

Chapter 10

Lovestone Unmasked

Otto, Harold Williams and Farmer, having completed their course at KUTVA, left the Soviet Union after the Sixth Congress. The African, Bankole, remained for further training to prepare him for work in the Gold Coast (Ghana). At KUTVA there was another contingent of Black students from the U.S. Along with Maude White, there were now William S. Patterson (Wilson), Herbert Newton, Marie Houston and many more were to come.

I was then thirty and had recently completed my last YCL assignment as a delegate to the Fifth Congress of the Young Communist International (YCI). Along with my studies at the Lenin School, I was continuing my work in the Comintern. I was then vice-chairman of the Negro Subcommittee of the Eastern (colonial) Secretariat, and Nasanov was chairman. The subcommittee was established as a “watch-dog” committee to check on the application of the Sixth Congress decisions with reference to the Black national question in the U.S. and South Africa. According to our reports, the South Africans were applying the line of the Sixth Congress and so we devoted most of our attention to the work in the United States.

In the U.S., the minority girded itself for a long struggle against the Lovestone-Pepper leadership, which had emerged from the Sixth Congress battered, but not beaten. This leadership still enjoyed the majority support within the Party. This was due primarily to the widely prevalent belief within the Party that this leadership was favored by the Comintern. Lovestone was loud in his protestations of support for the line of the Sixth Congress and attempted to pin the right-wing label on the minority. This deception was successful for a short time.

The CI’s support for Lovestone seemed confirmed by a letter from the ECCI dated September 7, 1928, a week after the adjournment of the Sixth Congress. The letter contained two documents. The first was the final draft of paragraph forty-nine of the “Thesis on the International Situation and Tasks of the Communist International,” which dealt with the U.S. Party. The second was a “Supplementary Decision” by the Political Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Communist International which denied the minority’s charge that the Lovestone-Pepper leadership represented a right line in the Party.¹

Paragraph forty-nine commended the Party, saying, "it has displayed more lively activity and has taken advantage of symptoms of crisis in American industry.... A number of stubborn and fierce class battles (primarily the miners' strike) found in the Communist Party a stalwart leader. The campaign against the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti was also conducted under the leadership of the Party."

It also criticized the Party, stating that "the Party has not with sufficient energy conducted work in the organization of the unorganized and of the Negro Movement, and... it does not conduct a sufficiently strong struggle against the predatory policy of the United States in Latin America." It concluded by stating, "These mistakes, however, cannot be ascribed to the majority leadership alone.... the most important task that confronts the Party is to put an end to the factional strife which is not based on any serious differences on principles..." The thesis pointed out that while some rightist errors had been committed by both sides, "the charge against the majority of the Central Committee of the U.S. Party of representing a right line is unfounded."

The letter evoked great jubilation among Lovestone-Pepper cohorts and was given widest publicity. A self-laudatory statement from the Central Committee was published alongside the CI letter in the October 3, 1928, *Daily Worker*. It boasted that the letter proved that the CI "is continuing its policy of supporting politically the present Party leadership."

Of course we in the minority resented Lovestone's interpretation of the CI's letter. We felt that the CI's criticisms of all factionalism and its rejection of our specific charge against the Lovestone-Pepper leadership were not equivalent to a political endorsement for Lovestone. The Comintern called for unity in the Party on the basis of the Sixth Congress's decisions. We could hardly expect the CI to come out in support of the minority; it was not a cohesive ideological force itself. The subsequent defection of Cannon to Trotskyism further demonstrated the lack of ideological cohesion in the minority. Then there was the hard fact that Lovestone still held the majority of the U.S. Party.

Differences of principle between the minority and the Lovestone leadership had begun to develop only a half year before at the Fourth Congress of the RILU in March 1928. These arose over the question of trade unions; but even here they were clouded by factionalism and vacillation on the part of the minority. There was, therefore, substance to the CI's charges that both groups had placed

factional consideration above principles.

About the same time, the Party was shocked by the defection of James Cannon and his close associates Max Shachtman and Marty Abern. They were exposed as hidden Trotskyists and expelled from the Party. Cannon's treachery was first exposed by the minority. This frustrated Lovestone's attempt to pin the label of Trotskyism on our group. Nevertheless, Lovestone sought to use the Trotsky issue to divert the Party from the struggle against the main right danger. Later, the Comintern was to criticize the minority for its lack of vigilance and its failure to disassociate itself "at the right time" from Cannon's Trotskyism.

Lovestone was cocky and over-confident. He was looking forward to wiping out the minority as a political force in the U.S. Party at the next convention. Even the recall to Moscow of Pepper, his main advisor and co-factionalist, shortly after the return of the U.S. delegation, seemed not to shake his self-confidence. (Pepper had originally come to the U.S. as a Comintern worker and was thus directly subject to its discipline.) His recall was undoubtedly an indication of Lovestone's declining support within the Comintern. The Lovestone leadership supported Pepper's protest against recall. The CI did not press the issue at the time and Pepper remained in the U.S. Shortly thereafter he returned to his former position in Party leadership. But the incident was not forgotten; it was to be added on the debit side of the ledger at Lovestone's final accounting.

Then came the first blow. It was a letter from the Political Secretariat dated November 21, 1928. The letter expressed sharp displeasure at the factional manner in which Lovestone had used the previous letter of September 7. It pointed to the non-self-critical and self-congratulatory character of the statements issued by the majority in response to the September letter and expressed emphatic disapproval of the claim by Lovestone that the Comintern was "continuing its policy of supporting politically the present leadership." "This formulation," the new letter asserted, "could lead to the interpretation that the Sixth Congress has expressly declared its confidence in the majority in contrast to the minority. But this is not so."²

The letter also called for the postponement of the Party Convention until February 1929. Clearly Lovestone had overreached himself. Coming on the eve of the U.S. Central Committee Plenum, the letter threw the Lovestoneites into dismay and consternation. How do we explain the sharpened tone of this letter? It was a by-product of the heightened counter-offensive against the international

right and its conciliators which had gotten underway after the Sixth Congress of the Comintern. It was a warning tremor of the quake that was to come.

Internationally the right had crystallized at the congress and, immediately following, it had burgeoned forth in the USSR and other leading parties of the Comintern. In Germany it was expressed in illusions regarding the social democrats and in resistance to the organization of left unions. In France it was reflected in opposition to the election slogan of "class against class." In Britain it surfaced as a non-critical attitude towards the Labor Party and a refusal to put up independent candidates.

This new thrust of the right was met by a strong counteroffensive. In Germany it led to the expulsion of the Brandler-Thaelheimer right liquidationists. The CI intervened there on behalf of Thaelmann against the conciliators Ewart and Gerhart Eisler.

In the Soviet Union, the right line of Bukharin and his friends had encouraged resistance on the part of the *kulaks* and capitalist elements to the five-year plan, industrialization and collectivization. They resisted the state monopoly on foreign trade. This was reflected in mass sabotage, terrorism against collective farmers, party workers and governmental officials in the countryside, burning down of the collective farms and state granaries. In the same year (1928), a widespread conspiracy of wreckers was exposed in the Shackty District of the Donetz Coal Basin. The conspirators had close connections with former mine owners and foreign capitalists. Their aim was to disrupt socialist development. As a result, the counter-offensive could no longer be postponed, and the CPSU was obliged to take sharp action against the menacing right and its leaders – Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky.

The opening gun against the right came in October 1928, at a plenary meeting of the Moscow Committee of the CPSU. At first, Bukharin was not mentioned by name. Other meetings followed. In early February 1929, at a joint meeting of the Politburo and Presidium of the Central Control Commission (CCC), Bukharin was exposed as a leader of the hidden right.

In the Comintern itself, the struggle unfolded after the Sixth Congress. As Bukharin came under attack, his leadership became increasingly tenuous. De facto leadership of the CI passed to the pro-Stalin forces and Bukharin became little more than a figurehead. His lieutenants, the Swiss Humbert-Droz and the Italian Celler, also came under attack.

Against this background, it was inevitable that Lovestone too, would be smoked out in the open.

We students held what amounted to a dual-party membership – enabling us to keep abreast of the situation in both the CPSU and the CPUSA. From our vantage point in Moscow, we had a clearer view of the developments in the CI than did our counterparts at home. As members of the CPSU we participated in the fight of the school against the right. Molotov himself, Stalin's closest aide came to the school to report on the decisions of the February 1929 joint meeting of the Central Commission of the CC of the CPSU and the Moscow Party organization. Along with Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky were exposed as leaders of a clandestine right in the Soviet Party.

Molotov had moved into the CI immediately after the Sixth Congress – a clear political move to offset Bukharin's leadership. Therefore, he spoke authoritatively on the ramifications of the international right and of Bukharin supporters in the fraternal German, French, Italian and other parties. He didn't mention the CPUSA or Lovestone in his report, but we students did in discussion on the floor following his report.

The Lenin School was a strong point in the struggle against the Bukharin right, just as it had been in the struggle against the Trotsky-Zinoviev left. The school reflected in microcosm the struggle raging throughout the CI for the implementation of the Sixth Congress line against the right opposition. Here we had the right on the run. They were in the minority and at a decided disadvantage from the start, for the entire school administration and faculty from Kursanova (the director) down were stalwart supporters of the Central Committee of the CPSU and its majority grouped around Stalin.

Indeed, Lovestone had made a fatal mistake in allowing so many able comrades of the minority in the CPUSA to go to the Lenin School. He had undoubtedly already realized this. My group was now in its second year. The students who had preceded us, including Hathaway, were back in the U.S. and Hathaway quickly became an outstanding leader of the minority group upon his return.

We all had many friends in the Russian Party and in the CI, especially among the second level leadership – people important in international work. Some of us were sent on brief international missions – for example, the Krumbeins were sent to China and also to Britain. Rudy Baker, another student from the U.S., was also sent to China. A number of us American students were invited to partici-

pate in meetings of the Profintern, the Anglo-American Secretariat and even the ECCI itself on occasions where American questions were discussed.

I remember one such meeting that I attended as part of a group from the Lenin School. I had been sent by the school to extend greetings to a joint meeting of the Central Control Commission of the CC of the CPSU and its Moscow organization held January-February 1929, as mentioned above. Although I felt no need for an interpreter, as my Russian was adequate, Gus Sklar was sent with me. He was a fellow student and one of the few supporters of Lovestone at the school. A Russian-American, he was completely bilingual and a very affable fellow.

In my brief speech of greetings I hailed the victorious struggle of the CPSU against the right and right-conciliators under the leadership of Comrade Stalin as setting an example for us in the American Party. "We have our own right deviationists," I said, "Bukharin's friends in the American Party – the Pepper-Lovestone leadership." I described the leadership's theory of American exceptionalism and its underestimation of the radicalization of the American working class and oppressed Blacks. I ended my speech in a typical Russian manner: "Long live the CPSU and its Bolshevik Central Committee led by Comrade Stalin."

I listened attentively as poor old Gus honestly and accurately translated my speech. It certainly was a factional speech but was greeted with applause by the Moscow officials and workers in the audience.

Gus left the hall and proceeded immediately to the Lux Hotel to inform Lovestone's crony, Bertram Wolfe. Wolfe had recently replaced J. Louis Engdahl as U.S. representative to the CI. He had been sent by Lovestone in the hope of improving communication between Moscow and the American Party.

I recall that he was particularly riled by this speech. Several days later there was a meeting of the ECCI on the preparations for the American Party's Sixth Convention to which a number of us students were invited as usual. Wolfe, while giving his report, voiced a number of complaints. Citing my speech, he questioned the seeming lack of respect accorded the legitimate representative of the American Party. "How is it," he wondered, "that Haywood, a mere student, extends greetings to the Soviet Party. Why is it that he is given a platform at such an important meeting to launch a factional attack on the U.S. Communist Party? Why is it that when I report

here, Lenin School students are always called on to give minority reports?”

These complaints were met with stony-faced silence by the members of the secretariat.

CURTAINS FOR LOVESTONE

From Moscow, we students followed events in the U.S. with avid interest. Our line of communication was in good repair, as our stateside friends kept us well posted. We knew a showdown was imminent. Finally, the Sixth Convention of the CPUSA convened on March 1, 1929.

It was attended by two special CI emissaries with plenipotentiary powers, the German, Philip Dengel, and the British Communist leader, Harry Pollitt. They brought with them two sets of directives: the first was public in the form of the final draft of the CI's open letter to the convention, and the second, confidential organizational proposals designed to ensure the carrying out of the directives of the open letter. The contents of the open letter were known; it had been circulated as a draft. We students at the Lenin School had participated in the discussions in the CI in which the letter was formulated.

The open letter continued the balanced criticism of both groups along the lines of paragraph forty-nine of the Thesis of the Sixth Congress and the Supplementary Thesis. It held that both groups were guilty of unprincipled factionalism; it pointed to the absence of differences on principle between them. It said both were guilty of right mistakes. However, there was something new in the open letter. It pointed out that the source of the right mistakes of both groups lay in the idea of American exceptionalism. “Both sides,” it continued, “are inclined to regard American imperialism as isolated from world capitalism, as independent from it and developing according to its own laws.”³

To us in the minority, it seemed the scales were now tipped lightly but definitely against Lovestone. Though both sides were guilty of this error, it was the Lovestone faction which had articulated it into a full blown theory and which, I felt, held to it the most strongly.

“This mistake of the majority is closely related to its great overestimation of the economic might and the powerful technical development of the United States.” In this regard the open letter emphasized that it is “absolutely wrong to regard this technical evolution

as a 'second industrial revolution' as is done in the majority thesis." It was a "serious error," it stated, to infer that the remnants of feudalism were being wiped out in the South and that a new bourgeoisie with a new proletariat were being formed.

"Such overestimation (of the results of the development of technique) would play into the hands of all advertisers of the successes of bourgeois science and technique who seek to deafen the proletariat by raising a lot of noise about technical progress and showing that there is no general crisis of capitalism; that capitalism is still vigorous in the U.S. and that thanks to its extremely rapid development, it is capable of pulling Europe out of its crisis." The letter contended that "technical transformation" and rationalization lead "to further deepening and sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism."

With regards to the minority it criticized Bittelman's "apex theory" and stated that the "sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism is to be expected not because American imperialism ceases to develop but on the contrary it is to be expected because American imperialism is developing and surpasses other capitalist countries in its development, which leads to an extreme accentuation of all antagonisms." The "apex theory" is the view that U.S. imperialism had reached its peak of development and would soon be brought to its knees, primarily by the weight of its own internal contradictions.

The letter went on to condemn the factionalism in the Party, stating, "so long as these two groups exist in the Party... the further healthy ideological development of the Party is excluded."

It concluded by putting forth four principal conditions essential to the Party's "transformation into a mass Communist Party... the decisive significance of which neither the majority... nor the minority have understood." The four conditions were: "1) A correct perspective in the analysis of the general crisis of capitalism and American imperialism which is a part of it; 2) To place in the center of the work of the Party the daily needs of the American working class; 3) Freeing the Party from its immigrant narrowness and seclusion and making the American workers its wide basin, paying due attention to work among Negroes; and 4) Liquidation of factionalism and drawing workers into the leadership."

Clearly the letter put an end to any basis for Lovestone's claim of CI support.

What then were the CI's proposals for a new, non-factional leadership? These were contained in the confidential organizational pro-

posals brought by the two CI reps, Dengel and Pollitt. The proposals called for the temporary withdrawal of Lovestone and Bittelman – considered the two main factionalists – from the U.S. and requested that they be placed at the disposal of the CI for assignment to international work. It advised the appointment of William Z. Foster as the new general secretary. Pepper was again ordered to Moscow immediately and forbidden to attend the convention.

Formal acceptance of the line of the open letter posed no difficulties for an unprincipled opportunist of Lovestone's caliber. In fact, the letter was endorsed by both factions. But the organizational proposals, which threatened to snatch power from Lovestone, were another matter. The crucial question for Lovestone and company was to retain control of the Party. With his huge majority in the Party, he felt he was in a position to bargain with the CI. But the situation called for some fast footwork.

While loudly proclaiming full agreement with the political directive and proposing its unqualified acceptance, he directed his main thrust at the organizational proposals, claiming they contradicted the political directive. Defying the CI reps, he and his partisans carried the fight to the convention floor. There they launched an unbridled campaign of defamation and character assassination against Foster, who was then favored by the CI to replace Lovestone. The minority, on its part, charged Lovestone with support of the deposed Bukharin.

Not to be outdone, the Lovestoneites supported a resolution denouncing Bukharin and calling for his ouster as head of the Comintern. Lovestone had no compunction in dumping his former political patron.

Tempers flared; fistfights erupted on the convention floor. A group of so-called proletarian delegates organized by Lovestone sent a cable to the CI pleading for a reversal of the organizational proposals, and that the convention be allowed to choose its own general secretary, subject of course to the CI's approval.

The situation was so tense that the CI responded by conceding the right of the convention to elect its own leadership – and thus its general secretary – with the exception of Lovestone. They still insisted on Lovestone's and Bittelman's withdrawal to Moscow. Other than that, the convention with its Lovestone majority was free to elect its own leadership.

Lovestone made his crony Gitlow general secretary. The CI also insisted on Pepper's return to Moscow. The convention ended up

with the appointment of several Lovestone loyalists as a “proletarian delegation,” which would travel to Moscow and plead the majority case in the Comintern. The members of the delegation were mainly Party functionaries chosen for political reliability. Led by the majority leaders Lovestone, Gitlow and Bedacht, they went to Moscow to seek the repeal of Lovestone’s assignment to Moscow and his prohibition from CPUSA leadership.

THE SCENE SHIFTS TO MOSCOW

Since the Sixth Congress, Lovestone had succeeded in covering his flanks on the Afro-American question. He had proposed Huiswood as candidate for the ECCI (of which he was now a member). Five Blacks – Huiswood, Otto Hall, Briggs, Edward Welsh and John Henry – were elected to the new Central Committee. Lovestone’s “proletarian delegation” arrived in Moscow on April 7, 1929, its ten members included two Black comrades, Edward Welsh and Otto Huiswood. I assumed that the line-up of leading Black comrades with the Lovestone crowd represented an alliance of convenience and had little to do with ideology. Up to that time there had been no serious discussion in the Party of the Sixth Congress resolution on the Negro question.

Foster and Weinstone also arrived to place the case of the minority before the American Commission. Weinstone had switched over to the minority during the Sixth Party Convention and now supported the CI organizational proposals. Bittelman was also on hand, having acceded without protest to his reassignment to Comintern work.

The American Commission convened a week later, on April 14, 1929, in a large rectangular hall in the Comintern building. More than a hundred participants and spectators were on hand. The commission itself was an impressive group and included leading Marxists from Germany, Britain, France, Czechoslovakia and China. Among the delegates from the USSR were Stalin, Molotov and Manuilsky. There were also top officials of the Comintern and Profintern: Kuusinen, Gusev, Mikhailov (Williams), Lozovsky, Bela Kun, Kolarov, Kitarov (secretary of the YCI) and Bell. Kuusinen was chairman of the commission and Mikhailov was secretary.

Among the invited guests was our large contingent from the Lenin School. I sat and looked over the “proletarian delegation” as we waited for the meeting to start.⁴ I knew Huiswood, having met him at the founding convention of the American Negro Labor Con-

gress in 1925, but I didn't know Welsh – he was a newcomer, having been in the Party only a few months.

There was Alex Noral, a farmer from the west coast whom I had met in Moscow the year before. There he had worked in the Crestintern (the Peasant International) representing American farmers. There was Mother Bloor whom I had met previously; she was a plump, kindly-looking elderly woman, formerly with the Foster faction. She always had a twinkle in her eye and her gentle look belied her true character as a staunch, fierce, proletarian fighter. A veteran of many labor battles, she was an impressive agitator. I wondered what she was doing in Lovestone's crowd. There were three others in the delegation whom I didn't know: William Miller, Tom Myerscough and William J. White.

The commission sessions were to last nearly a month. Gitlow led off stating the case for the majority. A large man, his face screwed up in a perennial frown, he was an ill-tempered sort. He harangued the audience for two hours, pouring invective on the minority, particularly Foster. Boasting that the overwhelming majority of the Party supported his group, he praised Lovestone, contrasting the great (so-called) "contributions" of Lovestone with the shortcomings and failures of Foster.

Woven throughout was the implication that the Party would be destroyed if the Comintern's decisions were not reversed. He attacked Lozovsky, Profintern chairman, as being virtually a member of the minority faction. He wound up his pitch by calling for a reversal of the CI organizational directives to the CPUSA Sixth Convention, stating that the removal of Lovestone from leadership would be a damaging blow to the Party.

Foster replied in a more moderate tone, scoring the Pepper-Lovestone leadership and their theory of American exceptionalism as representing the right deviation in the U.S. Party. He expressed outrage at the smear campaign launched against him by the Lovestone group which he said was designed to line up the Party against the CI decisions. He called for support of the Comintern.

Bittelman spoke, emphasizing that the downward swing of the U.S. economy was already taking place and life itself refuted the Lovestone-Pepper optimistic prognosis. Wolfe complained about discriminatory treatment by the ECCI; how his status as official representative of the CPUSA was not recognized and how he was excluded from important discussions on the American question.

At last, members of the "proletarian delegation" took the floor

and spoke, damning Foster and praising Lovestone. After speaking, each one was questioned by members of the commission. The questions were designed to bring out their understanding of the issues involved. Nothing came out but a parroting of Gitlow and Lovestone.

There was an undercurrent of belligerency and hostility to the commission and the Comintern. Loyalty to Lovestone was a hallmark of the delegation. I was particularly embarrassed by Ed Welsh. He was a tall, handsome, young Black. Welsh, I learned, had been in the Party only a few months, but was a staunch henchman of Lovestone, who had placed him on the Central Committee.

As he mounted the platform, anger, defiance and disrespect for the commission was written plainly on his face. He launched into a most vicious tirade against Lozovsky, the chairman of the Profintern. Manuilsky, a Soviet member of the ECCI who was sitting in front of the rostrum, was so shocked at the virulence of this attack against a person of Lozovsky's stature that he started to rise to his feet in protest.

Welsh waved him down with his hand, shouting, "Aw, sit down, you!"

Manuilsky flopped back in his chair in open-mouth amazement.

Tom Myerscough, a mine organizer from the Pittsburgh area, also spoke. He was a tough-looking, blustering ex-miner. He strode up to the platform and declared that he spoke three languages, "English, profane, and today I'm gonna speak cold turkey."

The running translation came to an abrupt halt and there was a momentary confusion as the translators stumbled over this slang term.

In the end, Myerscough's "cold turkey" turned out to be just another rehash of Lovestone's charges.

The commission then brought up its big guns. Comintern and Profintern officials – Gusev, Kolarov, Lozovsky, Bela Kun, Heller and Bell. They continued with a balanced criticism of both groups, but as the meeting went on more and more emphasis was placed on the mistakes of the majority.

Lozovsky, his eyes twinkling, stepped up joyously to the attack. It was evident that he welcomed this opportunity to settle old scores. He'd been subject to insults and slanders from Lovestone and company for several years, and now the day of reckoning had come. He directed his main barbs against Lovestone and Pepper, dwelling at length on the "strange case" of Comrade Pepper and his

fictitious travels.

Pepper was first called back to Moscow in September 1928; the call was repeated in the organizational proposals of February 1929, and he was ordered to take no part in the U.S. Party convention. Pepper dropped out of sight, giving the impression that he was on his way back to Moscow. Pepper's account of what then happened was that he went to Mexico to seek transportation by ship to the Soviet Union. When no satisfactory arrangements could be made, he returned to New York and from there went on to Moscow. But during the period he was supposedly in Mexico, he was seen in New York at the time of the Party convention there.

Pepper had returned, we heard, but was not present at any of the sessions. His case was before the International Control Commission. (An arm of the CI, the ICC was composed of representatives of seventeen parties. Its functions were to supervise the finances of the ECCI and deal with questions of discipline referred to it by member parties.)

Lozovsky dwelt at length on Pepper's mysterious travels; how it was the longest trip on record from New York to Moscow, how he had somehow managed the impossible feat of being in two places at the same time. He spoke of how Pepper had faced a big decision: either to return to Moscow or remain in the United States – which meant dropping out of the Party. It took him a long while to make up his mind, Lozovsky observed.

Kolarov, a huge Bulgarian, took the floor. He referred to Myerscough's "cold turkey" speech with heavy humor. He conceded that he lacked the linguistic skills of some of his American comrades, and since he didn't know anything about this "cold turkey," he was just going to speak plain Russian.

Stalin made his first speech at the commission on May 6. Foster had introduced me to him at the beginning of the commission sessions. I guess Foster had wanted him to know he also had some Black supporters. I had met Stalin before, but I doubt that the great man had remembered me from our first meeting.

I was now to hear him speak for the first time. Garbed in his customary tan tunic and polished black boots, he stepped to the rostrum. Very informally leaning on the stand with a pipe in one hand, he began speaking in a calm, measured, scarcely audible voice. We had to strain to hear him.

Stalin emphasized two main points, charging both the majority and minority factions with American exceptionalism and unprinci-

pled factionalism: “Both groups are guilty of the fundamental error of exaggerating the specific features of American capitalism. You know that this exaggeration lies at the root of every opportunist error committed both by the majority and minority groups.”⁵ Stalin followed this with a rhetorical question: “What are the main defects in the practice of the leaders of the majority and the minority?... Firstly, that in their day-to-day work they, and particularly the leaders of the majority, are guided by motives of unprincipled factionalism and place the interests of their faction higher than the interests of the Party.

“Secondly, that both groups, and particularly the majority, are so infected with the disease of factionalism that they base their relations with the Comintern, not on the principle of confidence, but on a policy of rotten diplomacy, a policy of diplomatic intrigue.” As an example he cited the way in which both factions speculated on the “existing and non-existing differences within the CPSU,” adding that they are “competing with each other and chasing after each other like horses in a race.”⁶

He presented a six-point program for a solution to the problems faced by the American Party. This included approval “in the main” of the ECCI proposals to the Sixth Convention of the CPUSA (except that relating to the candidacy of Foster); sending of an open letter to all Party members “emphasizing the question of eradicating all factionalism”; condemning the refusal of the majority leaders to carry out the ECCI proposals at the Party convention; ending immediately the situation in the American Party in which important questions of developing the mass movement, “questions of the struggle of the working class against the capitalists,” were “replaced by petty questions of the factional struggle.”

Stalin concluded by calling for a reorganization of the CPUSA by the secretariat of the ECCI, with emphasis on advancing those workers “who are capable of placing the interests and the unity of the Party above the interests of individual groups.” Finally, that Lovestone and Bittelman be made available for work in the Comintern so that everyone clearly understands that “the Comintern intends to fight factionalism in all seriousness.”⁷ Stalin’s remarks indicated why the CI considered the development of the American Party so crucial and why it spent so much time in resolving its problems: “The American Communist Party is one of those few communist parties in the world upon which history has laid tasks of a decisive character from the point of view of the world revolutionary

movement.... The three million new unemployed in America are the first swallows indicating the ripening of the economic crisis in America... I think the moment is not far off when a revolutionary crisis will develop in America.”⁸ As Stalin was speaking, I looked across and saw Lovestone with a leer on his face. Earlier on during a break in the session, I had run into him in the corridor.

“Hello, Harry,” he called to me, “you ought to come over to our side; we could use a bright young fellow like you.”

Rather taken aback at the man’s gall, I said something like, “You’ve got your own Negroes!”

“Oh, that trash!” he said with a deprecating wave of his hand, obviously referring to Huiswood and Welsh.

Shocked by his crudeness, I was strongly tempted to ask how much he thought I was worth, but I was afraid he might have taken me seriously.

The session continued as Molotov followed Stalin, speaking along basically the same line. He stressed the need to put an end to the factionalism which had corroded the Party and held back the growth of the working class movement. He concluded by calling on the CPUSA to “get on a new track.... to ensure the liquidation of factionalism not in words but in deeds, and to ensure the transformation of its organization” so that the Party could prepare itself for the sharpening struggles and crises to come.⁹

It was now clear from the speeches of Stalin, Molotov and other members of the commission which way the wind was blowing. For the majority, Stalin’s speech was definitely an ill omen. Even though the subcommittee of the commission (Molotov, Gusev and Kuusinen) had not yet reported out a draft of the commission’s findings, Lovestone and company decided to force a showdown. From this point on, they began a series of veiled threats against the Comintern.

On May 9, three days before the subcommittee’s draft was presented, the Lovestoneites issued a declaration which accused the ECCI of supporting the minority against the majority and “rewarding Comrade Foster with its confidence.” Gambling that they would still be able to control the Party at home, the Lovestoneites arrogantly challenged the leadership of the CI. As a cover for their own splitting activities, they accused the ECCI of trying to split the American Party.¹⁰

This was clearly the rhetoric of splitting, and was so considered by the members of the commission. It could only be interpreted as a

threat to take the U.S. Party out of the CI.

On May 12, the last meeting of the full commission was called into session. Kuusinen, as chairman, reported the findings and decisions of the subcommittee. Their report was in the form of a draft address from the ECCI to the membership of the CPUSA which had been circulated the day before.¹¹ Addressed over the heads of the Party leadership, it singled out the Lovestone faction for its sharpest attack. In this respect, it went much beyond previous criticisms, such as those of the "Open Letter to the Sixth Convention." It now said that exceptionalism was "the ideological lever of the right errors in the American Communist Party," adding that exceptionalism:

found its clearest exponents in the persons of Comrades Pepper and Lovestone, whose conception was as follows: There is a crisis of capitalism but not of American capitalism, a swing of the masses leftwards but not in America. There is the necessity of accentuating the struggle against reformism but not in the United States, there is a necessity for struggling against the right danger, but not in the American Communist Party.

The address charged the Lovestone leadership with "misleading honest proletarian Party members who uphold the line of the Comintern," and "playing an unprincipled game with the question of the struggle against the right danger." It termed Lovestone's declaration of May 9 to be a "most factional and entirely impermissible anti-Party declaration," stating that it "represents a direct attempt at preparing a condition necessary for paralyzing the decisions of the Comintern and for a split in the Communist Party of America."

The draft address concluded with five points:

- 1) A call for dissolution of both factions;
- 2) Temporary removal of Lovestone and Bittelman from work in the CPUSA;
- 3) Rejection of the minority demand for a special convention;
- 4) A call for the re-organization of the secretariat of the CC of the CPUSA on a non-factional basis;
- 5) The turning of Pepper's case over to the International Control Commission.

Presenting the draft address, Kuusinen appealed to the Lovestone delegation:

We call upon the comrades to turn back from this road unconditionally.... Our subcommission deems it necessary to call quite definitely upon the delegation as a whole, and upon every individual member of the delegation, to state with absolute clearness whether they are prepared to submit to the decisions of the Comintern on the American question and to carry them out implicitly without reservations. Yes or no? It will substantially depend upon your answer, what character the measures of the Comintern upon the American question shall eventually assume. From your declaration we see plainly that it is no longer a question of factionalism of the leaders of the Majority of the CC against the Minority group, but it is already a factional attitude towards the Executive of the Comintern.¹²

The majority delegates, after provoking this showdown with the ECCI, refused to give a straight answer to the question posed by Kuusinen – whether or not they would accept the decisions of the Comintern. They backed away, postponing a confrontation until May 14. In the meantime, the majority leaders were secretly taking steps to split the Party.

A cable drafted immediately after the May 12 meeting and telegraphed from Berlin on May 15 was secretly sent to “caretakers” at home, instructing them that the “...draft decision means destruction of Party.... take no action, any proposals by anybody.” The cable went on to state, “situation astounding, outrageous, can’t be understood until arrival” and “possibility entire delegation being forcibly detained.”

The cable then instructed the majority cohorts at home to “Start wide movements in units and press for return of complete delegation... take no action on any... CI instructions.... Carefully check up all units, all property, all connections, all mailing lists of auxiliaries, all sub-lists, district lists, removing some offices and unreliaables. Check all checking accounts, all organizations, seeing that authorized signers are exclusively reliables, appointing secretariat for auxiliaries and treasury dis-authorize present signatory, Instantly finish preparations sell buildings especially eliminating (Weinstone) trusteeship. Remove Mania Reiss.”¹³

LOVESTONE’S MOMENT OF TRUTH

May 14, the night of the big showdown, finally arrived. The

Presidium of the ECCI – the highest body of the Comintern – convened to hear the report of the commission and render the final decision on the American question. The Red Hall of the Comintern building was jam-packed with participants and on-lookers, among them top flight leaders of the Comintern and Profintern, political workers of both these organizations and leaders of many affiliate parties.

We Americans constituted a sizeable group. In addition to the ten delegates, it seemed as though Moscow's entire American Communist colony was present. Aside from our large Lenin School contingent, which had attended the sessions from the beginning, there were now students from the Eastern University (KUTVA): Maude White, Patterson, Marie Houston, Bennett and Herbert Newton.

Lovestone's moment of truth had arrived. During the month of sessions, tension had been steadily building; we waited with eager anticipation for the outcome of the final session.

Finally the meeting was gaveled to order and Kuusinen, the chairman of the commission read its findings. They were in the form of an address from the Executive Committee of the Comintern to all members of the Communist Party USA. He concluded by pointing out that the majority delegates had yet to answer the question he had posed in the commission on the twelfth of the month. The floor was then thrown open for discussion.

An angry, scowling Ben Gitlow mounted the platform and read another declaration signed by the American "proletarian" delegation. Although presented in a more diplomatic form than the previous declaration, this new statement continued the same factional and anti-Party attack. As later characterized by the ECCI, it was a "direct attempt to nullify the decisions of the CI and pave the way for an open split in the CPUSA."¹⁴

The declaration opened with some formal phrases asserting the adherence of its signers to discipline, loyalty and devotion to the Comintern, and claiming to speak for the "overwhelming majority of the membership" of the Party.

It went on to charge the new draft letter to be

Contrary to the letter and spirit of the line of the Sixth (Comintern) Congress... our acceptance of this draft letter would only promote demoralization, disintegration and chaos in the Party. This is the only logical outcome of the line of the draft letter.... There are valid reasons for our being unable to ac-

cept this new draft letter, to assume responsibility before the Party membership for the execution of this letter, to endorse the inevitable irreparable damage that the line of this new draft letter is bound to bring to our Party.”¹⁵

The audience sat in stunned silence at this outright defiance of the Comintern. It was a clear declaration of war.

Following Gitlow’s tirade, members of the Presidium and leaders of other parties took the floor and attacked the declaration, pointing out its anti-Party splitting character. They pleaded with the rank-and-file members of the delegation to remain loyal to the Comintern. This plea was joined by a number of our Lenin School students; Zack, Cowl and Lena Davis all spoke.

During this part of the discussion, Stalin took the floor for the second time. In his usual calm, deliberate manner he delivered it scathing blast at the majority leaders – Lovestone, Gitlow and Be-dacht. He characterized the May 9 declaration as “super-factional” and “anti-Party.” The May 14 declaration was “still more factional and anti-Party than that of May 9th.”¹⁶ He called the new declaration a deceitful maneuver, drawn up “craftily... by some sly attorney, by some petty-fogging lawyer.”

On the one hand, the declaration avows complete loyalty to the Comintern, the unshakeable fidelity of the authors of the declaration to the Communist International.... On the other hand, the declaration states that its authors cannot assume responsibility for carrying out the decision of the Presidium of the Executive Committee....If you please, on the one hand, complete loyalty; on the other, a refusal to carry out the decision of the Comintern. And this is called loyalty to the Comintern!... What sort of loyalty is that? What is the reason for this duplicity? This hypocrisy? Is it not obvious that this weighty talk of loyalty and fidelity to the Comintern is necessary to Comrade Lovestone in order to deceive the membership?¹⁷

It cannot be denied that our American comrades, like all Communists, have the right to disagree with the draft of the decision of the Commission and have the right to oppose it.... But... we must put the question squarely to the members of the American delegation: When the draft assumes the force of an obligatory decision of the Comintern, do they consider themselves entitled not to submit to that

decision?¹⁸

Stalin then dwelt at length on the evils of factionalism and his barbs hit us in the minority as well as the majority. He held up the American Party as an example of the havoc factionalism can wreak. He stated that factionalism:

weakens communism, weakens the communist offensive against reformism, undermines the struggle of communism against social-democracy... weakens the Party spirit, it dulls the revolutionary sense... interferes with the training of the Party in the spirit of a policy of principles... undermining its iron discipline... completely nullifies all positive work done in the Party.¹⁹

He warned the majority against playing “trumps with percentages,” and denied their claim of majority support in the U.S. Party:

You had a majority because the American Communist Party until now regarded you as the determined supporters of the Communist International.... But what will happen if the American workers learn that you intend to break the unity of ranks of the Comintern?... You will find yourselves completely isolated.... You may be certain of that.²⁰

Stalin’s speech really struck home to me. I had been a member of a faction for the whole five years I had been in the Party; I had been recruited simultaneously into the Party and into a faction. Thus, when Lovestone took over, I had shifted from the Ruthenberg faction to the Foster faction, but after the past month of discussion there was no getting around the fact that factionalism had harmed the Party’s work. It was clear the Party could not make the turn to the left and, in particular, develop the Black movement without the elimination of factionalism.

It was now after midnight, and the Presidium was finally called to vote on the draft address. It was accepted with one vote against, cast by its only American member, Gitlow. A poll was then taken of each of the majority delegates. Each was called to the platform and asked directly if he or she accepted the decision, yes or no?

There was a ripple of excitement when Bedacht, a majority leader and hitherto staunch supporter of Lovestone, broke with the majority and declared that he accepted the decision of the Presidium and would carry it out. He was joined by Noral, the west coast

farmers' organizer.

Lovestone stood by the majority declaration. Six others, including Welsh, answered that while disagreeing with the decision they would follow communist discipline and accept it until it could be raised at the next Party convention. Gitlow spoke last. He declared that not only did he disagree with the decision, but that he would actively fight against it when he returned to the U.S.

Again Stalin took the floor, evidently dissatisfied with the hedging of most of the American delegation. In a quiet voice he pointed out that the American comrades apparently "do not fully realize that to defend one's convictions when the decision had not yet been taken is one thing, and to submit to the will of the Comintern after the decision has been taken is another." He said it involved the ability of communists to act collectively and is "summed up as the readiness to conform the will of the individual comrades to the will of the collective."

He denied that the American Communist Party would perish if the Comintern persisted in its opposition to Lovestone's line, arguing rather that "only one small factional group will perish." The Presidium decision, he concluded, was important because "it will make it easier for the American Communist Party to put an end to unprincipled factionalism, create unity in the Party and finally enter on the broad path of mass political work."²¹

The historic meeting was finally adjourned at 3 A.M. the morning of the fifteenth. It was nearly summer and, as we passed into the street, the early dawn shone on Moscow's gilded church domes. We Lenin School students headed towards our dormitory off the Arbot. At first we were all quiet, each one engrossed in his or her own thoughts, trying to piece together what had happened and assess what it meant for the Party. Breaking the silence, someone asked me if I had witnessed the incident between Stalin and Welsh as we were leaving the hall.

"No," I said, "what happened?"

It seemed that on the way out, Stalin passed Welsh who was standing in the aisle talking to Lovestone. Stalin, in a friendly gesture, extended his hand to Welsh, as if to say "we have our disagreements, but we're still comrades."

Welsh rudely rejected the proffered hand and in a loud voice said to Lovestone, "What the hell does that fellow want?" There was something strange about Welsh I didn't like. His attachment to Lovestone seemed to transcend any communist or political princi-

ples. I wasn't really too surprised at this incident, remembering the earlier one with Manuilsky. But I was glad I hadn't seen it.

The Lovestone drama was drawing to a close. The Comintern moved with dispatch to head off the threatened split. On May 17, two days after the Presidium meeting, the Political Secretariat of the CI removed Lovestone, Gitlow, and Wolfe from all positions of leadership in the Comintern and in the Party. At the same time all three were detained in the Soviet Union to await the formal imposition of their cases. Lovestone was warned that to leave the Soviet Union without permission of the Comintern would be considered a violation of communist discipline. Bedacht, Weinstone and Foster, who supported the address, were immediately sent home. Mikhailov (Williams) was also sent to the States as CI rep.

The Comintern cabled the 3,000 word address to the CPUSA. It was received by Lovestone's caretakers Minor and Stachel, who immediately disassociated themselves from Lovestone. Along with the leading ten man majority caucus, they pledged to follow the Comintern decisions. The Central Committee met the same day and unanimously called upon the delegates remaining in Moscow to cease all opposition to the CI.

On May 20, five days after the meeting of the CI Presidium, the address was published in the *Daily Worker* and became the property of the entire Party membership. Lovestone's double-dealing and deception were now apparent to all. The mandate from the Sixth Convention had limited him to seek review of the CI decisions, not to defy them.

In the following days, there was a flood of letters and resolutions from former Lovestone supporters denouncing him, repudiating the actions of their former leaders in Moscow, and unconditionally supporting the Comintern. On May 24, Huiswood, Noral and Mother Bloor, who were still in Moscow, issued a statement. They maintained that they still disagreed with the CI, but had no intention of resisting.

The Central Committee set up interim leadership composed of William Z. Foster, Robert Minor, W.W. Weinstone and Max Bedacht as acting secretary. The new leadership immediately inaugurated a mass campaign to educate the rank-and-file Party members about the political issues involved in the struggle. This campaign swiftly swung the vast majority of the Party behind the CI. On June 22, the U.S. Party was notified by the CI that Lovestone had left Moscow in violation of the Comintern decision and without meeting

his promise to submit for publication a political declaration retracting his opposition. Gitlow and Wolfe had left before. Upon his return to the U.S., Lovestone continued his splitting maneuvers. By the end of June, all three were expelled from the Party.

Thus Lovestone's attempt to split the Party failed completely. It was repudiated by almost his entire following. His boasted ninety percent majority shrank to two percent. Only a couple hundred bitter-end right wing factionalists remained loyal to him and were expelled along with him.

The political and organizational line of the Sixth Congress was soon vindicated. Scarcely three months after the expulsion of the Lovestoneites came the stock market crash of October 1929 signaling the onset of the great economic crisis which was to engulf the entire capitalist world and exacerbate the already deepening general crisis of capitalism. The crisis shattered the bourgeois liberal myth of American exceptionalism perpetrated by Lovestone and Pepper.

With the elimination of the six-year-old factional struggle and its chief perpetrators, unity was at last achieved. The Party was now in a position to carry through the left turn called for by the Sixth Congress, now capable of leading the great class and liberation struggles of the next decade.

The political degeneration of the Lovestone leaders was rapid and predictable. Lovestone formed a so-called Communist Party Opposition Group, declaring its purpose to be the "re-establishment of communism in America." He kept up the pretense of being a Marxist-Leninist for a few years but when his anti-Party campaign proved ineffectual, the group fell apart and Lovestone embarked on an open anti-communist course.

He later placed himself in the service of the reactionary trade unionists Matthew Woll and David Dubinsky, with whom he helped sponsor the AFL-CIO anti-communist crusades. In 1963 Lovestone moved up to international prominence as director of the AFL-CIO's Department of International Affairs and George Meany's "Foreign Minister." The International Affairs Department had its own network of ambassadors, administrators and intelligence agents and collaborated closely with the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in reactionary subversion of trade union movements in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe.²²

John Pepper was expelled from the Party by the International Control Commission, not for his political crimes, but for lying with respect to the trip to Mexico which he never made and for falsifying

an expense account for a fictitious trip to Korea. He wound up working for the Gosplan (State General Planning Commission in the Soviet Union). I occasionally saw him on Tverskaya on his way to or from work. What a come-down for Pepper! From the glamor of international politics to a bureaucrat's desk in the Planning Commission.

Edward Welsh remained Lovestone's man-Friday. Many years later, in the early fifties, I ran into him on the street in New York City. We immediately recognized each other. Surprised and curious, I asked if he were still with Lovestone. He said he was, adding that he knew I was still with the Party. Neither of us had more to say; there was an awkward pause, we said goodbye and went our own ways.

Back at the Lenin School, we of the former minority were elated by the decisions of the commission and the news of the complete rout of the Lovestoneites at home. The political and organizational decisions of the Comintern were accepted unanimously at a meeting of American students held shortly after the close of the commission. Factionalism was condemned and the unity of American students achieved. It was at this meeting that the last two Lovestone hold-outs, Gus Sklar and H.V. Phillips, finally capitulated.

THE CRIMEA REVISITED

It was mid-summer and I was again on my way to the Crimea. I looked forward with pleasure to revisiting the lovely peninsula with its subtropical climate, lush beauty and of course, its warm and friendly people. It would be a month until school began, and I intended to spend half my time in rest and relaxation and the remainder in "practical work," which in this case was further observations on the national question.

Arriving in Sevastopol, I went immediately to the Party headquarters where I presented my letter of introduction to the local Party secretary. Where did he think would be the best place for me to go, I asked. The secretary, a big bluff man of Russian or Ukrainian nationality, was evidently very busy.

The anteroom was crowded with people undoubtedly with more important business than mine. He was polite and friendly, however, and in what seemed to me a split-second decision, he said he knew just the place for me – Alushta. It was a resort town on the coast about twenty-five kilometers beyond Yalta, where I had stayed two summers before. He offered to put me up in a rest home where his

Party organization had a number of places reserved. That sounded good to me, and I asked him if I would have an opportunity to study the national question there.

“Oh yes,” he assured me, “you’ll find a number of nationalities in the town there – Tartars, Greeks, Karaite Jews, Germans, Ukrainians and even some Russians! How many more could you want?” he joked. And he wished me good luck as his secretary called in the next person from the crowded anteroom. I waited outside while she typed the letter of introduction and then asked her for directions to the Coast Artillery Barracks.

It was a regiment “adopted” by the school in a special fraternal relationship which included mutual visits and cultural exchanges. We students also sent them literature and periodicals from our respective parties. This relationship heightened their political understanding of the international situation and the communist movement abroad. For us it deepened our insight into the role of the Red Army as a politically conscious guardian of Soviet power. It furnished a concrete illustration of how the Red Army functioned. I had met some of the members of the regiment in Moscow, but this was to be my first visit to their barracks. I arrived at the barracks which were situated on the outskirts of the city near the coast and was greeted warmly by the political officer of the regiment whom I had met in Moscow. He introduced me to other officers and men. I was then taken on a tour of the gun sights. They were big coastal guns, elaborately protected behind earth and concrete fortifications.

They were so expertly camouflaged, that it was impossible from the sea to tell anything was there. The huge guns were hidden in underground emplacements; each had its own electrical system which raised it by elevator to firing position. After firing they would drop back to their concealed pits. Under each gun was what seemed to be a virtual machine shop.

They had observation posts established along the coast to control the long range fire of the guns. They were proud of their guns and especially proud of their new British range finding equipment.

I asked how they had gotten hold of that, and an officer grinned, “Well, that’s what the British would like to know!”

After touring the gun sites, I felt Sevastopol was well defended against any attack from the sea. But alas, the enemy attack on Sevastopol thirteen years later – during the Second World War – was not to come from the sea. It came from the land when the Nazi armies smashed into the Crimea across the narrow Perekov isthmus

connecting the Crimea with the Ukrainian mainland. The “hero city” of Sevastopol was to withstand the siege for 250 days before it fell after putting up a stubborn defense which tied down the powerful German army.

Next came the inevitable *beced* – informal conference – with the army men. I was plied with questions about the United States, conditions of Blacks, and Lovestone and the right deviation in the Party. I gave them a rundown on the recent decisions, described the participation of Comrade Stalin and the eventual expulsion of the Lovestoneites. I was impressed by the high political level of the questions they posed and the knowledge they displayed of American affairs.

I stayed with them overnight and was invited to a big hearty meal at their mess. Discussions continued until the bugle sounded lights out. Next morning I was escorted to the station. From there, we drove a lovely, scenic route to the town of Alushta.

Alushta was a beautiful little town by the sea with the Crimean mountain range rising immediately behind it. I found myself in a modern rest home on the outskirts of town with the beach conveniently near – a perfect place to relax and rest. I met the Party Secretary of Alushta, a Tartar. He introduced me to some members of the Party Committee and town Soviet. These committees, I found, were representative of the various nationalities and ethnic groups in the area.

But in general I found nothing particularly new on the national question – it was similar to the situation in the Yalta area where I’d been two years before. All groups were living in peaceful harmony and the cultures of each were mutually respected. Stress was laid, however, on the development of the Turkic language and culture of the Tartars, who comprised the main nationalities of the Crimean Autonomous Republic, about one-third of the total population of the peninsula. After them came Ukrainians, Russians, Greeks, Jews, and Germans in that order. The Tartars, however, were regarded as the basic nationality and it was their homeland dating from the days of the Golden Hordes. These were sufficient factors for an autonomous republic to be set up for them in 1921 with a Tartar president.

But after a couple of weeks in the Crimean paradise I became restless and bored and longed to be back in the hustle and bustle of Moscow. I felt isolated; I wondered what was happening in the U.S. Party. I’d had no news of developments and had heard nothing of the unfinished business of the Black national question. I wanted to

talk to Nasanov about plans for our Negro Commission in the Comintern. Then, not least, I missed my wife Inushka.

RETURN FROM THE CRIMEA

I returned to Moscow a few days before the school opened in order to spend some time with Ina. From her I learned that a young Russian woman who worked in the chancellor's office at KUTVA had returned from vacation in the Crimea and was spreading malicious slander about me, portraying me as an insatiable womanizer. The woman was known among the KUTVA students as a scandal-monger, and my friends there paid her no attention. But Ina was afraid the rumors would cause me some harm in other quarters. I remembered having seen the woman in question at the rest home. I had greeted her, but paid her no more attention. Perhaps that was just the trouble.

As I entered the Lenin School building a few days later, I ran into Kursanova. She greeted me with a curt nod and a limp hand. "I want to have a talk with you, Comrade Haywood," she said. "Why, certainly, Comrade Kursanova. When?"

"In a few minutes, when I get back to the office."

I suspected then that the slander campaign had reached the school and a moment later my suspicions were shockingly confirmed. Further along the hall I saw a group of my fellow students looking at the wall newspaper and laughing. On seeing me, one of them said, "Why, there's Harry himself." Greeting them, I turned to see the cause for their merriment.

There it was – a cartoon captioned "Comrade Haywood Doing Practical Work in a Crimean Rest Home." The cartoon portrayed me surrounded by a dozen or so pretty Russian girls. It was expertly drawn, I suspected by a professional artist.

I saw nothing funny about it. Furiously I demanded, "Who in hell put that up!"

My friends disclaimed any knowledge of who had drawn it or how it had gotten there. Someone, I believe it was Springy, said, "Calm down, Harry! You're taking it too seriously – it's only a cartoon."

"It's slander," I retorted and immediately headed for Kursanova's office.

"Ah, Comrade Haywood – you saw the cartoon."

"Yes," I said, "I saw it and it's slander."

"Is it now? Or is it simply criticism by some of your fellow stu-

dents? How about a little self-criticism?"

"How can it be honest criticism when no one will admit drawing it and placing it on the board?" I replied.

"You were at a rest home," she asked. "How did you get there when you were supposed to be doing practical work?"

"I was sent there by the Party secretary in Sevastopol; he saw the letter from the school and knew what I was supposed to do," I replied.

"He probably wanted to get rid of you," she pointed out. I told her I saw no reason why practical work could not be combined with leisure and added that my comrades had said the rumor had been started there by a known scandal-monger. This cartoon, I contended, was just an echo of that malicious campaign.

"Regardless, you shouldn't have allowed yourself to get caught in such a situation," she observed.

I simmered down and we parted on a friendly note. But the source of the cartoon remained a mystery.

As I remember I protested the incident to Maurice Childs, the Party secretary of the English speaking sector and its representative to the School Bureau. I didn't see how the cartoon could have been posted without his knowledge, but he brushed the matter aside.

The following day however, the picture was removed. I believe it was Childs who told me that the artist was a young Mexican in the Spanish language section of the school. I remembered two Mexican comrades had entered the school some months before, but like most of the students they were using pseudonyms.

But this was not the end of the story. A few days after the wall cartoon incident I ran into Marie Houston, a Black KUTVA student from the U.S. Marie had a grudge against me for taking sides against her in some of her personal disputes with other students at KUTVA. Apparently her grudges were many and extended to most of her fellow students.

We exchanged cool formal greetings, and as I was about to pass on she lashed out, "Hey man, I've been hearing all about your carryings on in the Crimea – that's pretty bad stuff! What you trying to do, scandalize our name?" she demanded. "By the way, when you gonna be cleansed? I'm sure gonna be there!" she gloated.

She was referring to the Party cleansing (*chistka*) which was taking place that fall throughout the Soviet Union. I didn't take Marie's threat lightly. A few days before, during the cleansings at KUTVA, she hurled a series of violent and false charges at Patter-

son and Maude White. They were kept on the stand for hours attempting to refute them. In Patterson's case, his cleansing had taken up one whole evening and was extended to the next.

William Weinstone, then official Party representative to the Comintern and also a member of the International Control Commission, finally interceded to get Pat off the hook. A curious thing about all this was that to my knowledge Marie was never called to account for her slanderous accusations.

The day of the Party cleansings at the Lenin School finally arrived. The entire collective including the rector, the scrubwoman, maintenance personnel, faculty, clerical workers and the entire student body gathered in the school auditorium.

The chairman of our cleansing committee was none other than the famous old Bolshevik Felix Kohn, member of the Central Control Commission of the CPSU. He had been a member of one of the first Marxist groups in Russia and a friend of Lenin – a person with an unchallengeable record. He was a thin elderly man, stern looking, with a shaggy goatee and flashing eyes under bristling eyebrows. He impressed me as a strict disciplinarian.

He opened the meeting, called attention to the solemnity of the occasion, and then outlined the task, purpose and the procedure to be followed. It was a process of purification, he said, designed to purge from our ranks all noxious elements, factional troublemakers and self-seeking careerists which a Party in power inevitably attracts to it. Party members were to be examined on the basis of both their individual work assignments and their political commitment as members of the CPSU.

In other words it was to be a scrutiny of both conduct and conviction. All present, whether Party or non-Party, had the duty to come forth if they had criticisms or charges against any Party member. Indeed, it was permissible for people outside the school, anyone who had a complaint against any Party member, to participate. The Party member on the stand was required to give an autobiography – when, how and why he or she joined the Party, and what he or she was doing to merit renewing their membership. In a stern voice, eyes flashing, Kohn warned: "Woe betide anyone who makes false statements or attempts to in any way deceive this commission!"

He then listed the penalties which could be given to Party members for various infractions. First there was a reprimand for minor offenses, a censure for more grave ones, then strict censure with a warning and expulsion as a last resort.

We all sat tensely as the secretary of the commission began to call students to the stand. The commission had five members sent by the Party from outside the school. Each Party member upon taking the stand was required to turn his or her membership card over to the commission, to be returned only if the commission felt that he or she had answered all questions to its satisfaction. In other words the commission decided whether you retained the right to remain in the Party.

Eventually my turn came. I must admit I was rather nervous. I took the stand and sketched my background and Party experiences, what I got out of study at the school, what I intended to do when I returned home. No one rose to criticize me. And to my great relief, Marie didn't even show up. In fact, Kursanova commended me as a good student and spoke favorably about my studies on the national question.

The cleansing continued for several exciting days but no serious infraction of Party discipline or lack of Party loyalty was found among our English-speaking group. The cleansing, however, was a more serious matter among students from underground parties in fascist or semi-fascist countries. As I remember, a police agent was flushed out in the Polish group.

But who had drawn that cartoon? This mystery was not to be cleared up until forty years later, although I had always had some faint suspicion as to the artist's identity. I attended a birthday party for the world-renowned Mexican muralist David Siqueiros. As a result of an international protest movement, he had just been released from prison where he and other revolutionaries had been incarcerated, charged with leading and fomenting the National Railway Strike of 1959.

It was a festive occasion in typical Mexican style, complete with fireworks and a round-the-clock open house. Hundreds of comrades, friends and neighbors gathered to congratulate the great artist. As I was introduced to him by a friend a thought suddenly occurred to me: Had he not been a student at the Lenin School in 1929, I asked.

"Yes," he responded, looking at me curiously. "Yes, I was there."

"Were you the one who drew a cartoon for the school wall newspaper titled 'Comrade Haywood doing practical work in a Crimean Rest Home?'"

His eyes lit up with a gleam of recognition. "Yeah, that was

me.”

“Well,” I said, “I’m that Harry Haywood.” We both burst out laughing and he proceeded to tell the others around us the whole story.

“Who was the other young Mexican with you at the school?” I asked.

“Oh, that was Encina.” (Encina was the General Secretary of the Mexican Communist Party.) “He’s still in jail,” Siqueiros added sadly.

Notes:

1. (p. 282.) *The Daily Worker*, October 3, 1928.
2. (p. 284.) The letter was published in *The Daily Worker*, December 26, 1928. This issue was not available to me, and the quotations were taken from Draper, *American Communism*, p. 385.
3. (p. 288.) “Open Letter to the Convention of the Workers(Communist) Party of America from the E.C.C.I.,” *The Daily Worker*, March 4, 1929.
4. (p. 292.) The speeches of Stalin were published in the pamphlet *Stalin’s Speeches on the American Communist Party* (New York: International Publishers, 1929). The speeches of Molotov and Kuusinen were published in the proceedings of the Dies Committee: U.S. House Special Committee on Un-American Propaganda Activities in the U.S., *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939-40), pp. 7124-33.
5. (p. 296.) *Stalin’s Speeches*, p. 11.
6. (p.296.) *Ibid.*, p. 12.
7. (p.297.) *Ibid.*, p. 18.
8. (p. 297.) *Ibid.*, p. 20.
9. (p. 297.) *Un-American Propaganda Activities*, p. 7133.
10. (p. 298.) “Should the final decision of your committee follow the outline given in the last Plenary session of the American Commission [this refers to the speeches of Comrade Stalin and Molotov – ed.] then the membership of our Party would have to come to the conclusion that the ECCI desires to destroy the CC (of the CPUS A) and therefore follows the policy of legalizing the past factionalism of the opposition bloc and inviting its continuation in the future.” *The Daily Worker*, June 12, 1929.

11. (p. 298.) “To All Members of the Communist Party of the United States – An Address by the Executive Committee of the Communist International,” *The Daily Worker*, May 20, 1929 and *Inprecorr*, June 7, 1929, pp. 598-600.
12. (p. 299.) *Un-American Propaganda Activities*, p. 7129.
13. (p. 300.) *The Daily Worker*, June 7, 1929.
14. (p. 301.) *The Daily Worker*, May 20, 1929.
15. (p. 301.) “Important Passages from the Declaration of May 14, Submitted to the Presidium,” *The Daily Worker*, June 12, 1929.
16. (p. 302.) *Stalin’s Speeches*, pp. 21-22.
17. (p. 302.) *Ibid.*, p. 23.
18. (p. 302.) *Ibid.*, p. 22.
19. (p. 302.) *Ibid.*, pp. 27-29.
20. (p. 303.) *Ibid.*, p. 31.
21. (p. 304.) *Ibid.*, p. 39.
22. (p. 307.) See Don Kurzman, “Lovestone’s Cold War – The AFL-CIO has its own CIA,” *The New Republic*, June 25, 1966.