

# INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF THE COMMUNIST LEFT OPPOSITION

ENGLISH EDITION Published for the International Secretariat by the Communist League of America (Opposition), 126 East 16 Street New York PRICE 10 CENTS

English Edition

NO. 17 --- Jan. 1933.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The First Of May In Greece. p1

The "Promethec" Group and the Left Opposition

1. Theses of the Prometheo group on the Democratic slogans. p25

2. From an old letter by Comrade Trotsky p22

Differences within the camp of the International Right ( Documents and information) p5

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In Our Sections.

- 1. Report of the French League. p19
- 2. The German Opposition at work. p12
- 3. Spain: Letter of L. D. Trotsky to the Conference of the Spanish Section. (Sp Rev, p171) p17
- 4. In Italy p16
- 5. Report of the Belgian Comrades. p14
- 6. Poland. p16

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Alexander Rosanoff

Alexander Rosanoff, a Party member for many years, who fought in the Civil War, in the 5th Army which crushed Kolchak, succumbed to the loathsome treatment which the Stalinist bureaucracy inflicts upon our comrades of the Russian Opposition.

At the moment when the international situation is reaching to extremes, the defense of the exiled, isolated comrades assumes greater importance than ever. It is important to let Communist workers know these facts, in order that they may thereby oppose the crimes committed against the courageous militants of the proletariat, against the best militants of the Bolsheviki Party.

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The Greek Bolsheviki-Leninists--Organization of the Archio-  
Marxists

To the International Secretariat:

May 1st  
1932

Athens--

Just as last year, we decided to participate in the May 1st demonstrations, and in time we proposed to the C. P. a united front for the best possible preparation of the demonstration all over Grecian territory. The Stalinist leadership did not even deign to reply, differing in this from their predecessors, who replied with slanders and insults. Only in the Red Aid groups, composed of members and sympathizers from the two organizations, responsible Stalinists declared their firm intention of not collaborating with the Archio-marxists.

We sent instructions to the members to establish contact with the Party rank and file for the preparation of the demonstrations and in opposition to the wishes of the bureaucracy.

As is natural, and as was foreseen by us, Stalinist adventurism was displayed in this incident too. They had arranged as the scene of the demonstration Omonia Square in the center of the city, at 5 P. M. Whoever knows that this year May 1st coincided with the Orthodox Easter and that at 5 P. M. everybody, even the workers, would be at home to celebrate the Easter holiday; that in order to come from the workers' suburbs and quarters people would have to march for three hours if they could not pay their transportation costs, which, for some people, are a day's salary, can understand that this year's May Day could be a demonstration only of forces organized by the two Communist organizations.

We did not fail to criticize severely the Stalinists' adventurism, but we decided to do our utmost to mobilize the largest possible number of sympathizers. In spite of our efforts we did not succeed in establishing contact with the Party units, the orders of the bureaucracy on this subject being very stringent, under threats of expulsion, etc. Only in two Red Aid groups was the application of the May Day united front on the basis of the Bolsheviki-Leninist proposals unanimously ac-

cepted by the partisans of the two organizations. This attitude of the Party partisans was severely criticized in the Party central organ "Rizospastis" as carrying out a counter-revolutionary united front with the Archio-marxists, the worst enemies of the working class (i. e., of Stalinism). Thus we were left to make guesses as to the assembling-point, and to draw up our mobilization plans according to the circumstances.

On April 29th, the police suddenly carried out a series of mass arrests. They executed raids on the trade-union offices of the two organizations, and on the editorial offices of the Communist organs. There occurred 300 arrests, which continued up to the evening of May 1st. The police had profited by their experience of the previous year and foresaw that the participation of the Bolshevik-Leninists would have the same results as on May 1st, 1931, as well as at the political memorial demonstrations for our assassinated comrade Pampoucopoulas. Accordingly, they mobilized all their forces and scattered them in a radius of two kilometers from the demonstration spot. The arrests grew to the number of 500, and decimated the organized forces. The Party's complete failure to organize, our complete failure at trying to gain contact with the Party base, the police measures, as well as the unpropitious time for the demonstration and its site, caused them to give up all plans for the demonstration.

The Socialists— detachment of fifty of our comrades who avoided the police attended the meeting of the Socialists, who were also celebrating May Day with their partisans, composed of correctly dressed gentlemen and finely-painted ladies. There, in the name of the Archio-marxists, they demanded the floor, and amid cheers for the International Opposition, chairs began to rain on the heads of the Socialist leaders. The worthy representatives of the 2nd International were thrown into disorder and struck until they sought refuge under the tables. The reunion broke up hastily in spite of the fact that the police were making arrests. Eleven comrades, of whom one escaped, were sentenced to eight days each in jail.

Prisons—Lively discussions were carried on in the jails among those arrested and our comrades did good work in the prisons. They were the only ones to sing and for this action they were brutally beaten by the prison-trusties and thrown into the dungeons. The Stalinists adopted a passive attitude and only after realizing the significance of their behavior declared a hunger strike which lasted...between the noonday meal and the evening meal of the same day. One Stalinist in sight, the secretary of the bank-employees' union; (it is notorious that the leadership of this union; influenced by the Archio-marxists, was driven out by cooperation between the Stalinists and reactionaries) made the following statement to our comrades:

"In the same manner in which Socrates became a classic, Lenin has become one also." By that he means that Socrates' teachings are unobserved today, in the same manner as Lenin's teachings. Thus, Lenin having been deified, his commands are

no longer obligatory for his devotees. (This is an analogy to those priests whose actions are so much in contradiction to their religion.)

Salonica—In Salonica the situation was better. This is due to the fact that our comrades control the majority and the offices of 5 Red Aid groups. Thus they knew the assembling points for the demonstration and they were also able to apply a united front with the rank and file. Five demonstrations were held in the suburbs, with a total of 500 demonstrators, despite the terror. One comrade received a bullet wound in his foot but was not arrested. There was a total result of 11 arrests and 51 years in jail and deportation sentences. One Archio-marxist comrade received a five year sentence, and another one of seven years. In these demonstrations the Bolshevik-Leninists participated actively, and in one they took the initiative. The arrests were from both organizations, but we still do not know the proportion of our victims.

Similarly, at Patras, there were 15 arrests—Archio-marxists and Party members. We do not yet know the sentences.

Conclusion—May Day showed that the Grecian working class, although growing more radical, has not yet come to the point where it will fight with the state forces for aims which are still not openly linked with its interests. In the days before Easter 500 unemployed at Wanthi were beaten up while asking for bread. Two thousand railroad construction workers of Calambaca-Verria threatened to set fire to the workshops of the Company, which was holding up their wages for the past two months; in Pireus a month ago, 800 tobacco workers went out on strike and engaged in a battle with the police. Similarly, in Salonica, hundreds of workers fought for immediate demands. Some of these explosions are spontaneous, and, deprived of conscious leadership, they are quickly crushed. Then the lesson of May Day and of these struggles is clear: we must lead these immediate struggles, in order to gain power to lead the workers into struggles of a higher form. The dizzy drop in wages in consequence of the fall of the drachma (the franc has risen from 2.62 drachmas to 6.22) will stir into action the entire working class, which has seen its wages shrink to one-fourth. A general strike can be called, and the Congress of our organization has decided to create the necessary agitation and related propaganda in order that the partial struggles may be crowned by this strike for wage readjustment and democratic slogans.

The second conclusion is that Stalinism has become still more reactionary. The presence on the Politburo of the new Party C. C. of the murderer of our comrade Georgopapadates is very significant. The expulsion of Archio-marxists from units and prison units is proceeding at a rapid pace. Instead of a genuine united front, the Stalinists have made a united front with the worst reaction, with the Pirean bakers' unions and the Athenian veterans. Expulsions from unions, expulsions from Red Aid groups, and plans for assassination go on. There are pogroms at public assemblies against every Archio-marxist who de-

mands the floor to refute slanders and imbecilities. In spite of this, the application of the united front must go on. The decision of the two Red Aid groups is symptomatic.

Stalinist Calendar—Enclosed we send you an article which appeared in the Pali on February 15th on the subject of the International Unemployed Workers' Day on February 25th. By our participation in the fighting demonstrations of August 1, September 6, and on the 14th anniversary of the U. S. S. R., we showed the party members what results demonstrations can have when limited to Communist forces and in the absence of the working class. Our participation took the ground from under the feet of the Stalinists, who no longer dare to slander us as agents of the bourgeoisie. Of course they do it anyway, but nobody believes them. We accordingly declared ourselves against the Stalinist calendar and in favor of struggles which concern the masses, as was further shown in the Athens shoe-makers' strike, where our proposals for political action were sabotaged by Stalinism. The strike was a failure in spite of the number of strikers (4000). Stalinism offered proof of a vulgar economism in this strike, while our comrades arrested in these demonstrations are now serving long sentences.

Since this article, the International Unemployed Workers' Day was not commemorated, after a miserable attempt on the Stalinists' part to obtain police permission for a legal assemblage. A few days previously there took place an illegal Party demonstration in sympathy with the Chinese Soviets, but the sentences which ensued terrorized the Party. Thus the article in the Pali put an end to the calendar and the labor skates have not dared to criticize it to this day.

Municipal Elections in Pireus—Of 36,000 votes cast, the Party candidate received on the first ballot 1800 votes, and on the second (thirty days later), 1200. In 1928 the votes for the Party were 300. The candidate of the petty bourgeois Tsaldaris Party (characterized by the Stalinists and Spartacs as Monarchists), captured the votes of all.

ON THE DIFFERENTIATION IN THE CAMP OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
RIGHT

We submit to our readers the following extracts from two documents which furnish an interesting glimpse of the internal processes of the international Brandlerite organization,

We may justly designate the Czechoslovakian Brandlerite organization as the most variegated of this haphazardly jumbled together "international"; starting with messrs. Kowanda, Etscher and Hals, at present an obedient scribbler for the social democratic coalition ministry, and ending with Smeral's loyal friends, Muna and Company, passing by the pioneers of "Anti-Trotskyism", Jilek, Berger, and finished off on the left by the Neurath group, which, after hesitant unexpressed sympathies for the Zinoviev opposition of 1926-27, later attached itself to the Brandlerite leadership although careful to keep itself at a distance from the slimy campaigns against the Bolshevik-Leninists.

We shall furnish further information on the process of differentiation of the International Right in Switzerland and Austria where it tends toward the SAP, and in America where it has arrived much nearer to capitulation than the German "nucleus".

The Editors.

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Berlin 9/4/32

Comrade Neurath,  
Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Dear Comrade,

On April 7th I received your letter dated March 28th. I have had copies of your letter made and shall send them to the members of the bureau. I wish quite simply to give you the following reply on the same subject:

Your concern for the unification of the international communist opposition is expressed very strongly, to be sure in your letter, but a little bit late. Thereupon, you have the misfortune to be confusedly advised in your anger because of your attacks on Trotsky's impertinences, for we decided after the first international conference held at Berlin to discuss the Trotsky question. You immediately undertook to furnish a report for the discussion. As has often in the past been the case with these promises of yours, you did not keep your promise. We developed our viewpoint regarding Trotsky just as far in the Inkop as in Gegen den Strom. We published everything that was sent us on this question, detailed material, our American Comrades' resolutions, Roy's articles, and, finally, our own position. A discussion on the Trotsky question did not take place, for neither you nor any one else who did not agree with our position wrote anything. At the regular international conference, in December 1930, neither you nor any other Czechoslovakian comrade

came, although we invited you; here it was possible to develop a viewpoint on these questions:

So far as our divergences on the question of the SAP are concerned, it is true, nor is it a discovery on your part, that the position of the CPG Opposition (Brandler group) regarding Centrism is an international question. But our position regarding Centrism as an international question was not discussed in our groups. It emerged in concrete form in America and was discussed there a year sooner than in Germany, and resolutions were made in our groups in this concrete American form. We translated this material and published a part of it in German in the Inkop and in our organs. Again, you did not make use of the opportunity to take an effective position thereupon. You attend our national conference, it is true not as a delegate of the Czechoslovakian opposition, but in your own home. You participated in the assembly, but there too, you did not defend your present position, but you merely declared with decisive importance that you wanted information in so far as you had a viewpoint, also that in Czechoslovakia the official leadership of the Czech comrades, after your reports, adopted a position which was even worse than that of our minority. Anyway you wrote an article which we published. There arrived a protest against its publication from the leadership of the Czechoslovakian Opposition. We then replied to comrade Berger that in place of protests, he should send an explicit article in opposition. But on this subject I got no reply.

The fact that today, you once again take up in its coarsest form the argument of those who deserted us xxx for the SAP and the fact that you accuse us of capitulation to Stalin, shows that you now are adopting ~~ex xxx~~ a position of your own only insofar as, you constitute yourself the champion of these old shop-keepers. I welcome the fact that you now show yourself openly as a Trotskyist, for that is far better than your secret and not openly avowed activity for Trotsky.

But I must completely and categorically reject the statement that we, as the German opposition, have attributed our conception to the four other comrades of the international opposition. When we took a position on the Russian question, on Trotsky and on other questions, we always did so in the name of the CPG Opposition. In the name of the international union of the communist opposition we have spoken only through documents. We not only published the directives for the dependence of the CPG Opposition on the international union, but we first of all discussed them and decided them at the international conference. You and the other Czechoslovakian comrades took very little part in the work. We do not know the single viewpoint of the Czech comrades. Your article and the protest from the Center of the CPG Opposition demonstrated that you have no single viewpoint; the Asch comrades, the strongest of the German groups, do not share your viewpoint in the least. Instead of reproaching us by telling us that we prevent the clarification of international differences, you should take a few pains to clear up the differences among yourselves. Your personal opinion is of no importance to us, but what is important to us is the conception that the Czech Opposition adopts regarding controversial questions. If you have no single opinion, then first of all formulate the different conceptions among yourselves, as we have done with ours, discuss them, clarify them among yourselves, and then we shall be an-

abled to take a position regarding them, internationally. Your personal opinion, behind which we do not know who or what of our Czechoslovakian group is hiding, is only of accessory significance. We are ready, whenever you have completed your work of preliminary clarification, to take a position on this subject. To handle the subject of your insults, according to which we dupe the readers the Arpo and have no viewpoint on Stalinist policies--that isn't worth bothering about.

Communist Greetings,

H. Brandler.

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Prague, April 16th, 1932.

To comrade Brandler,

Dear Comrade,

First in regard to the Secondary questions:

It was impossible not to know that I participated at the National Conference in Berlin in my own name for I should have been unable to participate in any other manner. But if you infer that I had no mandate to present myself in the name of the Czech opposition, your reproach is unfounded. I appeared at the Berlin conference instructed by the Asch and Reichenberg organizations and in agreement with other German groups of our opposition. But I did not speak in the name of the Czechoslovakian Opposition because I was not delegated by the existing center which, it seems, was unwhited. The Center, dear Berger specifically, did not show the least interest in the Berlin conference. Whether he was so "modest" of his role, under such conditions not to present me in the name of the Czech Opposition I do not know, but it was conscious, and it was significant.

Even today I cannot change my opinion, expressed in Berlin, that the position of the Berger wing represented a far worse mistake than that expressed in your minority's attitude in the instance where it united organizationally with the S.P. It is absolutely inconceivable that you hold these declarations against me.

Your remark that I promised to call a Czechoslovakian conference and particularly to urge on this convocation, but that I did not keep this promise merely shows that you have not read the Arbeiterpolitik (Arpo), at least so far as the Czechoslovakian supplement is concerned, and still less the reports and conclusions of our conference at Asch, which were published in the Arpo and moreover addressed to you. The German International Conference was then convened and held by us, after all attempts and all



efforts to push our renowned CC to convene this National Conference had proved vain. We expressed this very fact in a clear and straightforward manner in our resolution. I cannot take seriously your wish to hold me responsible in greater or less degree because the CC did not wish to convoke any conference.

If one should abstract from this and from a series of other more formal questions which in truth constitute the essential content of your letter, one can say that you are hitting beside the mark on the question with which we are concerned. First a few words on the problems on which, in my opinion, we have a common conception. Judgement of the Frolich-Walcher group's step. At the Berlin conference, in a personal conversation with you and Thalheimer, I was of the opinion that this group would not ally itself organizationally with the SAP. In that I was mistaken. Today, as yesterday, I consider that this step taken by the minority was wrong, and that this attitude puts itself in complete contradiction to the principles of true Communist tactic. But Trotsky also condemns this step, and even more resolutely than you! But you have asserted the contrary in the Arpo, as it seems to us. To this reproach you reply with facility with a sentence which it is really not worth while answering.

On the SAP question. The SAP is a Centrist Party. In my opinion, you contributed nothing to the point in the judging of the process of differentiation in the ranks of the Social-Democrat workers, but you caused only confusion when you characterized the SAP as an afterbirth of the Independent Socialist Party. That is of importance is that a part of the Left wing social democratic workers reach out via, the SAP, towards Communism. The task of the Communists can only consist in helping this process. But you expressed your stand toward the SAP in your first slogan "Destruction of the Sap". It will be extremely difficult to offer proof that on this subject I did not personally take a "concrete position", as you say.

In a detailed circular sent to all our groups, I personally took a stand against the slogan "Destruction of the (SAP) Socialist Workers Party". At the Asch conference (and at the preconference I reported unequivocally in this way. There was not the slightest difference. This viewpoint was expressed in the resolution which was unanimously adopted by the conference, and this was very successful. Above all, Comrades Bloss and Volkel, in a most extraordinary manner approved the political report and resolution. If there are any divergences between your opinion and mine on this question, there were none at the Asch conference.

The Trotsky question--Your remark that until today I presented myself only "clandestinely" as a Trotskyist and that only now I have decided to act openly as one, merely proves that even in this discussion you do not forsake the method of calumny. It is sufficient to present simple facts against your assertion. Independently of your different viewpoint on the Trotsky question, I have published since the beginning in the "Arbeiter Politik" everything that I considered useful in Trotsky's works. In 1929 I published under my name a detailed and approving criticism of Trotsky's book "My Life". In the "Vorwaerts" Reichenberg. I not

only published Trotsky's articles on the Spanish revolution but, a series of articles on Trotsky's opposition to Stalinism's national and international policy. Naturally there was not in our ranks the least opposition to this manner of approach to Trotsky--least of all on the part of comrades Volkov and Bloss. In this manner appeared my "clandestine activity for Trotsky". It is not worth the trouble to make a polemic of this nature. But, we pose the question: why, during these years, did you say nothing our "clandestine manner" of taking a position with regard to Trotsky? Why does this statement come forward only now? You said on our attitude in the paper because at this moment, a deep international discussion on the question of Trotskyism was inconvenient for you. As long as you assumed that interest in Trotsky's work confined itself almost exclusively to the Czechoslovakian group of the international Opposition, you were not deeply concerned. The international situation and especially the German events, give Trotsky's criticisms and arguments particular and actually extraordinary weight. But between the Stalinist appreciation of the situation (which is identical with the attitude of the present leadership of the C.I.) and Trotsky's concepts there is no bridge. As you are in agreement on these questions, i.e., on all questions of Communist policy and tactic, with Stalin, you should resolutely combat Trotsky and his concepts. You should acknowledge this without reticence, and should say so openly to the comrades. However, concerning the manner in which you conduct the struggle against Trotsky, by what means and with what methods, I have expressed my personal opinion which means little to you. But it is also by no means important what you personally consider important or unimportant. From a purely matter of fact viewpoint, I may add something to this slightly "sornial" argument. If one will not acknowledge your positions, your estimation of persons and events, without considering the true relation of forces, one would believe that he was listening to someone speaking not only in the name of extraordinarily important positions but also in the name of extraordinary successes and progress. At the Berlin conference, we had 4500 subscribers to the ARPO. Today, after the rupture with the minority, you have appreciably less subscribers and supporters. And this difference only begins to acquire significance when we recall that you can work inside ~~the~~ of a state which numbers 60 million inhabitants and more than thirty million industrial proletarians.

Before the decomposition which decimated your organization and also reached our opposition, we had about 2000 members in the German region of Czechoslovakia, which comprises a total of three million German residents. And we have always worked with means incomparably more modest than you:

Therefore, in view of the results of your personal work, you have no authority to speak contemptuously of our reports and also of one or the other of those responsible for the Opposition.

But the most important concrete question is: Why, in reality has the opposition not been able to develop in any country--and probably constitutes one exception? After your return from Moscow, you even predicted the complete conquest of the German C.P. and in a relatively short time. After some years of toil, you are now in a process of decomposition and dissolution, and

almost all the groups which gathered themselves internationally around you are in the same situation. If Sweden constitutes the one exception, you should remember that the Swedish comrades do not ~~wish~~ accept your organizational methods and do not participate in the slightest degree in the hounding of Trotsky.

In reality, the opposition has always had a right to existence and it has today more than ever. But we must choose whether or not it is proper to combat Stalinism as a system, and precisely on the ground of Leninism, in which case this system must be completely rejected. Your thesis that Stalinism corresponds to Leninism only in the U.S.S.R., but not in the rest of the world, cannot be accepted by any thinking revolutionary worker. That is the decisive explanation why the opposition not only stands incapable of rising above the tactical and principle errors of CI policy, but even of outlining them. Naturally you are one in the opposition responsible for this state of affairs. We all share the responsibility for it.

In your letter you mention in every manner possible that the international conference did not take place, but I vainly look for a concrete explanation as to why it did not. You have control of the bureau, particularly of its principal functions. If you had so desired, the international conference could have convened a long time since, after the national conference. Not only has the SAP question international importance, closely related to it is Trotsky's critical position toward the CP tactics and his appreciation of the situation. Nothing is accomplished by insulting Trotsky as a Menshevik. You can characterize Trotsky as a Menshevik only to those workers who do not know Trotsky's position, who have not read his latest works. But you take even further steps on this question, Trotsky has always been a Menshevik, and accordingly, always an anti-Leninist. You could not very well deny that your methods of fighting Trotsky are in no way distinguished from the methods employed by Stalinism. Then, in questions with which Stalinism is concerned in the Soviet Union, there is no divergence of opinion between you and Stalinism. Similarly, in your stand towards Trotsky, there is between you and Stalinism no divergence of opinion, appreciation of Centrism, and, accordingly, of the SAP. Also, though this harmony is of recent date, there is no difference between you and Stalinism in appreciation of the policy of the Rev. Trade Union Opposition, on the question of Socialism in one country, there is nothing for you to say on the problem of the Chinese Revolution and on the Anglo-Russian Committee. Then, what is it that separates you from Stalinism? Nothing.

If it were otherwise, then the catastrophic smashing which the official Party has been suffering for several months and particularly in the last few weeks would have already placed you in power within the frame work of German Communism. In reality the process which is weakening you has lost none of its force. If you think that this is merely misplaced argument from the Walcher group to reproach you for your capitulation before Stalin. I shall not quarrel with you thereupon. But it appears clear to me that between you and Stalinism there exist no differences sufficient to justify the maintenance of your opposition to it.

You take satisfaction in rebuking me because Asch did not share my viewpoint. Besides that, you refer to Berger's opposition to my article in Gegen den Strom. We are discussing, as Communists, a series of questions of extraordinary importance for the Communist movement. In this manner I conceive the discussion with you and that goes for the discussion with Asch. This is why I ought to warn you seriously not to overestimate Berger's support. No matter where Berger stands, he is far at the right of any conceivable opportunist [?]. The Asch comrades can give you sufficient information on this subject. Furthermore, L. will translate for you from Svoboda the historic work that has been accomplished in the miners' strike.

In rereading the letter, I perceive that the general manner of handling the Russian question leaves room for misunderstandings. I repeat what I said in my letter to the Asch comrades, that the great successes of the Five Year Plan can be denied by no Communist. The successes of Soviet construction take place despite Stalinism, thanks to the tremendous force of the October revolution.

Communist greetings,

Neurath.

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Resolution      (Reichenberg May 23rd, 1935)

At the meeting on April 24th, 1935, the Opposition representatives of the groups from Josefstal, Maudorf, Gablonz, Reichenberg, Weisskirchen, etc., declared that they pronounced themselves in favor of the theoretical and tactical bases which determine the activity of the Leninist Opposition, that today, just as hitherto, they stand behind the resolutions of the last National Conference at Asch. The representatives of the North Bohemian district regret strongly that several responsible comrades of the Asch district who until now approved the principled bases of the Opposition, consequently the decisions of the National Conference at Asch, particularly those parts emphasized by comrades Volkel and Bloss in a letter addressed to comrade Neurath, as well as what was explained in the Asch circular. [?]

The representatives of the North Bohemian district declare unanimously that they completely share comrade Neurath's viewpoint in his discussion with comrades Volkel and Bloss as well as in that with Thalheimer and Brandler.

The conference further declares that it does not agree with the Arpo's attitude in international as well as in Czechoslovakian questions, since in this attitude is expressed the negation of the fundamental and tactical viewpoints of the Leninist Opposition, this modification in the conduct of the Arpo dates chiefly from the last ~~National~~ National Conference in Berlin.

The conference further affirms that the instructions which the Asch Secretariat addressed to the groups on the international political situation, then on the question of the political struggle in

Czechoslovakia (the miners' strike, estimation of the various parties) are in the highest degree superficial and, from our fundamental viewpoint, false.

The conference resolutely rejects to emulate the disgraceful Stalinist methods of throttling Party democracy by forbidding revolutionary workers to find out what Trotsky has actually said, particularly what he has written (a point which comrades Bloss and Volkel actually demand in their letter). The slanders directed against comrade Trotsky will be demolished by the workers as soon as they have the opportunity to learn the contents of his writings.

The responsible functionaries of the North Bohemian district deem it possible to arrive at an agreement on all argumentative questions within the frame-work of those oppositionist circles which do not wish to capitulate before Stalinism. With this purpose the comrades charged by the Conference must speedily realise the preparations for the convocation of a National Conference.

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A Among Our Sections

The Development of the German Opposition.

In Number 14 of the International Bulletin, we gave a general view of the political and organizational activity of the German comrades. Here we shall make an effort to give the comrades of the International Left a glimpse of the organizational development, and of the spreading of the press and our literature.

In the preceding report, comrade R.W. disclosed how the first months following Landau's expulsion were devoted to centralizing the organization; further, during this period, all the comrades had to tie themselves down to regular work. This year, during which the German Left did not, as formerly, expend its energies and forces in internal discussions, ends with a relatively favorable balance-sheet.

A year ago we had more than ten comrades in Berlin, the groups from Leipzig, Hamburg, Königsberg, Bruchaal, Hambern, Rheinland, and Goldap in East Prussia. The Hamburg group, which has offered a particularly fecund field of labor, has seen the number of its adherents increase six or seven-fold. The new adherents are all CPG members, and two thirds are Party functionaries. So far as Bruchaal is concerned, we have already stated in Bulletin number 14 that the group has increased from 45 to 100 members. Furthermore, the Bruchaal comrades have been able to establish several other small local groups in Baden. In the course of the last few months, we have succeeded in creating groups in Magdeburg, Oranienberg, Batzen-in-Saxony, Beuthe, Rimpeln, Gelsenkirchen, Cologne, Dinslaken, Friedrichsfeld, Erkenschwik, Erfurt, Bretten, Zentheren, and Heidelberg, comprising from 4 to 15 members; there are solid connections with 1-3 comrades in Breslau, Frankfurt-on-the-Main, Kaiserslautern, Karlsruhe, Gorkitz, Theinhausen, Esson, Solingen, Dusseldorf, Lauenburg, Stettin, Bremerhaven, Dresden, Gera (in Thuringia) and Prathal-in-Saxony, as well as in Stuttgart. These

comrades work in the direction of the German Opposition, and they distribute our literature, they maintain correspondence with the leadership or with the corresponding regional leadership, and endeavor to create regular groups in their regions.

In Berlin the work is more difficult, for the apparatus pressure weighs more heavily on the Party-members. And the CC watches with a severe eye, lest "Trotskyism" should penetrate into its home. In spite of the difficult region and numerical weakness our Berlin group has made excellent progress during the last three or four months; the number of its adherents has risen at present to more than 50 comrades, solidly organized; besides this, it has gained a series of sympathizers with whom, from time to time, we hold discussions; it is especially encouraging that in Berlin as well as in the rest of the country the majority of the new comrades are between the ages of 18 and 35 and, for the most part, have, for several years, been members of the Party and or the YCL, some of them holding responsible positions.

After the Prussian elections all our groups exhibited very lively activity within the Party, where some of them openly agitated in the direction of the German opposition, demanding a change of Party policy in accordance with Comrade Trotsky's proposals, and energetically protesting against the removal of his rights as a Soviet citizen. The result is that up to now around 15 comrades have been expelled in Oranienburg, Rinteln, Magdeburg, Berlin, Gelsenkirchen, Beuthen, Hamburg, and Kaiserslautern.

Let us make note of the fact that we owe our success above all to comrade Trotsky's pamphlets; they were purchased not only by Party members, but also by proletarians belonging to the Socialist Labor Party (the SAP) and to the Socialist Party; they even penetrated into the camp of the left bourgeois and they have made the Left ~~revolution well-known~~ in Germany.

The German Left had printed ~~7,000~~ 7,000 copies of comrade Trotsky's pamphlets in the course of a year (round numbers), of which about 55,000 have been sold so far; although for the moment the circulation has slackened a bit, it nevertheless continues unceasingly.

The first pamphlet appeared in April 1931 (the Spanish Revolution) and 2,000 copies were printed. Of the second, "Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R.", we printed 1500, the third, "The Spanish Revolution in Danger", a printing of 2,000 copies. At the end of September, 1931, we brought out "Against National Communism", a pamphlet of which we ran three consecutive editions, and of which a total of 15,000 copies was printed. At the beginning of December appeared "The Key to the International Situation", and at the close of December 1931, "Against National Socialism". The last two pamphlets, in three editions, also had a printing of 31,500 copies. At the beginning of March 1932, appeared the last large pamphlet "What Next", which has up to now, had two printings and a diffusion of 15,000 copies.

Our review, "The Permanent Revolution" which first appeared monthly, and since the beginning of the year, semi-monthly, has almost doubled the size of printing since the beginning of its appearance. But this result is far from satisfactory, for there are much greater possibilities of diffusion, possibilities which we must ex-

exploit by making use of all, and especially through the new groups and comrades. A satisfactory symptom for the Permanent Revolution is the fact that the number of readers is constantly, though slowly, increasing, and that there is no fluctuation in the number of subscriptions.

Our next aim is to make the Permanent Revolution a weekly paper (This was accomplished in July-Editor); however, for the moment, technical and financial difficulties are so great that sufficient aid from all sections is necessary to accomplish this.

---A. Grylewicz.

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Extract of a Letter From the Belgian Opposition  
of January 12, 1932

So far as the life of our group is concerned, we can assert that the rupture with the van Overstraten tendency has permitted us to make definite progress, the policy of our group having ceased to be equivocal, and that, with the International Opposition, we have resolutely engaged in the question of reintegrating the Communist Opposition in the CI and for a policy of regeneration in the former and in the official Parties.

Similarly, the fact that on various occasions (while fully justifying our criticism of Stalinist policy), we have been able to show that we are for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union, has brought us near to communist workers and sympathizers, who used to interpret our struggle against the rotten policy of the Stalinist leadership as a struggle against the Party, the CI and the USSR.

Furthermore, a good number of communist workers who had not the political capacity requisite to discern the shameful maneuvers of the Stalinist secessionists at the moment of the secessionist process, have been successfully reached anew; so much the more for similarities, the Stalinist leaders have succeeded in having expelled the foreign comrades, who constituted the majority of them at the moment of secession. At the time of the "third period of errors", without taking into account facts and possibilities, they demanded that the workers follow them, a policy of bluff and demagoguery. Not only did this policy isolate the Party from the masses but it caused the disappearance of the activity of the best elements still remaining in the Party after our expulsion.

The CPB is, at present, without serious influence on the workers, and their efforts at trade-union splitting, as well as their theory of social fascism, have deprived them of the possibility of influencing the reformist workers.

On the contrary, the policy of the Communist Opposition, which

takes realities and possibilities into consideration, our anti-secessionist attitude on the trade-union question, our proposals on the united front, looking towards a true union of workers' forces for struggle, our action for unification opposed to the Stalinists' secessionist actions, all this has permitted us not only to win sympathy among the reformist workers, but also to make the most clear-sighted communist workers and sympathizers understand that the Oppositions are serious and know better how we must defend the workers' interests, and that it is regrettable that they are not within the Party.

The most serious objection that they made to us was that our activity was not sufficiently manifest externally. They allow themselves to be impressed by the external demonstrations organized by the Stalinist bureaucracy, which is financially supported by the CI. These workers do not understand that our Opposition group which edits a semi-monthly paper (which falls short of its requirements and which has no other reserves than the support of Opposition comrades and sympathizers) has not the opportunity to organize numerous external demonstrations. During the last period, the Opposition has organized some meetings which met with good success. But the fact that at present the Opposition can only make use of two orators (Verrecken and Lesoil), and that it is very limited in its financial possibilities paralyzes it in the domain of external activity as compared with the CPB. The Stalinist leadership does not hesitate to produce as orators hollow-sounding blusters who don't know the ABC of Communism and who do nothing but discredit the Party and Communism among the workers, who can never reflect on their arguments.

It is pitiful to hear them stumping out their sentimental speeches and to watch them thus furnishing arms for the social-democrats to ridicule communism.

The Voix Communiste, our semi-monthly organ, has 1200 copies to an edition; of these over a thousand are sold regularly (220 to subscribers and 800 sold in the streets and at the entrances to factories and mines.)

Our organization--after the rupture with the van Overstraten tendency, Charleroi alone remained with 2 comrades in Verviers. At present the Charleroi region has six groups of 30 comrades, who meet regularly each week, where they live, who participate in Oppositionist and trade union work as well as in the sale of the Oppositionist's paper and publications. At Verviers we have two comrades who work in a section under Stalinist influence (circulation of the paper--60 copies).

Brussels-Louvain--A dozen comrades led by comrade Verrecken of whom four are youths recently expelled from the Party for working and uniting with the Opposition. (circulation of the paper 125 copies).

Liege--A group of old oppositionist comrades and sympathizers, whom the van Overstraten leadership forced into passivity. They agreed with the Left Opposition on the question of the Sino-Russian conflict and on that of the tactic of struggle for the reform of the Party and of the CI, against the creation of a new Party, and for that reason have rejoined the Left Opposition.

At Laupham, our influence is increasing and our forces are becoming organized.

AT 11/12 P 12



Up to the present, the Charleroi Comrades alone had leadership of the group, naturally with the consent of the comrades from other sections. But soon we shall be able to create a national leadership within which will also enter comrades from the other sections.

We can, then, sum up that the Belgian Opposition is gaining new forces and gradually surmounting the difficulties of two consecutive crises and split with the CPB and the split with the van Overstraten tendency.

The van Overstraten tendency, deprived of the considerable support of the Charleroi workers' federation, is rapidly dwindling as a result of its false policy. Van Overstraten is lost politically (he has ended all collaboration with his old group). His desertion brought about further departures. As a result of differences with Polk (of the Urbahns tendency), old leader of the Anvers group, who edited a review, this group of the van Overstraten tendency is also decomposing. In the Flemish region several comrades are approaching us. As I write these words, Hennaut still persists on urging the necessity of creating new parties, thinking that only our complete independence of the CI and the CP would permit us to carry out to the limit our tasks, so far as we are communists.

We shall do our utmost to convince the comrades of the van Overstraten-Hennaut tendency, that the safe road for them, who are menaced with political disappearance consists in closing ranks in a spirit of collaboration in work with the Communist Opposition which was tight against van Overstraten-Hennaut-Polk.

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### ITALY

"La Vie Proletarienne", organ of the CPI, since May 1st, has spoken of a conference of the Italian group of the Parisien region, convoked to thrust back "Trotskyist and conciliatory" tendencies. There we have a heartening indication, all the more so since we are informed in a letter from Italy that among the membership, ultra-left tendencies, dispersed by the Party and the Leninist CI by a long and arduous ideological struggle, once more take on extraordinary extent among the adherents. The official leadership, itself heading down an ultra-left road, finds itself powerless without a line and without directives in the face of these tendencies.

### POLAND

Our Polish comrades have just brought out the first number of their review "Proletariat", which appears in Brussels.

### SPAIN

We learn that the bourgeoisie has enforced to the hilt the suppression of the counter-revolutionary Trotskyists. In Madrid, our comrades Lacroix and Fernandez, were under arrest for several weeks, and recently they just arrested comrades in Estremadura, Seville, and Barcelona, among others, comrade Nin. The latest number of their weekly paper "El Soviet", has been confiscated. We send our comrades in prison our fraternal greetings for struggle and we demand their release as well as that of all revolutionary workers.

COMRADE TROTSKY'S LETTER TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE SPANISH LEFT  
OPPOSITION

Dear Comrades,

The very fact of the convoking of the conference of the Spanish Left Opposition in itself represents an undeniable achievement for which I sincerely congratulate you.

I deeply regret that circumstances have kept you from publishing in convenient time the drafts of the resolutions, and in this way from giving foreign comrades an opportunity to partake in their deliberation before the conference. For this reason, not having an opportunity to pronounce my views more concretely on the questions of your order of the day, I here confine myself to a few short remarks. It is quite possible that their elementary character renders them superfluous. I should be the first to rejoice, if this is so.

1. First of all, it seems to me that in the regional reports it is necessary to clarify just what part the Bolshevick-Leninists have taken in the genuine acts and struggles of Spain's working class. That is the central question. A political group which stayed outside of the actual movement and occupied itself with criticisms after the events, would, above all under revolutionary conditions, be rejected by the working class. I do not doubt for a moment that the majority of the Bolshevick-Leninists in the regions have participated in all the mass movements, even when they deemed them as not conforming to their own purposes. A revolutionist criticized, not from without, but from the very heart of the movement itself. On January 9, 1905, the Bolsheviks, together with the workers, marched to the Tsar to lead, with far greater success, the republican propaganda.

I have no doubt that on this fundamental question, we shall have not the slightest difference among us. If, nevertheless, I raise the question, it is because, as the experience of other countries has shown, certain isolated elements are prepared to link themselves with the Left Opposition, which, under the pretext of "Marxian criticism" actually dodge the revolutionary struggle. For these gentlemen the revolutionary movement is never sufficiently "conscious", "lofty" and "towering", for them to indulge in coming out themselves on the streets with the workers. We must, at an opportune moment, purge the organization of people who, in the crucial moment of the struggle, are inclined profoundly to contemplate their navals.

That is why I advise, in the regional reports, in connection with the critical work of the Opposition, the clarification of its direct participation in the struggle. A concrete report on this subject would be very useful for our entire international press.

2. Another question to which I would like to call your attention touches upon the international character of our work. Opportunists of the type of Maurin and his Madrid imitators

built up their entire policy on their national peculiarities. Not to know these peculiarities would be, I grant, vast idiocy. But underneath them we must know how to discover the motivating forces of international development, and to grasp the dependence of national peculiarities upon the world combination of forces. Precisely in this international manner of solving national problems and national peculiarities consists the tremendous advantage of Marxism and consequently of the Left Opposition.

For your young organization there arises here in particular the task of following carefully the work of the other sections of the International Left Opposition, in order always to make your acts conform with the interests of the whole. Without the international criterion, without regular international links, without the control of one national section's work by the work of the other national sections, the formation of a true revolutionary proletarian organization is impossible in our epoch.

3. Germany stands at the centre of the world situation right now. I do not doubt that your conference will devote all necessary attention to the burning problems of the German revolution. This question is one of immeasurable as well as immediate importance for the formation of the Spanish Opposition. The more the Spanish Bolshevik-Leninists pose clearly and decide before the eyes of the official Party and the proletariat of Spain, the problems of the German revolution, the more smashing will be the blow they will deal to bureaucratic centralism, the more quickly will they concentrate about them the sympathies and support of the advanced workers of Spain.

In confining myself to these short remarks, I warmly wish you success in the work of your conference. Forward! There are mighty tasks and decisive struggles; may your conference forge the necessary weapons for these struggles.

Communist greetings,

Yours,

L. Trotsky

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FRANCE

From a Report of the French Section of the ILO

"Liberalism, linked up in the last analysis with Trotskyism, has been able to make its way into the CPF."

(Pravda, Saturday, Feb. 14)

Our comrades only know of the internal difficulties and the numerous discussions within the Ligue. Insofar as the activity of our organization in the working class and insofar as our successes and possibilities there are concerned they could at best only have received a meagre report from reading La Verite. It is the latter that we want to try to clarify in the following lines. The space allotted to the question of the Left Opposition in the party press is in itself an indication of the influence we exercise. There is not a number of the Cahiers du Bolchevisme, of late, that does not take up the problem of "Trotskyism". This question was posed in the greatest part of the issue of January 15, especially in an article by Ferrat entitled: "Defeat Trotskyism etc."

As preparation for the party congress, the party conducted a very fierce campaign against Trotskyism, and attacked the comrades for the sin of believing they have a right to "open their mouths". The leadership itself exaggerated the tension of the situation, in order better to be able to introduce terrorization into the ranks of the party and in order to rally the vacillating elements. Speaking of the preparations for the congress in the Parisian region, Sward writes: "It is no exaggeration to say that opportunist ideology, both from the Right as well as from the Left (Trotskyism) dominated our district conventions." (L'Humanite, January 26)

A few examples worth while quoting:

"Do not content yourselves with merely saying that 'Trotskyism' is a part of the vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. Prove it!", said two comrades of the IV. District.

One unit adopted a resolution against "Trotskyism"; L'Humanite published it indicating that it passed with 17 for, 12 against, and 3 abstentions. One of their ridiculous maneuvers consisted in shifting the fault for all the mistakes on to a part of the apparatus which was recently discovered to have participated in the founding of a secret group—the Barbe-Celor "Group". But not all of the comrades permitted themselves to be deceived by this maneuver. "It is strange that the CI has denounced this group. It also has its share of responsibility," declared one comrade from the IV. District. The hostility toward the leadership is very great. Sward, who has strained relations with the Parisian District, expressed himself as follows: "On the one hand, the District leadership is against the self-criticism of the upper leadership because the upper leadership forgets to criticize itself, on the other, it can tolerate unjust attacks and great injustices against part of the leadership and of the District." (L'Humanite, Feb. 20)

But this is the least. Even much worse than these reactions is the confusion. Uncertainty and instability often interchange. At the moment indecision and restlessness predominate in the party. Workers grope, listen to what is said about the party, sympathize with what the LO says, even though it is forced to approach them from the outside. From the first appearance of the Verite, we have struck out with meetings and discussions. But this was done more or less haphazardly. The Spanish uprisings of last year, the present situation in Germany and the forthcoming election in France require of us systematic activity in a better sense. In the Parisian suburbs, in the workers sections, we are organizing meetings, participate in the meetings of the party. A significant number of party members and unemployed participate in our meetings. Our views are listened to with great attentiveness. At the meetings of the party, to which we direct our main attention, we note that there is a great desire to listen to what we have to say. In the 19th and 20th arrondissements (wards) in Paris the workers turn against those who interrupt us systematically and want to sabotage us. We are making headway, increasing our contacts, gaining sympathy in the party. In the course of a socialist meeting we received lively and enthusiastic support from Communist workers in our exposure of the social democratic policies. L'Avantgarde (organ of the YCL) is alarmed and writes: "Another danger is rotten liberalism, which shows consideration for the Trotskyists. Therefore our comrade from the 6th section must understand that he is making a mistake when he supports the Trotskyists at an open meeting under the pretext that they do not say anything against us."

In the country at large, our influence is also spreading. By collaboration of the various centers which we already have--excepting Halluin--the latter have managed to gather closely about them the members of the party and the sympathizers' organizations. Montigny has been reorganized. In the East, Taget and Florence have been mentioned by the Executive Committee of the district. In Les Chevants, our comrade Courdavault has contact with the party units and the latter have managed to get him to speak for the party publicly. In Lyons, our comrade B gathered all the militant Communists in town at a meeting simply to listen to one of our comrades passing through the city. There was an excellent discussion. Our group in Marseilles is growing stronger. The work carried on by the Opposition in the last few months has enabled us to get a foothold in the party and the working class. Yet, the bureaucrats still have the nerve to speak of "Exterminating" us. There are naturally many weaknesses. Many leaks in the technical, many in the political, and even more in the organizational direction of our affairs. The living contacts with the party are as yet weak, especially in the Parisian region, where the Opposition group does not carry on work systematically.

The poor work of our Parisian Opposition group is as much an effect as a cause of the crisis in the Opposition. But this work, which has cost us many efforts, the lack of experience of the organization, as well as of its members, has conditioned only a feeble success. Despite all these weaknesses, the Opposition in France has been able to build up, not a group with an unin-

fluent journal, but a group of workers, who have contact with many other workers, with sympathies in many organizations, and which can be faced with great possibilities by the development of events.

There is a great discrepancy between our organization and its influence. One of the reasons for this no doubt lies in the "traditions" of the French party, of that we are sure. The weak conception of the importance of organization has unfortunately been inherited by us. The results achieved, however, can only impel us to take the following measures: to set ourselves a definite goal; to convert all the anarchistic attempts into their opposite; by setting ourselves the task of extending and deepening our organization and our influence by means of systematic work on the part of every one of the collaborators of our organization.

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On the Question of the "Prometheo" Group

The question of the "Prometheo" Group and its relations to the International Left Opposition has now reached a decisive stage. We have already in the past carried several articles on this question and consider it absolutely indispensable to transmit as much material as possible to the sections, so that they will be enabled to form a completely independent opinion on the basis of the political position of this group.

In order to achieve this aim, we consider it necessary to reprint below the theses of the "Prometheo" group on the democratic slogans. We are publishing in addition excerpts from a letter of comrade Trotsky, written more than a year ago to a member of the IS, but unpublished up to the present.

In our next issue we intend to carry further documents concerning the "Prometheo" Group.

---The Editors.

FROM AN OLD LETTER OF COMRADE TROTSKY'S ON THE BORDIGUISTS

(Critical remarks concerning the Prometheo group resolution on the struggle for democratic slogans.)

...And now a few words on our Bordigist friends. If one reads Paragraph III of their resolution, which is inserted separately, altogether mechanically, without any connection with the text, the question is posed among them in the following manner, Democracy is an exploiters principle; revolutionary parties never grasped this hitherto, the Russians vacillated in 1917 between democracy and dictatorship. The Bordigists were the first to discover the principle of dictatorship. After this principle was discovered every usage of democratic slogans became reactionary: in other words, the dialectic of social development is replaced by the metaphysics of the development of a sectarian circle. The Bordigists train of thought entirely corresponds to the the spirit of the rationalist enlightenment of the 16th century, Before, error and prejudice reigned; now the true principle of society is discovered on the basis of which it will rest in the future, for, since we enlighteners have understood it, there remains only one little thing: to rebuild society. Curiously enough it was the enlighteners precisely who discovered the principle of democracy and opposed it formally to the entire past development of humanity as an absolute beginning. The Bordigists has discovered nothing: they have merely borrowed from the Russian Revolution the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat and set it free from all historical reality, only to oppose it as an absolute truth to the absolute error of democracy. That proves that they have understood absolutely nothing of the theory and practice of the Russian Revolution, as well as--let us mention in passing--of Marxism. They do not take the trouble to explain what their own conception is of democracy. Apparently, it is just parliamentarism. But, then, what will become of so small a thing for example as India's independence of Great Britain? This is a purely democratic slogan. It is a question of the liberation of one nation from another (naturally the Bordigists will immediately explain that these are class-nations, something that we sinners never thought of: but the essence of the matter is that it is a question of the liberation of a nation of the colonial type from another of the bourgeois imperialist type.)

Then what is to become of the democratic slogan of national independence? Our wise critics have posed this question by.

Should Communists fight against measures of police violence and chicanery directed against freedom of the press, of striking, of assemblage? And what does this mean, if not the struggle for democracy?

What will happen to the agrarian question in this same India or in Hungary or in many other countries? We know that his hunger for land can impel the peasant to support the dictatorship of the proletariat in a country as backward as India. But to realize this possibility we need a series of concrete historical conditions together with a correct understanding of the agrarian democratic problem. The Indian peasants do not understand the dictatorship of the proletariat and they can only

bourgeoisie. The entire misfortune lies in this--that the Bordigists conceive democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat not as historical institutions, one of which relieve one another dialectically, but as two bare principles, one of which incarnates good, the other, evil.

In conclusion I wish to consider further the point 5. on the subject of Russia, as an incredible curiosity. There it is asserted that the Bolsheviks supported the slogan of the "national assembly" "during a very short period, from the fall of Czarism up to the attempt to install capitalist domination". In reality, the social democracy put forward the slogan of the national assembly from the beginning of its existence, i. e. since the year 1883. This slogan played an enormous role in the education of the proletariat and of the party, starting with the first years of the present century. It was under this slogan that the revolution of 1905 developed. All the work of the Bolsheviks between the two revolutions was carried on under the following slogans: 1) democratic republic; 2) the land for the peasant (the agrarian revolution); 3) an 8 hour day (demand for proletarian democracy).

The Bordigists will probably explain that all this was a transitory mistake, because it belonged to the sombre period when the absolute truth of the dictatorship of the proletariat had not yet been discovered.

--L. Trotsky

J n. 15, 1931.

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Note: The European editions of the I. B. publish in this place comrade Trotsky's two letters to Weisbord. Both have been published in the "Militant" (On the Labor Party Question, Vol. , No 1931, Letter to Weisbord, Vol. , No. ), obviating any need to republish them here.

--Editor, English Edition.



learn to understand it when it is realized by means of their semi-conscious support. I say semi-conscious because the Indian peasant, with all his narrowness, with all the lack of clarity in his political viewpoints, nevertheless wishes consciously to take the land into his hands, and he expresses this desire with the formula that the land belongs not to the landlords but the people. This is a pure democratic revolutionary program which signifies liquidation of every sort and every remnant of feudalism. What will the Bordigists say to the peasants? Your program is democratic, therefore reactionary. We propose to you a program of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of socialism. It is to be foreseen that the peasant will reply to them with some strong expression in the Indian language. What do we, on the contrary, say to the peasant? Your democratic agrarian program signifies a powerful historic step forward in social development. We Communists pursue a more radical historic aim but we support fully and entirely your democratic tasks, and we make them ours for the present period. It is only on this road that we can lead the peasantry to support the dictatorship of the proletariat in the course of its struggle.

Curiously enough, the Bordigists here serves up as a discovery of their own, the same humbug that the Stalinists and Zinovievists attributed to me as the permanent revolution ("skipping over" democracy, the peasantry, etc.)

It has already been remarked above that the Bordigists manifest a parliamentary cretinism turned inside out, in the sense that they apparently reduce the problem of democracy entirely to the question of the national assembly and of parliament generally. But even within the limits of the manner of posing the parliamentary question they are completely wrong. From their anti-democratic metaphysics must proceed the tactic of boycotting parliament. Comrade Bordiga held this position at the time of the Second Congress, and abandoned it later. (I believe, in fact, that in this polemic we must strictly differentiate between Bordiga and the Bordigists. We do not know his viewpoint because the conditions under which he lives do not give him the possibility of expressing himself. However, we think that Bordiga would hardly take the responsibility for the caricatured conceptions of this group of his pupils.) It would not be bad to spring the question on the Bordigists, if they are in favor of boycott or participation in Parliament. If a Communist deputy is imprisoned in violation of his immunity, will the Bordigists then summon the workers to protest against the violation of our democratic rights?

These doctrinaires do not want to understand that we realize the preparation for dictatorship by half, by two thirds, and in certain periods, by ninety nine percent on the basis of democracy all the while defending every inch of our democratic positions. But if we must defend the democratic conquests of the working class, may we not perhaps also fight for them where they do not exist?

Democracy is an arm of capitalism, our critics teach us; yes, but a contradictory arm. Democracy served the bourgeoisie, but within certain limits, it serves the proletariat against the

On the Question of the Prometheus Group.

The question of the Prometheus group and its relation to the International Left Opposition has entered a decisive stage. We have already published a few articles on this question and considered it absolutely essential to send to all the sections as much material as possible so that they can form, from the political position of this group, their own opinion with regard to it.

For this purpose, we consider it useful to present below once more the Theses of the Prometheus group on the democratic slogans. We also present excerpts from a letter of Comrades Trotsky which was written over a year ago to a member of the International Secretariat but remained unpublished. (pp 22-24 preceding)

In the next issue we will give further documents on the Prometheus Group.

No. 5. March 1931

--Editors.

On the Democratic Slogans

(Resolution of the Executive Committee of the Italian Left Fraction)

1. Democracy is a form of government through which the bourgeoisie exercises its class domination. The principle of democracy, that means, the so-called division of society into different majorities and minorities which create a political balance, is on the other hand the specific form which capitalism uses to hide its class dictatorship. The essence of the capitalist state is determined, according to the Marxian conception, by its desire to establish a balance between the forces of capitalism and economic anarchy, on which the bourgeois domination rests. It also serves to bring into accord the various ideological measures which strengthen the apparatus of subjugation of the masses, which corrupt the proletariat and endeavor to destroy the communist ideology among the masses.

2. To the fundamental idea that society does not consist of majorities and minorities which find their expression in elections, but of classes, and that the state is the organ of a given class, it is to be added, that the proletariat can never, even provisionally, achieve democracy which in the final analysis is the reestablishing of capitalism.

3. Democracy represented under various forms of social life a progressive force as long as capitalism had not come to power, that is to say when capitalism itself represented a revolutionary class. In the present situation when on the contrary, capitalism holds possession of the commanding posts of world economy, democracy signifies not one step forward for the proletariat on the contrary it appears as the direct reserve which the enemy holds in hand against the communist revolution.

4. Where the class differences are less pronounced as with the petty bourgeoisie and among the working peasant population, the attempt of capitalism to mask its class domination with a democratic cloak meets with much more success. These classes can never be the vanguard of a social overturn; they are the forces which find them-

selves at the tail end of the one or the other antagonistic class. Democracy is a form which serves capitalism for turning these forces to its own advantage. The idea of a proletarian dictatorship supported by a program of gradual change in agricultural economy, is the sole one which can lead to the peasants' support of the communist revolution.

5. During the Russian revolution, the Bolsheviks provisionally supported the slogan of a "constituent assembly" for an exceptionally short period, from the overthrow of Tzarism until the attempt of the bourgeoisie to set up its power, which was threatened by the growing advance of the revolutionary movement of workers and peasants. In spite of the fact that the convocation of the "constituent assembly" went hand in hand with the establishing of Soviets, that the class foundation of the bourgeoisie were not as strong as in other countries in spite of all, this government represented a great danger to the Bolshevik power at the time of greatest revolutionary crisis.

5. Even when the relations of classes and the beginning of the historical period of civil war force capitalism to relinquish the specific form of democracy and to fall back on other forms such as white terror, democratic slogans must be rejected by the proletariat; they create reserves on which the democratic and social-democratic counter-revolution falls back. The German example shows us that the defeat of 1923 was not due to the fact that the united front with the social democracy was not embraced sooner; it shows, as a matter of fact that this road could not be followed at all.

The Italian example shows that there are no special democratic and fascist groupings among the capitalists. On the other hand the convulsions which used to shake to the foundations capitalist society have disappeared in the period of imperialism; and when democracy as well as fascism find resistance on the agricultural field, they thereupon depend entirely on their ability to manoeuvre with the middle layers of the peasant population.

7. The employment of democratic slogans must be decisively rejected in all capitalist countries. These demands will only discourage the proletariat from preparing political conditions similar to the Russian experience. There it was the proletariat who with weapons in hand dispersed the constituent assembly; in our country also it would be the constituent assembly had it the opportunity, which would try to hold back the victory of communism with the weapons of counter-revolution.

8. Even in the colonies in the present phase of imperialism there exists no basis for democracy as a necessary anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois form of government. If a form of bourgeois power on the type of the European or American, does not exist there it is due to the fact that the capitalist world domination is accompanied by the impossibility to accomplish in great stretches of the world a 100% capitalist economy which is in permanent competition with other capitalisms. We must not conclude from this, however, that the establishing of democracy will necessarily have an anti-capitalist character. The example of China shows that there in the shadow of revolutionary Russia, through the opportunist policy of centrism and under the banner of Soviets was perpetrated a massacre of workers and peasants who were preparing the communist revolution. The fact that the Chinese peasants are actually isolated and betrayed shows that

a directly anti-capitalist program is the one which bases itself on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

9. A thorough re-examination of the situation in China and in the colonies in general where the conditions for a mass movement are ripe is absolutely necessary. And especially in order to decide whether in the present period of imperialism, in the historic period of proletarian revolution, the social relations are such that the communist parties should employ democratic slogans or whether they should propagandize the slogans of the democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants. The experience and re-examination of these questions for such imperialist countries as Spain and Italy is absolutely negative and shows the danger for the party of the proletariat in accepting democratic slogans, if only temporarily.

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