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# Lovestone's Appeal to Party

by Max Shachtman

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Less than one-tenth of the appeal to the International now being circulated secretly among the Party membership by Lovestone, Gitlow, Wolfe, Miller, Myerscough, Welsh, and White, is devoted to any differences in platform or principle it may or may not have with the present leadership and line of Stalin and the American Party leadership; and this is entirely characteristic of the present unprincipled struggle between the Right and Center wings of the Communist movement. Lovestone, even less so than Bukharin or Brandler, has not yet completely unfurled his programmatic banner. He is recruiting the forces for his faction *first*; he will develop his platform in full *later*. Here again he is only following in the footsteps of his new masters: Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky.

Lovestone's document, therefore, is mainly a personal factional polemic against his opponents, a printed edition of the underground mimeographed caucus circulars that corrupted the movement for years. What he succeeds in proving to the hilt in his appeal is that the personnel of the newly-concocted leadership is man for man no better, and in many respects worse — from the political and moral viewpoint — than the crew that Lovestone has managed to recruit.

Place *The Daily Worker's* frothing next to Lovestone's appeal and you will have a rounded-out picture of the whole leadership that earned its spurs in the struggle against the Bolshevik Opposition — from Lovestone through the gamut of the Weinstones, Bedachts, Stachels, and Johnstones to Foster. Each is a sample — Lovestone's more than the Stalinists' — of the friendly thieves of yesterday who have finally fallen out. Here is how Lovestone characterizes six of the men with whom he collaborated most intimately in the Party and in caucus for the last half decade or more:

“Degenerated elements from the former majority leadership of the Party — precisely those elements which are ideologically weakest, most factional, most unprincipled, and guilty of committing the worst right wing errors. Minor (the alliance with Sydney Hillman against the Communists and the left wing, the proposal to desert the central field of the mining struggle, the repeated opportunist errors of *The Daily Worker* under his editorship); Weinstone (a co-father with Cannon of the National Opposition Bloc condemned by the Communist International; a congenital petty bourgeois vacillator notorious for careerism and most unprincipled striving for office as best exemplified in the body-snatching role he played when he threw the Party into a factional struggle upon the death of Comrade Ruthenberg in order to secure for himself the National Secretaryship; the Panken case, the New York cooperatives, the painters, fraction, the Electrical Workers' Union, etc.); Stachel (joined Party only in 1924 and never participated in any of the mass work of the Party, professional trickster, petty bureaucrat deeply distrusted by even his closest co-workers and shared most of the errors of Weinstone enumerated above); Bedacht (Social Democratic attitude toward the youth; the Milwaukee Socialist Party alliance, the right wing capitulatory policy in the mining campaign, crassly social-democratic literature in Chicago in the last election, surrender to Dr. Warbasse at the last Cooperative League Convention); Ballam (notoriously lazy and incompetent and permanently on the auction block, chronic unprincipled factionalist and propounder of the fantastic counter-revolutionary doctrine that the Communist International through the Address is attempting to weaken the American Party in order to gain for Soviet Russia, American credits and recognition); Wicks (deserted the party during the first government attack, furiously attacking the Party from outside, Lynch alliance in the Typographical Union unanimously condemned by Fourth Congress [sic.] of Party [Aug. 21-30, 1925] for this opportunist policy.”

But these were precisely the “deserters, petty-bourgeois vacillators, careerists, opportunists, bureaucrats, and fakers” that formed Lovestone's main strength in the Party, his closest colleagues, whom he protected and defended, who formed his “Marxian trunk” and his Bolshevik “old guard”! What he

says about them all is quite true, and more might be added. We only await the moment when he will fall out with Gitlow and Wolfe, and then remind us how Wolfe cravenly deserted the Party twice and ran from the police.

Lovestone was put out of the way by Stalin because he was an American base for Bukharin, just as Bukharin and Stalin put Fischer, Maslov, Treint, and Neurath out of the way because they were bases for Zinoviev in 1925. All the other accusations against Lovestone are afterthoughts. It avails Lovestone nothing to point out the unquestionable fact that the Comintern has supported him and his group for the last 4 years and helped to crush any opposition to his dominance. Lovestone was supported so long as the Right-Center Bloc was in operation in the Russian Party and the International. When the crisis overtook this bloc, and only then, did Lovestone fall from grace.

### **The "Speculation" on Bukharin and Stalin.**

Lovestone, like Bukharin, like Stalin, hoped that the differences in the bloc could be patched together in the interests of a solid front against the Leninist Opposition. That is why, on the eve and after our expulsion, we were damned so violently by both Lovestone and Foster for "speculating" on the differences in the Russian Party, which everyone protested did not exist. That is why Lovestone speaks only now — a year after the event — of the famous anti-Bukharin "Corridor Congress" that was the talk of Moscow during the sessions of the 6th Comintern Congress [July 17-Sept. 1, 1928], the "Corridor Congress lead by the Neumanns, Lominadzes, and Bittelmans, but secretly supported by more powerful forces," i.e. by Stalin. Lovestone, who has as little principle as the Stalinists who now condemn him, was hoping for a new consolidation of Bukharin and Stalin that would leave him more firmly entrenched in the American Party leadership, a hope based upon the fervent speeches of Stalin himself, made only a few months ago, which denied the "counter-revolutionary Trotskyist slanders" of a breach in the Russian Party or its leadership.

The notorious anti-Bukharin resolution proposed by Lovestone and Gitlow at the last Party convention [6th: March 1929] was therefore a last-minute

act of desperation, an attempt to "get straight" with the new leading faction in the Comintern. Lovestone now reveals the whole self-condemnatory and squalid story of this resolution, and the story sheds no glory either on his former faction colleagues or their Fosterite opponents. The resolution was written by Minor and Bedacht and proposed by the faction to the convention, although Lovestone now claims that he opposed the whole affair. Johnstone, speaking to the convention in the name of the minority, declared that it "would not permit this Convention to get away with a mere declaration on policy but would force it to take an open vote on the condemnation of Comrade Bukharin by name." The two Comintern representatives, Dengel and Pollitt, made it plain to the Lovestoneites "that the ECCI considers us Bukharinites and that this fact influenced the judgment of the ECCI on the American question. We were informed that our repeated declarations on policy to the contrary were insufficient to clear us from this suspicion. We were told that our declaration would have to be much more specific, would have to mention names." Then, only after the Fosterite minority and Weinstone had each introduced resolutions condemning Bukharin by name and endorsing Stalin similarly, did Lovestone introduce his resolution! This, briefly, is the sordid history of the game of wire-pulling that passes for political struggle today.

### **Lovestone's Cablegram.**

The same is more or less true with the case of the incredible telegram sent by Lovestone from Moscow-Berlin to his caucus in the United States, outlining steps for taking over the Party apparatus and properties in defiance of any decision by the Comintern. The Bedachts, Stachels, and Minors are now violently outraged at their former leader for having conceived such a telegram. But Lovestone proves that while he may be a scamp, his former friends are not innocents abroad.

First, the cable was drafted by Lovestone, Wolfe, Gitlow, and Bedacht. Secondly, "Stachel and Minor fully agreed with this policy before the delegation left. In fact, Stachel and Minor prepared a list of names of comrades to whom, all Party property could be transferred in case the CI would decide...to turn the Party over to the Minority.... Stachel, even before the

delegation left for Moscow, arranged with one of the attorneys handling the Party's legal matters, to make it impossible for Weinstone to take away through legal channels, the Workers' Center from the Party in New York." Thirdly, Stachel and Minor, the recipients of the cable, concealed the cable from the Party for almost 3 weeks; "if Stachel, Minor, Ballam, Puro, Engdahl, Olgin, Mindel were immediately convinced that it was a party-splitting cable, why did they keep it a secret for so long?... And why doesn't Stachel tell the Party and the CI how it is that this cable is made public only now when the New York national Majority top caucus decided to burn it and he, Stachel, guaranteed its being destroyed?"

Only lack of space prohibits us from quoting further from Lovestone's proofs of the utter depravity of such people as Minor and Stachel, these glowing torches of Party "enlightenment." But a few words must be added on the odious role played by the paragon of self-pollution, Bedacht, over whose "honorable, manly, and Bolshevik self-criticism" Earl Browder recently went into panegyrics of praise.

Bedacht earned his laurels, and membership on the almighty Party Secretariat, by his indignant denunciation of Lovestone for all his crimes, and for a "self-criticism" of his own — only, Bedacht neglected to "admit" those "mistakes" that serve as the most damning indictment of him. We mention only a few. When it became known that Stalin had decided in advance to condemn the Lovestone group, "Comrade Bedacht proposed that we demand our passports." It was Bedacht who participated in the sending of the Lovestone splitting cable from Moscow. And when he had had his fill of Stalin's intrigues, "it was Bedacht who proposed in Moscow to Comrades Gitlow, Lovestone, and Wolfe to establish connections with Brandler and to keep a permanent representative in Berlin." It was Bedacht who drafted the aggressive Lovestone delegation statement on May 9th [1929]. And finally, it was Bedacht who wrote the letter to Wolfe, who was then in Moscow, on February 20, 1929, in which he gave his opinions of that eminent paladin of Bolshevism, Comrade Goldfarb-Petrovsky-Bennett-Williams as follows:

### **Bedacht on Goldfarb-Bennett.**

We are living in an almost impossible atmosphere. After we were told to fight it out, at the World Congress, and after we fought it out to live in constant expectation that some Goldfarbian cable will nullify the whole history of the last few months and will declare that the membership of our Party proposes and God Goldfarb disposes.

I have told you in my last letter and I repeat here that the role played by the Goldfarbs creates a most impossible relation with the Comintern. No edict of any person or any body can establish confidence of our Party members in the face of the Comintern if this face is that of an old Menshevik whose outstanding contribution to American Party history is his alliance with Abe Cahan and his right wing gangster tactics in the struggle against the Left Wing. No matter how loud he hollers now about Bolshevism, he cannot drown the sound of his past tirades against the Left Wing in the American SP and he cannot eradicate his history. It is a bitter experience for us who have gone through the struggle against the Goldfarbs here, against his counter-revolutionary Menshevik conceptions and tactics, to be now treated like schoolboys by the same Goldfarb, posing as a school master of Bolshevism. That makes not only a cat laugh but also makes angels weep.

Deceit and hypocrisy are not yet recognized Bolshevik methods and we refuse to use them, as well as we refuse to be made victims of them.

What has happened since this letter was written that has changed the character of Goldfarb to such an extent that Bedacht finds himself able to take orders from him in the Secretariat and the Political Bureau, and hail his ignorance as the apex of Leninist wisdom? Goldfarb has not changed; Bedacht has.

The essence of Lovestone's document is his appeal for leadership of the Party, based on two claims: his past loyalty to the Comintern, and his struggle against and final expulsion from the Communist Opposition. His claims for leadership are as valid as the ones of those who replaced him. Not valid at all are his complaints: "We have the unprecedented situation in the Party in which comrades fear to express their opinions. Discussion is being stifled... The 'enlightenment campaign' is a campaign of terror paralyzing the Party." It was the Lovestones throughout the International who were the heartiest protagonists of the regime of terror against the Leninist Opposition. It was they who stifled discussion. It was they who expelled the Leninist critics, made gangster attacks upon them, imprisoned and exiled them. Lovestone applauded this regime for years, and even called for more violent measures; in the United States he practiced these methods upon

us. Who will give his pleas for "Party democracy" a penny of credit?

The Party is in a bitterly critical situation. But Lovestone can offer no way out since he was and is one of the main causes of the crisis. It was his management of the party for 4 years that brought it to its present pass. He is as incapable of solving the situation as he is of analyzing it.

Lovestone represents the American section of the International Right Wing of Communism, the banner-bearer in Russia of the Thermidorian elements. He and his represent the policy and interests of one class and we another. His demand for Party democracy, like Brandler's, may appear superficially to be similar to ours. The same may appear true on other fields. But the demands of the Leninist Opposition are raised to subserve certain class interests which are antagonistic to the class interests represented by the Right Wing. When we demand Party democracy, or a correct trade union policy, it is for the purpose of strengthening the working class Bolshevik elements in the move-

ment. When it is demanded by Lovestone, it is for the purpose of gaining free play for interests alien to the working class that have seeped into the Communist movement. That is why any collaboration or a common line between us is impossible, all the malicious talk of the Weinstones, Fosters, and Petrovskys to the contrary notwithstanding.

Nor can a way out be offered by that weird Stalinist amalgam of Centrism which has been imposed upon the Party, a leadership without line or lineage, still bound politically and theoretically by a hundred threads to the Right Wing, before whom it is ready to capitulate in every crisis, with whom it is ready to make an intimate bloc, as it has done in the past, in order to fight the Left.

A solution can be had only on the basis of principle, after the adoption of the tried line of Lenin which has been thrown overboard, after the readmission of the International Opposition which has made this line its own. There is no other way out of the present swamp.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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