

WORKERS AGE

A PAPER DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

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LOVESTONE'S SPEECH AT MAD. SQ. GARDEN

In the Discussion on the Seventh Comintern Congress

In accordance with our promise we now present the speech which Comrade Lovestone was to have delivered at Madison Square Garden, on October 3, where Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party, presented his report of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International.

We are certain that our readers will find this document to be a valuable aid in understanding the decisions of the Seventh Congress and the present situation in the international Communist movement.

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Comrade chairman, comrades and fellow workers: In the history of our movement, this mighty gathering will have a distinct significance. By those who are with us now and will come in the future this gathering will rightly be hailed as the first ray of hope and the first harbinger of revolutionary unity in our ranks after more than six years of acute dissension, bitter strife, and costly disunity.

At the outset I must underscore, with the greatest emphasis, that the leadership of the Communist Party is to be commended for granting us of the Communist Party Opposition the right to address you here tonight. Had the Central Committee of the Party not allowed us to appear on this platform, many, very many workers following the Communist banner or sympathetic to the revolutionary proletarian struggle, would have concluded that responsible Communist leaders do not know how to exercise their responsibility, how to be really worthy of the confidence placed in them by the workers even in these most fateful hours—in the hours of an impending imperialist world conflagration and menacing waves of fascist savagery.

Then, I want to assure you that I will not abuse the privilege granted us by speaking long. As precisely and pointedly as I possibly can, I will state the position of the International Communist Opposition, the position of its American

organization, the Communist Party Opposition, in the light of developments in the world Communist movement during the last seven years.

WHY WE ARE OUTSIDE OF C.I.

We of the International Communist Opposition have been and still are outside of the Comintern not of our own desire or choice. Our comrades in Germany, colleagues of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, builders of the Spartacus Group, founders of the Communist Party of Germany, have not left the official Communist movement in Germany of their own free will. Our comrades, followers of Comrade Roy, imprisoned for years in Britain's darkest dungeons in India, have been in a similar position. We of the Communist Party Opposition in whose ranks there are to be counted the founders and builders of the Communist Party of the United States, some of the most experienced and influential workers in the trade unions, in the mass organizations, have never been outside the Party through our own volition. The same holds true for our comrades in France, Czechoslovakia, Scandinavia, Sweden, Spain, Denmark, and elsewhere.

We found ourselves outside the Communist International, not because of any difference in principle with the Executive Committee of the Communist International, not because of any disagreement with the Communist Party of Soviet Union's correct policy of socialist construction in the Soviet Union. We were forced outside the organization ranks of the Comintern because we would not endorse and were in determined opposition to the sectarian tactics, to the ultra-leftist tactics, to the ultra-leftist strategic line. Long before the Seventh

Congress we saw the necessity for and fought for the realization of democratic centralism, of establishing a genuine collective leadership in the Comintern.

MASS WORK OF COMMUNIST OPPOSITION

Comrades, we of the International Communist Opposition, did our best never to allow ourselves the suicidal luxury of name-calling, of factional bitterness or approach as a means of settling political issues. We have sincerely tried our utmost not to sacrifice an iota of objectivity, not to swerve even an inch from our Marxist-Leninist course, from the path of comradely, constructive criticism. Besides, we never gave ourselves over merely to the tasks of Communist analysis and enlightenment, valuable, indispensable as these are. In the course of our years outside the official Communist Party ranks we threw ourselves into energetic mass work, into efforts at exemplary activities in the trade unions, into winning masses for the class war. We are confident that it won't be long now before rapidly increasing numbers of the comrades in the Communist Party will realize that the struggle we of the Communist Party Opposition have been waging was not one of factional malice, of clique pique, of destructive character but one which, despite terrific handicaps, severe strain and stress has objectively been of invaluable service to our world party of Communism, to our class.

In spite of tremendous odds we have sought, to the best of our ability, to restore the Party, the C.I., to a correct tactical course, to a healthy inner regime, to sound Communist unity. That is why we rejected dual unionism, union-splitting in any shape, manner or form. That is why we insisted that all Communists, all militants, all progressives,

stay within the main stream of American labor—the American Federation of Labor—to work there constructively, to help strengthen the unions, to set the pace in union-building, in strike militancy and in this practical, positive way disabuse the minds of the workers of the prejudices against Communism and thus win them over to the cause of the revolutionary class struggle. That is why we rejected the theory of social fascism and its logical practice of the united front from below which made impossible a genuine united front of working class organizations against fascism, war and all expressions of capitalist reaction. That is why we demanded a united front of the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the trade unions and all other labor organizations as a genuine joint effort to defend and extend the interests of the working masses.

To us the strategy and tactics of the class struggle were not matters of dry-as-dust formulae, of mechanically devising or executing policies, regardless of the concrete, specific, often exceptional conditions at hand. To us the questions of trade union tactics, of united front strategy, of approach to the great mass of non-Communist workers were problems to be solved solely on the basis of the conditions at hand and not thru wish-thinking or worshipping of fetishisms and idols. At all times we have sought to preserve and develop a spirit of Leninist self-criticism.

OUR STAND ON THE SEVENTH CONGRESS

But we do not come here to settle scores. We do not come here in any spirit of "I told you so", with any aim of proving who was right and who was wrong thruout these critical years in the life of our world party of Communism—

the C.I. Rather do we come here to tell the comrades of the Party and the workers in general what we hail and what we cannot endorse in the Seventh World Congress deliberations and decisions. We have come here to seek to reduce further and if possible to eradicate the bitterness which has arisen between us, to help the Party to struggle against sectarianism, against the remnants of ultra-leftism, to help overcome what Comrade Dimitroff called "the isolation of the vanguard." We are prepared to do our all to help the C.I. and our party to begin to lay a firm foundation for genuine democratic centralism, to realize in life the decision of the Seventh Congress for democratizing of the Comintern and against the mechanical transference of tactics. Here, we do not hesitate to say that the hero cult which has been developed to a very dangerous point thruout the sections of the Comintern is, in our opinion, an obstacle that must be overcome before a real critical spirit, initiative and self-reliance can be developed in the ranks and leadership, before real party democracy and a collective international leadership can be established.

DANGER OF OPPORTUNISM

To the leadership and membership of the Party we must say frankly that we are deeply concerned over what appears to us as a veritable epidemic of opportunist excesses in the American, French and other sections of the C.I. in recent months. It is with profoundest regret that we are compelled to say that the Seventh Congress has, either by way of omission or commission, failed to check this serious right danger in the Comintern. Believe us, dear comrades, it is not as carping critics, it is not as chronic kickers that we now sound the alarm against the opportunist

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ist deviations in the C.I. We have in mind some of the tactics put forward by the Seventh Congress for the struggle against fascism and for the struggle against imperialist war in those capitalist countries momentarily on the side of the Soviet Union in a general conflict.

It is solely because of our devotion to the principles of Marx and Lenin that we so vigorously warn that some of the very principles of Communism will be endangered if the C.I. persists in a false course of attempting to defeat fascism by fighting for bourgeois democracy as such, by adhering even for the briefest time to the idea and practice of Communist Parties entering coalition governments. The same grave danger to our common Leninist principles is at hand in the equally erroneous course of wavering, hesitating, or veering away in the least from our task of transforming the imperialist war into a civil war in all capitalist countries—in these imperialist countries which are temporarily on the same military front as the U.S.S.R. as well as in those imperialist lands fighting against our Socialist Soviet fatherland. To us any other course is short-sighted if the USSR is to be defended effectively, if the base of the world revolution is to be maintained and strengthened.

WE ARE FOR COMMUNIST UNITY

Comrades and fellow workers! We accept in all good faith and welcome the following encouraging declaration of Comrade Dimitiroff to the Seventh Congress:

"We want the workers who belong to the Second International and the Amsterdam International and those workers who belong to other political organizations to discuss these resolutions with us; to bring us their practical proposals and supplementary proposals, to try to think of the best method of application and to join us hand in hand to carry them out in practice."

It is in this spirit that we appear here. We entertain the highest hope and have full confidence that thru comradely discussion, thru full party democracy the old leftist sectarian errors can be overcome, and the menace of new opportunist deviations beaten back.

Comrades, we are for Communist unity today as ever before. In these fatal hours of fascism menacing us ever more, in these decisive hours of the world on the brink of another imperialist conflagration, at this very moment of Italian imperialist onslaught on Ethiopia, the crying need is for revolutionary unity. We hold that such revolutionary unity, unity in the ranks of world Com-

munist, is the first pre-requisite for working class unity, is the decisive pre-requisite for complete cooperation among the organizations of Socialists, Communists, trade unionists, expropriated middle class folks in the cities and the poor farmers.

We are firmly convinced that there are conditions under which sound Communist unity can be realized. This unity must, of course, be achieved internationally—between the Communist International and the International Communist Opposition. How this all-desirable goal is to be achieved, what the concrete conditions are under which this Communist unity is to be attained, it is not most appropriate for us to examine in detail at this moment. Suffice it to say that we feel certain that authoritative representatives of both Communist tendencies should get together to examine this problem concretely and to seek its speedy and sound solution.

OUR PROGRAM OF ACTION

We do not rest at words. We propose positive action, practical constructive activity and collaboration. Therefore, we take this occasion to make the following suggestions:

1. The decisions of the Seventh Congress which are of the most vital concern to the entire working class, should be discussed jointly by us—by the C.P. and C.P.O. On our part, we are prepared to have official party spokesmen address our units, provided the C.P. will allow our speakers to appear before its units. Similar procedure should be followed thru the press of both organizations. We declare here and now that the columns of the **Workers Age** are open to Party representatives and members for a frank, comradely, and constructively critical discussion of the Seventh Congress, of the I.C.O. position, etc. And, indeed, we do not hide from you the fact that reciprocity in such discussion would be welcomed by us.

2. Representatives of both organizations should get together to discuss ways and means of joint struggle against ultra-leftist sectarianism. Who is there who can effectively challenge our contention that we who have years of experience in fighting ultra-leftism, sectarianism, and adventurism, can be of real service to the Party here? Surely, the leadership of the Party will not question this.

3. Representatives of both organizations should get together to discuss collaboration in constructive mass work, in joint efforts to foster the development of genuine broad united front movements, in finding of sound methods of hastening the development of a farm-

er-labor party based on the mass organizations of the workers and poorer farmers, in strengthening the trade unions and in gradually transforming them into militant powerful organs for the defense of the interests of our class.

ATTITUDE TO US TEST OF C. P. POLICY

Comrades—and here I address myself particularly, tho not exclusively, to the leadership of the Party—in the eyes of many thousands of workers thruout the country the acid test of your efforts to put life into the Seventh Congress decisions for instituting party democracy, for constructive work in the unions, for genuine united front tactics, for a break with sectarianism will be your attitude to us, your relations to us. Surely, you understand why this is so. Only by dropping your old attitude towards us, only by collaborating with us, who have fought for years for these sound inner and outer policies, will it become clear to the masses of class-conscious workers—to thousands of our comrades in the Socialist Party and brothers in the American trade union movement (the A.F.L.)—that a new and better day has really dawned for our world Communist movement.

Comrades and fellow workers: Here I address myself especially to the rank and file of the party membership and the thousands of workers gathered in this inspiring assembly. To you I say that my very appearance here on this platform with the official Party leadership—after more than six years of a rupture of comradely and even diplomatic relations between us—affords a very substantial sign that the Central Committee of the C.P. will strive to respond, as it should, to the crying need of the hour in these historic days thru which the American and the other proletarian movements are now moving.

Comrades and fellow workers! Forgive me for having taken up so much of your time. We can only pledge to you that we will spare no effort or pain, that we will leave no stone unturned, to help clear the road for our Communist movement growing ever more firm in principle, ever more effective in tactics, ever more sound in organization and leadership and thus completely unified. Only then will we become powerful enough to storm the strongest fortress of world imperialism—U. S. capitalism—and build a Socialist Soviet Republic in the United States.

Here is the historic world mission of our class. Here is the task, the duty of our party. Here is the inspiration, the goal, of all of us Communists, revolutionary workers.

I thank you.