

Only One Line In the C. E. C. Majority

Statement by Comrades Lovestone and Pepper

The Foster-Bittelman Opposition in its new statement, "The Minority on the Results of the Party Plenum," makes a rather belated attempt to criticize the Thesis on the Economic and Political Situation and the Resolution against the Right Danger and Trotskyism adopted at the last Plenum of the Central Executive Committee.

At the Plenum itself the Opposition was unable to uproot any section of the analysis given by the Central Executive Committee or to meet the critical views destroying the whole artificial edifice of their pseudo-analysis.

After their decisive defeat at the Plenum (and the ideological defeat the Opposition suffered at the Plenum was even greater than its organizational defeat) the Foster-Bittelman Opposition tries to "change the subject" to get away from the painful memories of the Plenum discussion on the estimation of the world role of American imperialism, of the mutual relations of the internal and external contradictions of the imperialist world, on the estimation and prospects of the mass struggles in America.

At the Plenum Comrade Foster declared Comrade Bittelman to be the greatest living Marxian on the American continent, stating that he himself is only a simple worker in the vineyard of Bittelman. Comrade Bittelman, on the other hand, raised his claim of being the leading Marxian within the Communist International, expressing his disagreement with the unanimously adopted theses of the World Congress on the international situation, which was introduced by Comrade Bucharin in the name of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, approved by the Russian delegation, and assumed its final shape with the cooperation of fifty-odd sections of the Communist International.

Comrade Bittelman put forward the wholesale charge that the thesis introduced by Comrades Gitlow, Lovestone and Pepper is a right wing document, because it overestimates the strength of American imperialism and underestimates the degree of radicalization in America. The charge was supported most emphatically by the other learned Marxians of the Opposition, such as Comrades Gomez, Costrell, Hathaway, Grecht, etc., all of whom spoke overtime to prove that, although they disagreed with the analysis of the Comintern, which also "overestimates" the strength of American imperialism and "underestimates" the degree of radicalization in America, this is not their fault but that of the Central Executive Committee, and that if the World Congress did not accept their views, the worse for the World Congress.

The Plenum exposed the political bankruptcy of the Foster-Bittelman Opposition completely. Comrade Foster made the solemn declaration that Comrade Bittelman is the ideological leader of the Opposition; Comrade Bittelman made the modest statement that he could not contradict Comrade Foster; while the other comrades of the Opposition tried to plug up the holes in the sinking boat of the Opposition, and produced much opportunistic confusion, defending the theories of partial disarmament, of the Smith vote as the clearest expression of radicalization, of the primacy of internal over external contradictions, and the short-lived but cute "apex" theory.

The wrong tactics of the Bittelman-Foster Opposition at the Plenum resulted in a heavy loss of their followers, some of them going over to Cannon, most of them coming over to the correct position of the C. E. C. The Bittelman-Foster Opposition is now executing a retreat and is trying to bring order into its scattered ranks by issuing its new statement. The new statement develops a new "theory." The Party is not surprised at this, because it has been the habit of the Opposition to invent in each of its statements a new theory. The ten points of the new statement try to make the Party membership believe that there are two lines within the C. E. C.: one the "Lovestone line" and the other the "Pepper line," and that the two contradict each other. They put forward the ridiculous charge that the thesis which they call the "Lovestone thesis" has been withdrawn, and that a new thesis, which they call the "Pepper thesis" (they thus designate the Resolution against the Right Danger and Trotskyism), has taken its place.

It will be enough to mention certain facts to ridicule this charge out of existence:

1. The thesis, which they call the "Lovestone thesis," has been indeed "withdrawn"—by adopting it—by an overwhelming majority and printing it in the Party press.

2. Pepper declared himself against the so-called "Lovestone thesis" by—being one of its authors and by signing it in the face of the whole Party.

3. Lovestone took a stand against the so-called "Pepper thesis" by—helping to clarify some of its formulations and by voting for it.

The Opposition must be very short of political arguments if it resorts to such a ridiculous statement as that Pepper is against the thesis which he signed and is for the Resolution against the Right Danger and Trotskyism, which was introduced to his report at the Plenum but which was signed by three other comrades who are the authors of the resolution.

The Opposition has permanent inner troubles and internal fights for "leadership." The letters of the various leaders and sub-leaders and sub-sub-leaders of the Opposition to each other and against each other reveal the fact that there was a serious fight within the Opposition between Cannon and Foster for "leadership" and simultaneously a struggle between Dunne and Cannon. Later a new struggle developed for "leadership" between Comrades Foster and Bittelman. The results are known to the whole Party: Cannon is out of the Foster group, and Bittelman is today the undisputed leader, members of the Opposition, in their correspondence, mentioning Comrade Foster only as the "ex-Chief."

The present Opposition is an unprincipled coalition of comrades who have only one aim, as it is stated many times in their correspondence, the overthrow of the so-called "Lovestone leadership," and who differ in political questions frequently and in many respects. It was just a few months ago that Comrade Foster refused to fight the present Central Executive Committee as a Right wing, and refused to make a report in Moscow against the trade union policies of the Central Executive Committee. We quote here a letter dated Moscow, August 31, 1928, which is signed by Comrades Bill Dunne, Hathaway, Gorman, Sam Don, Max Salzman, Harry Heywood, and Manuel Gomez and which states:

"At the same time the comrades of the former Foster group were having similar difficulty with Foster. He hesitated also in opening the fight against the Lovestone group as a right wing group and proposed to merely fight against certain right mistakes. On the criticism of Losovsky, the failure to endorse the R. I. L. U. Congress report, and the mistakes in the miners' struggle, he resisted every effort of the group to deal with these questions in the group, and in his speeches he tried to avoid them. In the American Commission, Bittelman had to make the report because of Foster's refusal to admit the mistakes on the R. I. L. U. questions and the mistakes in writing the reply in the July Communist to the article of Cannon defending Losovsky. These questions were discussed in a very sharp manner in our group meeting here and resulted in certain tendencies toward a realignment of groupings in the Party."

The Opposition is trying to hold together its disintegrating following by the building up of a Frankenstein of disunity in the ranks of the Central Executive Committee. This policy is only the sign of the political bankruptcy of the Opposition, and is nothing by the continuation of their policy of "speculation" on so-called inner differences.

We want to state before the whole Party that since 1922, since the first discussion with the present Bittelman-Foster group about how not to make a united front in Chicago and against the influence of the Fitzpatrick A. F. of L. group upon certain sections of our Party, we have always been working together politically very closely, that in all Party discussions in the last six years we have shared the same views and tried to combat, together with Comrade Ruthenberg, the erroneous opportunistic political opinions of the comrades around Bittelman and Foster.

In the present Party discussion we state with the utmost emphasis that the so-called "Lovestone thesis" is the product of collective work, in which not only the signers of the thesis, Comrades Gitlow, Lovestone and Pepper, participated, but also other comrades, such as Comrades Weinstone and Minor, and that the Resolution against the Right Danger and Trotskyism is the result not only of the work of the comrades who signed it—Comrades Bedacht, Patrick, and Weinstone—but embodies many suggestions of Lovestone and Pepper also. There are no two lines in the majority of the C. E. C. There is only one political conception; there is only one leadership, which is neither the leadership of Lovestone nor of Pepper, nor of any other individual. It is the collective leadership of the C. E. C. It is a leadership which is based on common policies and on the support of the overwhelming majority of the proletarian membership of our Party.

JAY LOVESTONE,
JOHN PEPPER.

December 27, 1928.