

Lovestone Reports on Soviet Party Questions

Before a crowd of five hundred workers at an open discussion meeting of the New York organization of the Communist Party (Majority Group), Jay Lovestone reported on *The Situation in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Recent "New Turn."* The report, which lasted over two hours, was followed with the closest attention by the comrades present.

The "Russian Question"

An American Question

The so-called "Russian question"—he started off—is a major American question and is a the greatest significance to the American workers. Comrade Lovestone took occasion to repudiate in the most emphatic terms the counter-revolutionary propaganda being spread that the Five-Year Plan and Socialist construction in general have collapsed in the USSR. Socialism is being steadily built regardless of changes of tempo and methods.

As the starting point for an objective examination of what the Five-Year Plan really is—declared the speaker—we must turn to the unanimously adopted reports and resolutions of XV Congress of the CPSU in December 1927, especially the report of Comrade Rykoff on *The Five Year Plan of Economic Development* and the supplementary reports of Comrades Krzhizhanovsky and Molotov.

At this Congress there was complete unanimity but it did not take long before there were already rumors of "differences." By the middle of 1928 it could already be seen that on such questions as the use of "extraordinary measures," on the price of grain, and on other questions, differences were arising as a result of the perversion in practise by the Stalin majority in the Central Committee of the line laid down at the XV Congress. Nevertheless, these differences were suppressed and covered with deceptive declarations of "complete unanimity."

At the April 1929 Plenum the struggle emerged sharper than ever into the open. The secret resolution of this Plenum, from which the reporter quoted at length, accused Bukharin of "supporting the right-wing renegades in the Communist International," condemned Bukharin's *Notes of An Economist* (which Stalin himself had officially endorsed in November 1928) as an "opportunist platform", and branded the "Bukharin group" as a "right-wing group." It gave official authorization to the perversions of the line of the XV Congress that were taking place under Stalin's leadership.

Our Attitude to the Russian Question

At this point Comrade Lovestone turned to a brief consideration of the policy of the former CC of our Party towards the "Russian question." Our attitude—he declared—was founded upon an uncritical endorsement of everything the Russian leadership did; based not upon knowledge but primarily as a matter of formality. This attitude was promoted by the absolute lack of information from the CPSU and by the constant official repetition of "no differences" made by both groupings in the Russian CC. This attitude naturally led to the gross error of the Bukharin resolution at our VI Party Congress last March.

Throughout 1929—Comrade Lovestone continued—the factional struggle in the CPSU continued in more and more open form and the practise in carrying out the Five-Year Plan became more and more perverted in a Trotskyist direction—a fact which Trotsky himself recognized immediately.

The reporter then turned to the November 1929 Plenum which marked the last open appearance of the Bukharin group, for Bukharin's capitulation followed in a few days. It was in the period following the November Plenum and the capitulation that the ultra-left perversions of the Party line reached their height and thus precipitated the present serious economic situation. Serious dislocations began to appear in industry, individual branches began falling far

behind the plan and the original coordination almost disappeared. But it was in agriculture that the dangerous effects of the new course, were clearest. As Stalin himself later admitted the distortions of policy had gone so far that they brought about "the danger of breaking with the peasant masses and undermining the proletarian dictatorship!"

The "New Turn"

Suddenly, like a bolt from the blue came the "new turn" heralded in Stalin's famous article on "dizziness." The tension inside and outside the Party had reached such a point that the "turn" was inevitable; in line with the methods of the Stalinist leadership it was accomplished in a thoroughly bureaucratic and therefore dangerous manner. Scapegoats were found—"certain overenthusiastic young Communists"—and all blame shifted to them. Instead of recognizing—in a Leninist manner—that the new turn was made necessary by the perversions that he himself had forced upon the line of the Five-Year Plan, Stalin again reiterated the doctrine of the infallibility of the Russian Party leadership (that is, his own) and traced the necessity for the retreat to the very "successes" that had been achieved!

Comrade Lovestone then analyzed the actual form which the new turn was taking—the new rules in regard to collectivization, etc. He showed that although these provisions are probably made necessary by the critical situation and the previous false course, yet they constitute perhaps greater concessions to the kulaks than had ever been made before. This—Comrade Lovestone emphasized—is the price of the ultra-left perversions of the previous year.

The speaker then called attention to the recent reorientation of L. D. Trotsky and the Trotsky groupings on the question of Soviet economy. Trotsky, who had hitherto occupied an ultra-left position on these questions, is now criticizing Stalin's line from the right!

Comrade Lovestone turned to the question of perspectives. Yes—he said—there has been a change of practise, a change in the manner of carrying out the Five-Year Plan and a change unquestionably for the better, a change helping to assure the success of the Five-Year Plan. But still there is no Leninist approach to the great questions at stake, there is no objective examination, there is no self-criticism. The method of the bureaucratic and factional manipulation of these great problems still remains as before. This is the basis of the great dangers facing the CPSU today: the danger of zig-zag, the danger of factional excess, the danger of going far to the right.

The Crisis in the C. I.

In connection with the situation in the CPSU stands the crisis in the Comintern. The reporter showed the incorrectness of the Trotskyist conception which traced the crisis in the Comintern to an alleged Thermidorian crisis in the CPSU. He explained the source of the crisis as the gap between the steady building of Socialism in the USSR on the one hand and the slowing up of the world revolution in the capitalist countries on the other. The failure to help bridge this gap thru the development of a *collective*

A Plot Against Foreign-Born

The bills to register and finger-print the foreign-born workers are very acute issues in Washington. The economic crisis, the huge unemployment and growing resistance of the mass of workers to the speed-up and wage cuts are increasing the determination of the reactionaries to rush thru such legislation against the workers. Already many employers have dismissed workers because of their not being born in the United States or their being unnaturalized. In numerous cases workers have also been dismissed because they were unable to show papers from the Federal authorities that "they are not undesirable citizens and are lawfully here."

An event of tremendous significance to the entire American working class which has passed unnoticed is the vicious practice begun by the United States Department of Labor on July 1, 1928 of issuing certificates to incoming immigrants. These certificates have been properly labeled "respectability certificates." They are like cards from an organization showing that one is a "member in good standing." Senator Blease of South Carolina who has introduced one of the worst registration and finger-printing bills, plainly says that his bill aims to legalize formally and officially this practice of the Department of Labor so that all foreign-born workers who have entered the country before July 1, 1928 will be compelled to receive these "certificates of respectability." Each immigrant is to pay \$3.00 for this certificate which will bear a photograph and a detailed personal description of the bearer.

The bill plainly aims to put under suspicion any immigrant who does not secure such a "certificate of respectability."

Senator Blease defends his bill by saying:

"I do not see how any honest man could object to my bill. Its aim is to protect the alien who wants the protection of the United States government and I believe that it will be helpful to aliens generally."

These bills against the foreign-born workers are part of the whole scheme to strengthen the strike-breaking and Wall Street espionage bureaucracy against the workers.

These bills now have the blessings of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L.

international leadership—the speaker explained—has given rise to the political and organizational crisis in the Comintern. Precisely because of this fact (the monopoly of leadership of the Comintern by the CPSU, and today even by a clique in the CPSU) the developments in the CPSU have decisive influence upon the Comintern. Comrade Lovestone showed the relation between the "new turn" in the CPSU and the contemporaneous "new turn" in the Comintern.

The speaker concluded by drawing the conclusions of the whole situation for the struggle of the international opposition and for our struggle in the U. S. A.

The report was followed by a period of questions and discussion.

This discussion meeting will be remembered for a long time by the comrades who were present for it was the first time in many years that Russian questions were discussed frankly and honestly on the basis of conviction not on the basis of ulterior consequence.

Out Soon!

THE THESIS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE FEBRUARY PLENUM OF THE CP-MAJORITY GROUP.

1—The Thesis on The Present Situation and the Tasks of the Communists.

2—The Resolution on The Crisis in the Communist International and the International Opposition Movements.

3—The Resolution on The Crisis in the Young Communist League and Our Tasks.

Watch for It!