic negation of every important decision of the C. I. Can we hope to free ourselves from this corruption if we do not, first of all recognize its existence and acknowledge the justice of the C. I. criticisms?

"A rejection of the criticism . . . would transform the culprit from a Communist into petty bourgeois opportunism, a petty bourgeois politician and a rotten diplomat."

Translated from Bedachian into American, this means:

"What a scoundrel I have been! For six years I've been most unholly scamp and wastrel. There was nothing too dirty for me. Up to the very last minute I sinned like a rake. I never went to mass or confessional. I corrupted the Party and was myself as corrupt as they come. I was a petty bourgeois politician; I was a right winger; I committed deviations with sinful glee; I chortled gaily at every new crime of my buddies, Lovestone and Gitlow and me. In general, I was a pretty low dog.

"But now, comrades and brethren, I've seen the light. Oh, how I've seen the light! And praise the Lord, I am atoning for my sins! I wear a hair shirt next to my tender skin. I have shaved my head clean. I sleep on barbed wire mattresses. I'm going to fast longer than Terence McSwiney. I'm beating my breast

That the organizational form of a Soviet can be of gigantic importance, this is irrefutable, provided, however, that it reflects a correct political line and in proper time. It can, on the other hand be of no less negative importance if it is converted into a fiction, a talisman, a bagatelle. The creation at the very last moment of German Soviets in the Autumn of 1923 would have added nothing politically, it would only have caused organizational confusion. What happened in Canton is even still worse. The Soviet which was created in a hurry to perform the ritual was merely a masquerade for the adventurist putsch. That is why we found out after it was all over that the Canton Soviet was just one of those old Chinese dragons—simply drawn on paper. The policy of wire-pulling and paper dragons is not our policy. We were against the improvising of Soviets by telegraph in Germany in September 1923. We were for the creation of Soviets in China in 1926. We were against masquerade Soviets in Canton in 1927. There is nothing contradictory in that. In that we see a deep integral understanding of the dynamics of the revolutionary movement and its organizational forms.

The question of the role and significance of the Soviets which has been distorted and confused and overshadowed by the theory and practice of recent years, has not been illuminated in the least in the draft program.

CONTINUED IN NEXT ISSUE

till my ribs are caved in, and I howl "Peccavi, peccavi, I have sinned" until my throat burns. . . I tear whole pieces of flesh out of my body. I throw myself to the lions and beg them to bite chunks out of my bleeding frame.

"The truth is, confidentially speaking, that I have to go through this rigorous treatment—and do even more—to keep my post as leader of the Party and show the boys in the ranks that if it's self-criticism they want, I'm the lad who can give it to them in two daily shifts of twelve hours each. It's a hard job, and I want all and sundry to cooperate with me in cleaning an infested body.

"So come along, fellows! Take a few cracks at me! Punch me in the nose. Sock me in the teeth. BBat me in the jaw. Bite off my ear. Hit me in the solar plexus. Throw stones at me and cover me with grime. Step violently on my toes. Kick my well-bruised bottom with hob-nailed boots. I take all comers and promise no resistance. Lay it on thick!

Well, we too are for self-criticism, but we are against self-flagellation. It would have been better for Bedacht to play the role not of a Job and Jeremiah rolled into one, but a naive, coy and sad Gretchen who wistfully regrets her seduction by Don Juan Lovestone or Bertraw D. Faust. The role of a fragile Gretchen might be a somewhat difficult one for Max, but he would at least be more amusing and certainly less painful.

THE EXPELLED

We print here the names of an additional number of comrades who have been expelled from the Party in Canada or the United States by the Stalinist bureaucrats. Despite the attempts of the opportunists to conceal their corrupt course by fake "unity" maneuvers and unprincipled combinations of Party officials at the top, workers in the Party continue to read and study the position of the Communist Opposition and take a stand on the principle questions raised by it. The names of the comrades recently expelled are as follows:

GUELPH, ONTARIO (Canada)

ALBERT J. FARLEY

CHICAGO

DAN POLLIN

A. BORNSTEIN

FANNIE MINUK

ROBERT GARVER

H. P. CLAUSEN

JOSEPH R. BOOTH

JOSEPH GODDISS

DETROIT

HARRY HOFF

BOSTON

SAM FRIEDMAN

We are further informed that a group of comrades in Montreal, Canada, have been expelled by the Stalinists for supporting the Opposition. Their names will be published later.

MASS MEETING IN BOSTON

BOSTON.—Max Shachtman, member of the national committee of the Communist League of America (Opposition) will speak here on Friday, June 21, 1929, at 7:30 p. m., at 62 Chambers Street, on the program of the Communist Opposition and the work of the recently concluded national conference. All workers are invited to attend and bring their friend. Tickets are obtainable at Shapiro's Book Store, 7 Beach Street, Boston. The meeting is held under the auspices of the Boston Communist League. (Opposition).

The Building Trades Situation

A sharp decline in building totals for the first quarter of 1929 in the metropolitan area of New York and the 37 states east of the Rocky Mountains is reported by Thomas S. Holden, vice-president of the F. W. Dodge Corporation. This is a report of the building condition committee of the New York Building Congress and constitutes a survey of building construction for the periods of the first three months of 1928 and 1929. The comparative figures are \$254,933,000 for the 1929 quarter and \$378,280,800 for the 1928 quarter.

While the fakers of the building trades unions say everything is yet "jake" in the building industry, building is on the increase, unemployment is nominal, etc., the cold figures of this report show something else. Building totals declined for the period given a total of 33% for the New York Metropolitan area and a decline of 15% is noted for the 37 states. This in fact means a decline of such proportions for the entire United States, since 91% of building in the United States is carried on in these Eastern states.

Reasons for Decline

To an extent this decline for the first quarter is explained by the increase in money rates in this period thru the orgy of gambling or speculation in recent weeks in the stock market when call money reached astounding proportions. The building trades industry requires large outlays of ready money for wages, materials, etc., and swift and large credit facilities. But the tightening of cash and credit facilities for this period does not explain away such a sharp slump in the first quarter of 1929 over the same period a year ago. The report of the committee attributes the slump to "slackened demand and unsettled credit conditions." In this time, industrial and commercial building gained, while public works and utilities contracts decreased over the whole country, except in New York where educational buildings increased. The report notes the trend of decreasing residential building throughout the country.

The decline reflects itself in the increase of unemployment or part time work among the building trades workers generally with isolated exceptions in some localities. The officials of the building trades unions hide their heads in the sands and content themselves with the prospects of huge projects of public utilities and governmental building on national, state and local scales. They accept "Hooverian prosperity" and promises, but take no steps to strengthen the fighting qualities of the unions for the time now approaching when the building contractors will push systematically and in a concerted manner for lower wage scales, longer hours and speeded production. The reactionary union officialdom is contenting itself with day-to-day adjustments. Still, they know that the building corporations and contractors will not stop at efforts to "adjust credit facilities", but will intensify even more the rationalization process in the building industry. Machine methods are being introduced with precision and speed into all trades of the industry, bringing with them the concomitant of unemployment first, and next, demands by the employers for wage reductions, longer hours, etc.

Building trades workers are especially affected with the illusions of public works and utilities construction by the government when times are hard. There is need for these to be broken down among them and all workers, and instead preparations made for forthcoming struggles: strikes, lockouts, etc.

The Public Works Illusion

"Prosperity reserve" is the name given to the illusion of public works construction in times of depression. On occasion capitalism utilizes such and similar projects as "stop-gaps". They offer no permanent solution to the unemployment problem which grows constantly and maintains its permanent character.

Capitalism cannot ever stop unemployment, but only increase and aggravate the situation. The federal or state governments may provide

for such works through taxation. But the practical result usually is that capital is merely shifted from other capital investments, industries and manufacture, and other groups feel the sharp whip of unemployment. Under such conditions, capital often holds off from going industries or does not develop new enterprises.

The building trades workers yet retain these illusions and many more, and pride themselves as aristocrats of labor. But if they will not learn from other workers in America and other countries, they will nevertheless have to concern themselves with growing problems arising out of their industry. The building trade employers are certain to attempt to

Fight for Mooney and Billings

Recent months have seen exposure piled on exposure of all the sordid details of the frame-up which sent Tom Mooney and Warren K. Billings to the Penitentiary for Life terms. From the perjury of the notorious "cattleman" Frank Oxman to the lying evidence of Estelle Smith, the long list of witnesses who passed through the court to put a noose around the necks of the two California labor fighters have been revealed as a troop of bribed characters among whom prostitutes, pimps, gamblers, dope fiends, and forgers whose tongues moved in court in tune with the money paid them out of the funds of California's business men. Rarely, if ever at all, has there been so bald and outrageous an instance of class "justice" inflicted upon workers.

Twelve Years in Prison

Mooney and Billings have been imprisoned now for almost twelve years. Their case has served not only to blacken the already reactionary nature of the capitalist courts and the whole machinery of "justice" in this country. It has also served as a black mark against the labor movement of the United States. The labor misleaders at the head of the trade union movement in this country, had they been moved by any genuine desires to obtain the release of the prisoners, could have accomplished this aim long ago. But their only intervention in the fight for liberation has always been to attack and seek to discredit every serious working class movement organized to free the victims of the frame-up system. From the days of the fight of the International Workers Defense League, organized on the Pacific Coast by the radicals, to the time—last year—when the International Labor Defense reopened the national agitation for the two men, the role of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats has been that of persistent sabotage.

For our part, we are for the release of Mooney and Billings in the interests of the working class, and NOT for the purpose of whitewashing the corrupt judicial institutions of capitalism WHOSE BASIC PURPOSE is the frame-up and imprisonment of the Moonneys, Billingses, Barnetts, Lambs, McInerneys, Malkins, MacNamaras, and the scores of other class war prisoners: WHOSE BASIC PURPOSE is the legal murder of the Joe Hills, the Saccos and the Vanzettis. The Mooney-Billings case is part and parcel of the essential and inevitable work of the capitalist courts, and those who seek to free Mooney and Billings by erasing the "discredit on the whole system of justice"—that is, capitalist justice—are preparing the ground for the commission of new Mooney-Billings frame-ups, new Sacco-Vanzetti murders.

Only the Workers Can Free Them

When Mooney and Billings are liberated it will be due only to the organized demand of the American workers and the labor movement of the rest of the world. It is good that numerous public men not associated with the labor movement have demanded their release. This demonstrates further the obviousness of the prisoners' innocence. But to leave the liberation movement in their hands alone would

hammer down the wages of the workers, to increase their hours, despite the fact that the profits are the largest ever. The conscious rank and file in the building trades must endeavor more systematically and patiently than ever to draw the mass of the building trades workers to fight for a program to include among other points, the following: A six hour day and a five day week, with no reduction in wages. Amalgamation of the building trades into one industrial union to effect a stronger fighting front against the bosses; establishment of unemployment insurance to be paid by the employers and the government and administered by local trade union committees elected by the membership; And, then, the membership must begin to think in terms of struggle as a working class against the capitalist class in a struggle for political power.— M. A.

serve to weaken the movement. It was these same "respectable gentlemen" who split the Sacco-Vanzetti movement, who turned back to their own class when the working class began to move into the streets and demand the liberation of the Massachusetts martyrs in plain language.

The opportunity is still at hand for the working class elements, particularly its advanced section, to organize, strengthen and lead the liberation movement. The International Labor Defense, which began the campaign under such good auspices last year, has fumbled the opportunity for the moment. The faction agents of Stalin who were recently foisted upon the I. L. D. are interested primarily in their revolting factional jockeying, and only secondarily in the class war fighters in prison. The reestablishment of the basic principles upon which the I. L. D. was organized and built up is immediately necessary. The defense work of the movement cannot be a hunting preserve of Party factionalists.

The movement for Mooney and Billings must be revived on a national scale, with the support of every worker and every working class organization in the country. The prison gates must be forced open and the two fighters be returned to the ranks of the working class from which they were torn by our class enemies.

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Conference of the Opposition Communists

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

interest was manifested in the report on this question and an earnest discussion followed it. Here a great progress was reflected. The tendencies toward organization fetishism in regard to the Stalinist apparatus, the "legalistic" attitude toward the rules of the usurping bureaucrats, which affected our ranks in the beginning, had been completely overcome. Not a single voice was raised in favor of holding back our necessary organization development on this score. On the other hand, there were signs of a reaction to the other extreme. The unbounded provocations of the subsidized corruptionists had led some comrades, who incorrectly identified them with the Party, to think a complete break with the latter.

The discussion clarified this question and resulted in the unanimous decision to organize our forces for independent activity while maintaining our position as a faction of the Party and strengthening our bonds with its proletarian elements. This latter is necessary in order to assist their inevitable development toward the path of the Opposition which is the only possible outcome of the present factional impasse in the Party. The Oppositionists must have confidence in such a development and work for it. That means to keep contact with the party ranks. We were the first to grasp the significance of the world issues shaking the Comintern and to raise the banner of the International Opposition, but we will not be the last. The struggle for the consolidation of a new grouping in the party on our Platform must go hand in hand with the development of our organization and the recruitment of new revolutionary workers outside the Party ranks. The Conference decided unanimously for this policy.

A large percentage of the delegates were representatives of the Communist Youth. This was a proper reflection of the composition of the ranks of the Opposition movement as a whole. The Youth are the most free from bureaucratic cynicism and corruption and the most responsive to revolutionary ideas. A large number of the foremost young Communists of the United States and Canada have already rallied to our banner—far more proportionally than the adult party members—and this process is only beginning. The letter from comrade Trotsky which placed the greatest emphasis on the struggle for the proletarian youth met with the warmest approval of the Conference.

Disputed Questions

Conflicting opinions were revealed in the discussions mainly on the Labor Party and on the Slogan of the Right of Self Determination for the Negroes. The delegates who opposed the formulation of the Platform on the Labor Party showed a number of differences and shadings ranging from a virtual "opposition in principle" to the position that it would be correct for us to participate in a mass labor party if it should be formed, but wrong to work for its formation. The gross errors of the Party and the Comintern on this question, which have never been properly corrected or explained, have undoubtedly produced a vast confusion and skepticism about the labor party throughout the ranks of the American Communists. There is less of it in the Opposition than in the Party as a whole. Such as exists among us was brought out more clearly and fully only because the discussion was open and free at our Conference and there was no reason for anyone to conceal his opinions or doubts.

It was the opinion of the majority that, although it certainly is not a pressing question of the moment, the labor party question has a great importance for the future when the radicalization of the workers will begin to seek political expression. Therefore it is imperative to have a clear and definite stand on it. A misjudgment of the probable line of development of the American workers or a sectarian doctrine which would prevent us from approaching and influencing new upward movements might have the most serious consequences later on. The formulation of the Platform on the

Perspective of a Labor Party was adopted by a majority after a thorough discussion.

Following a discussion of the disputed section of the Platform on the Slogan of the Right of Self Determination for the Negroes it was decided to defer final action until more exhaustive material on the subject can be assembled and made available for discussion in the groups. In view of the profound importance of this question and the manifest insufficiency of informative material and discussion pertaining to it, this decision to defer final action was undoubtedly correct.

General Summary

The National Conference, held under such adverse conditions and with such gratifying results, made a profound impression upon all who took part in it. Quiet and matter-of-fact, in glaring contrast to the bombast and ballyhoo of so many "Conferences" which have made a noise and left no trace, our gathering generated an enthusiasm which was real and genuine. The pledging of quotas for the support of The Militant from the various delegations, which preceded the singing of the International at the close of the last session, was a sign of that kind of enthusiasm which expresses itself in deeds. Such enthusiasm and conviction are our capital for the future.

The Conference was a picture of the best representatives of American Communism. Side by side with the young fighters, many of them at the beginning of their revolutionary activity and attending a National gathering for the first time, were not a few veterans of the movement whose faces have been familiar at all important meetings of the party since its foundation. We saw there the forces of the Communist vanguard again assembling and taking shape on a National scale, and it was a heartening sight. The Opposition and its Platform are on the march in America. That which was merely an idea advocated by a few individuals in the Central Committee a brief seven months ago has become a National movement taking on organization form and functions. It has its own momentum. It will go forward in spite of all.

The characterless bureaucrats who cannot understand how anyone can or should swim against the stream talked a great deal about the early collapse of the Opposition movement and, no doubt, really expected a flood of "capitulations" after the first few engagements. The delegations were the answer to them. They showed our ranks unshaken and more closely united than ever. Our forces have grown, slowly, but steadily, since the beginning of the fight.

A significant aspect of the Conference was the appearance of a true collective leadership, capable of harmonious collaboration and division of labor and bound together by a common standpoint on all important questions. The close unity of the leadership with the Opposition movement as a whole was illustrated by the conscious and deliberate support given to all its proposals by the Conference delegates and by the unanimous election of the National Committee. A nucleus of leadership evolving by these processes in the heat of struggle will have an organic character. It will have a real authority and will be able to exert a unifying influence on the movement. It needs no appointment by cablegram and cannot be removed that way.

The political and organization tasks of the Opposition are determined basically by the situation of the Russian revolution and the Comintern. Representing the stream of genuine proletarian internationalism, the Communist Opposition equally rejects the bureaucratic caricature of internationalism by the subsidized Stalin consulates, and the reaction to social-democratic national-narrowness of the Right Wing Brandler groups. The course of the Russian revolution, which has now reached a turning point, is fateful for the international class struggle. The final victory of socialism in the Soviet Union, in the economic as well as military sense, can only be assured by the international revolution. In the interval only the platform of the Russian Opposition can strengthen the socialist as against the capitalist

and restoration elements in the Union.

The regime in the Russian Party decides the regime in the International and the present crisis in the Comintern is due to the fact that opportunism and bureaucracy have entered into the leadership of the C.P.S.U., and resulted in the general demoralization of the sections and the expulsion of the Left Wing. The Opposition refuses to identify the International with the Stalin hierarchy. It is the Opposition which in reality represents the historic line of the Third International, for the leadership of which it will struggle both inside and outside the party. The victorious outcome of this struggle depends not only on the sharpening class struggle in the U.S.S.R., in the capitalist world and the Orient, but on the active and organized intervention of the Left Communist Opposition.

The Conference turned a corner in the struggle of the American regiment of World-Bolshevism and opened up a new stage of its development. It faced its problems, its difficulties and its prospects realistically and showed a collective will to battle onward to victory. This victory will come all the sooner if the members of the Communist Opposition promptly carry out the decisions of the National Conference to organize their forces more cohesively, develop a firmer and more conscious discipline and work with increased energy to enlist new recruits under our banner, which is the banner of International Communism.

Help the Imprisoned Bolshevik-Leninists!

We must start a systematic and unremitting campaign of struggle to improve the conditions of the exiled and arrested Bolshevik-Leninists. The number of the latter now exceeds 2,000. They are confined in prison under foul conditions: no light (the blinds on the windows are almost tight shut), damp rooms in which they crowd the prisoners to the extreme limit, bad food, extraordinary brutal treatment. It is still worse in the Tobolsk hard labor prison (Political-Solitary). It is the same as it was in the time of Dostoevsky's "House of the Dead". In this prison there are only Bolshevik-Leninists. They have released the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. They have introduced military sentries. The cells are locked. No interviews are allowed. The Mensheviks had a common dining table, a common kitchen, free interviews, etc. Our comrades are deprived of all this. Unquestionably the powers have adopted a policy of physical extermination of the Bolshevik-Leninists. Relations have grown very tense. Any moment you can expect not only physical conflicts, hunger strikes (which have no end) but . . . yes, the firing squads. Fifteen men from the prison personnel of the Tobolsk Political Solitary refused to apply repressive measures to Bolsheviks; they were replaced by guards specially sent from Moscow. The need among the families of the arrested is enormous, simply monstrous. The families of the prisoners and exiled remaining at liberty are literally starving. We haven't our own International Labor Defense. We must collect money abroad. We must fight for the right to have our legal International Workers' Defense. We must pillory the contemporary agents of the Soviet power, the Party leaders, who are responsible for these crimes. Correspondence from Tomsk, Sterdlovsk tells of whole crowds driven into the hard labor prison, Naryn, where they are sending Oppositionists, taking them from the various places of exile. Among the exiled and imprisoned there are heroes of the October Revolution and Civil War decorated with the Order of the Red Banner (Dreitzer, Gaievsky, Kavtaradze, Enukidze and many others). Among those imprisoned in a hard labor prison is Budu Mdivani, the old Bolshevik who served time under the czar, was president of the Soviet of People's Commissars of Georgia under Lenin and head of the Soviet Trade Delegation in Paris, fifty-three years old.

T. T.

Moscow, March 20, 1929.