

The Party's Shortcomings, Mistakes and Problems

NOTE: This is the eighth installment of the report for the Political Committee made by Jay Lovestone, at the recent Fifth National Convention of the Workers (Communist) Party held in New York City. This installment deals with "The Party's Shortcomings, Mistakes and Problems."

V. The Inner Party Situation.

A few words in reference to the inner Party situation. The present period of the Party situation is characterized by the following features:

First of all, we now have the last gasp of factionalism. I do not feel, and I think no comrade has illusions that the morning after the convention, factionalism will be 100 per cent dead, but I maintain that not only the morning after, but in these very sessions, the trend will be away from factionalism, not towards it.

Secondly, I believe that the political differences have been reduced to a minimum. Never before was our Party so homogeneous ideologically in such a sense and to such an extent as today. Never before were our political differences so small.

Thirdly, there is the beginning of the merger of the two main groups in the Party. Here we do not speak of the exclusion of other groups in the process of unification. I speak of the fact that the road toward the first steps of the merger of all groups in our Party lies at this moment in the unification of the two main historical streams of the Party.

Fourthly, we have achieved a basis for the establishment of the broadest collective leadership. The effect of the factional struggle has been not only destructive but also helpful in the way of clarification of issues.

Fifthly, the objective conditions. We realize the dangers of the bureaucracy's campaign against us as Communists. Especially do all sections of the Party realize the dangers today when Communists are attacked more than at any time before since the Palmer raids. We speak of the open letter sent out by Peter J. Brady, president of one of the leading New York labor banks to 1,000 ordinary bankers, in which he quotes the resolution of the C. I., regarding their fight on labor banks. Mr. Brady is compelled to come out in the open to his nearest and dearest and best friends, to ask for support from them because the Party is engaged in such an active campaign against the labor banking schemes.

The Sacco-Vanzetti campaign has shown that if any campaign of terror will be started against the working class, it will start immediately and primarily against the most advanced section of the working class, the Communists. This is a further basis for making every comrade, regardless of past group alignments, more conscious of the need for unification.

2.—What about differences? There have been differences and there will be differences in our Party, but we again cite Lenin on the question of differences in our Communist Party, or in any Communist Party. Lenin said: "Without debates, disagreements, conflicts of opinion, no movement is possible, not even a labor movement. Without a relentless fight against the degeneration of disagreements into quarrels and insults, organization is impossible. But without organization, the working class is nothing at all."

It is all right to have differences among ourselves, but we must bear in mind that these disagreements must not degenerate into quarrels, into campaigns of insult, because then the organization of the Party is impossible. In the decreasing differences in our Party, there has been a decrease, a marked decrease in the extent of our differences developing into quarrels and insults. Differences in themselves are not objectionable, but the bad thing about the differences, or the history of our differences has been that it has been too often tending toward taking these differences and making them a question of factionalism, a fight for power.

When I speak of this shortcoming, I do not speak as a member of any group, because all groups have been guilty of that, and the leaders of all groups and the sections of the various groups and the leadership of our Party as a whole have been guilty of this error. Without exception that has been the basic weakness, the most harmful aspect of our differences and disagreements. I believe that after this convention we shall have very largely outgrown the possibility of our ever facing such a danger again. We have had differences before in the history of our Party. I see comrades in this room with whom some of us have fought over the organization of an open Party. I recall the struggle over the use of the slogan of armed insurrection. I recall the struggle against maintaining an underground Party when there was no need for it. I recall the struggle over language federations dominating the life of our Party. I recall all these struggles. We have had these struggles which I have mentioned, and I submit that thru them the Party has grown.

We have had factionalism. What is the basic cause for factionalism in our Party? Factionalism is not an abstract phenomenon. It does not grow out of the horns which some individuals do not have. Communists are not factional for the sake of factionalism. Factionalism in a Communist Party grows out of the objective conditions and out of the difficulties, which a

Party faces. Some comrades react one way; some another for a multitude of reasons. It is no accident that in recent months there was a revival or intensification of factionalism in our Party. The fact that our Party was consciously seeking to find the best means of meeting the dangers of attack against it by the imperialists, was seeking to arrive at a solution of the resulting problems, made it possible for factionalism to develop.

Then the composition of our Party itself has been of a source making for factionalism. We speak of the composition of our Party which is of such a character that an insufficient number of our Party members is connected with the basic mass movements. To the extent that we can sink our roots into the basic mass movements, we take away some of the sources of factionalism.

Factionalism is not only an objective but a subjective condition. I speak not of the attitude and practice of any one group, but of the Party as a

Party. These subjective reactions have also been responsible for factionalism. The New York Times today carries a story of comrades in our Party coming to grips. The New York Times as an agent of the bourgeoisie looks for every possible indication to find relief and hope that our Party is divided. We say in answer to the New York Times that we are not coming to grips in our Party, but that the Party as a Party is unifying itself more than ever before in order to be able to come to grips more effectively with the ruling class as a class. We are not fighting as the bourgeoisie fight for power in the narrow sense of power. We may have differences. We may have struggles over these differences. But once these differences have been removed, we do not fight for the sake of a fight. The bourgeoisie can get no comfort out of our differences, because after this convention the Party will show itself more united than ever before.

(To Be Continued)

The Communist International, The War Danger and the Role of American Imperialism

By ROBERT MINOR

(Continuation of Convention Report)

In carrying out their duties for the defense of the Chinese revolution, the Communist Parties in several countries have made certain serious mistakes. The Comintern was obliged to search every Communist Party, including our Workers Communist Party, for every particle of evidence to see whether we had made mistakes in regard to the campaign in support of the Chinese revolution. The Comintern found it necessary to criticize several Parties. The Party in the United States, our Workers Communist Party, received from the Communist International the following comment on its Chinese campaign, which has been referred to during this discussion. I think that there is danger that it might not be understood, and so I am going to read it to you. Before reading I call attention to the fact that the Communist Party of France, the Communist Party of Japan, and the Communist Party of Holland were criticized on the ground that each of them underestimated the role of its own imperialism. If you understand, comrades, that that is one of the most serious offenses that a Communist party can commit, you will understand that every particle of evidence that was offered by anyone to prove that any Communist Party underestimated the importance of its own imperialist government's role was gone into very carefully by the Comintern. Naturally, the Comintern without exception, condemns the faults of any of its sections, in so serious a matter. The three Communist Parties which are condemned by name for underestimating the role of their own imperialism are the Party of France, the Party of Japan and the Party of Holland. In regard to the Chinese campaign of the American Party, the Comintern was obliged to express itself for the additional reason that the question had been raised in regard to the campaign of the American Workers (Communist) Party, and thus its policy was under consideration.

The Comintern's words on the subject of the American party's Chinese campaign are as follows:

"In the present stage of the world situation, the preparations for war against the Soviet Union and the imperialist menace to the Chinese revolution constitute the greatest danger for the working class. British imperialism plays a leading role in these war preparations. At the same time the attitude of the United States towards these conflicts (China), the speeches of its official spokesmen against the Soviet Union (Ambassador Herrick in Paris), its loans to Poland, Finland, etc., show that America will not play a passive role. Despite all its antagonisms with Great Britain, the United States undertakes, to an increasing extent, to back, thru open and covert collaboration, the British war preparations against the USSR in order, undoubtedly at the decisive moment to support actively Great Britain's war policy while at the same time it continues to strive for world hegemony. The absolutely necessary struggle against Great Britain's plans to wage war on the Soviet Union and the Imperialist intervention in China must therefore always be linked up by the Workers (Communist) Party with the mobilization of the masses for the most energetic fight against the specific role of American imperialism.

"In this sense the demonstrations organized by the Party in connection with events in China in front of the British Embassy and Consulates were right and a proper move. But the writer of some of the editorials in the 'DAILY WORKER' (May 7 and 8) deviated from this line of action by minimizing the predatory role of American imperialism in China and by representing it one-sidedly only as a tool of British imperialism."

You will notice that the Comintern criticizes the editorials on the ground that these editorials deviated from the line of action of the Political Committee, by minimizing the predatory role of American imperialism. That, Comrades, must be understood

if we are to make any serious effort to estimate our duties in the future where again we will be called upon to make right and proper tactics against American and all other imperialisms.

Before I close let us take another last look at that imperialism which must be to us the greatest enemy, the imperialism of the United States of America. There were certain phases of difference in the historical development of American imperialism which make it not so easy to understand. Not with the dogmatic phrases of the Social Democratic parties can anyone understand American imperialism, not by mechanical application of the stock phrases of the European continent. Marx and Engels, and Lenin in recent times, have made exhaustive studies of American early history. But as Lenin has pointed out, the period of American imperialism proper began, roughly speaking with the Spanish-American war of 1898. Before that American Imperialism was not a well-defined, clear development. The imperialist period in the modern sense—not in the sense which would be used by liberal pacifists in description of the early history of wars against Mexico, etc.,—but in the modern sense—American imperialism began with the Spanish war. Since that time we see a rapid series of aggressions of American military forces against Latin America, against the Philippines, etc. We find that a whole series of countries extending from the Southern tip of South America to the northern wilds of Canada passes more or less under the domination of American finance capital with its central location of New York City. To a more definite degree, there are something like eight Latin American republics which can be said to be ruled politically directly by the United States government. When a French paper recently attacked the United States government for its policy in Latin America a flunkey in the person of the Cuban ambassador came out and said there was no American imperialism. That Cuban ambassador was really a Wall Street ambassador. This development of American imperialism between the Spanish-American war and the World War, however, was a relatively mild development. Before the World War America had only foreign investments to the extent of two and one half billion dollars, which are comparatively small figures. The amount of capital invested by European powers in the United States was then twice as large, i.e. \$5,000,000,000. That was before the World War and we find that by the end of the World War the United States had become no longer a debtor nation but a very aggressive investor of capital abroad and an imperialist power in the most complete sense.

In 1923 five hundred million dollars were invested abroad during the year.

In 1924 that had increased threefold, in 1926 and in 1925 it averaged about two billion dollars per year invested abroad. Thirteen billion dollars are the total amount now standing as investments abroad of private capital by American capitalists. These investments abroad are rapidly rising; the ratio increasing rapidly. With every dollar goes a potential bayonet. The Federal Reserve Bank is acting as the agency, through which there is a coordination of this progressive advance. Since 1922 the State Department in Washington had exercised a control over these investments. In many instances the naked manner in which this is exercised comes to light. For instance, the coffee planters of Brazil were purposely bankrupted through the central policy of American finance capital finding expression through the State Department. The State Department acted directly to help the Firestone Rubber Company to get a hold for the first time for American capital on the continent of Africa, and American finance capital, acting through the State Department, denied at one time the right of the French bourgeoisie to make government loans after a certain degree of absorption had taken place.

(To Be Continued)