

Chapter One

Appendix

Document A

Report of Meeting of International Secretariat, October 13, 1931. English versions received from George Breitman, Pathfinder Press, New York. Original in papers of James P. Cannon in the Library of Social Science, New York.

Document B

Reports of contributions by Glotzer and Aggravaila (Aggravall) to meeting of International Secretariat, October 13, 1931. Source as of Document A.

Document C

Copy of letter from Glotzer to Trotsky, dated from New York, December 26, 1931, reporting on his visit to Britain.

Document D

Manifesto of the Marxist (Marxian) League, "Communism or Chaos". Congress as reported by

Document E

Political Biographies:

Dick Beech
Hugo Dewar
Reg Groves
Frank Ridley
Jack Tanner
Harry Wicks
Ryan Worrall

Document F

The Amsterdam "Anti-War" Congress as reported by participants.



Document A

International Secretariat Minutes of March 31, 1931

Present: Souso, Mill. Frank excused, has been sent North by the Ligue.

Comrade Naville is invited to make a report on his trip to England.

Agenda: (1) International Bulletin No. 5 and 6; (2) Correspondence and decisions to be adopted; (3) England (Naville's report).

1. No. 5 is ready; publication is assured during the current week. As No. 6 it has been decided to publish only the letter of Comrade L.D.T., due to its great length. If any space will remain, the publication of the documents of the Berlin Executive will be begun; if not, the following issue will be devoted to the Landau documents and those of Leipzig. Decision adopted to this effect.

II. Comrade Gorkin has replied to our letter. Explains his attitude concerning the appearance of L.D.'s pamphlet in "Nosestros". As to his ambiguous attitude towards the French and Spanish Opposition, he interprets it differently than the Secretariat and finds it normal and clear. He has put himself at the disposal of the I. S. for work and for supplementary explanation. It is decided to consider this reply as insufficient and to ask him for information on his activities, his relations with Madrid, Barcelona and the Maurin Group. More activity must be demanded from him with regard to the "Verite" on Spain. In the letter to Comrade Nin the graveness of the Spanish situation must be clearly stressed and a prompt reply demanded.

A letter from the Mexican comrades speaks of a confused situation in the Argentine group. Quotations from the letter of the leading Argentine comrade denote an anarchist ideology incompatible with the ideas of the Left Opposition. Comrade Mill explains that the relations between Argentina and the I. S. are very irregular. This letter must serve us as an opportunity to clear up the situation in the Argentine group and of the "Veridad". A letter will be sent them after the translation of the Spanish correspondence between the Mexican and the Argentine comrades. Comrade Seipold, member of the German Executive, has sent the I. S. a long letter in which he informs the I. S. about the factional machinations of Landau and about his campaign of slander against Comrade Trotsky and the International Secretariat. Comrade Seipold, as a member of the Prussian Landtag, each month gave part of his Parliamentary stipend to the German Executive. In his letter he concludes:

"This executive (or rather the Berlin group) has been engaged in a factional struggle which threatens to push the German Opposition to national sectarianism. The Landau group openly struggles against the International Left Opposition and against Comrade Trotsky. That is why I cannot support such a struggle and satisfy the petty vanity of Landau. I shall send my usual contributions to the I. S. which can make use of them for the German and the International Opposition. For a revolutionary Marxist, international discipline is higher than national discipline."

The reasons given by comrade Seipold are recognised as completely correct. His contributions are accepted.

The letter of the American League speaks of the publication of the International Bulletin in English. Number one of the bulletin has already arrived. All the material in this issue has been translated without exception. Among the material there are some out of date documents, which makes their publication useless. It has been decided to inform the comrades to create an editorial committee under the direction of Comrade Shachtman, member of the International Bureau, to select the material for each issue of the International Bulletin, before translating it. As to the proposal of the American League to send one of their leading comrades to England for the organisation of an English section, it is not realisable due to the lack of financial means. Comrade Mill will reply in the name of the International Secretariat in a letter to this effect.

III. The report of Comrade Naville on his trip to England. A written report has not yet been finished. In brief, the situation in the English Opposition is the following: The British Communist Party has had no Opposition either in 1927, 1930 or at present. A demonstration of opposition will find loud echoes. How can such a demonstration be prepared under the conditions current in the British Communist Party? It is best to have it take place at a conference of the Communist Party. At the meeting of March 22, eight comrades were present, three of whom are still in the Communist Party, and one of whom was a Hindu comrade. Comrade Naville reported before these comrades on the Russian question, the Chinese revolution, the Anglo-Russian Committee and the general position of the L.O. toward the C.I. This report was followed by an animated discussion that revealed a community of ideas between the English comrades and the I.L.O. on fundamental principles. In the discussion on the tasks of the Opposition in England, the comrades stressed the fact that very profound social movements are taking place at present. The work of the Opposition will be of great importance to the British movement. The small London nucleus shows some Right Wing and some Leftist tendencies. The trade union question will be a touchstone for our English comrades. The Hindu comrades do not expect any results at all from the trade union work. "The trade unions are pillars of the state. They believe that there will be no revolution in England without a revolution in India. India is the key of the British revolution." This conception (as well as a certain national hostility) causes the Hindu comrades to organise themselves and to work separately. According to the information given by the comrades present at the meeting, there are 150 comrades in all. They have studied Marxism a great deal and read particularly the works of Comrade Trotsky, which led them to the Left Opposition. Part of the comrades have decided to return to their country shortly, with the intention of forming an Indian Communist Party "on the basis of the Permanent Revolution". They have asked Comrade Trotsky to write a study on India. They will take care of the translation and of its circulation in the different dialects.

What are the tasks which face the English Opposition at present? A political document must be elaborated. Closer contact must be established between them and the Secretariat. A trip of Comrade Beech to Paris would be very useful. It is necessary that the small group begin to function regularly. Their participation in a convention of the Communist Party must be carefully prepared. Comrade Naville's report is accepted. A letter to the British comrades is to be sent in which the I.S. will concretise the tasks of the British Opposition and demand that they establish regular connections with the I.S.

Document B

Minutes of the International Secretariat - October 14, 1931

Present: - Mill, Souso, Frank and Myrtos
Naville, Glotzer and Aggravaila;

Report of Aggravaila:

The two most important questions are our attitude toward the Trade Unions and the Party. In the unions we can only have connections with individuals, because in the present situation the unions will no longer be fighting organisations of the working class. At the present time the trade union organisations cannot offer anything to the working class. In the period of the development of capitalism, before the war, unions could gain something for the workers. But following the war in the period of the disintegration of capitalism this is no longer possible. On the Party the opinion of the Marxian League is as follows: There are only 20 bureaucrats who direct it. There is no proletarian democracy in the Party nor does it have a proletarian policy in the class struggle. In the coming year free speech will be abolished and the Party leaders imprisoned. A semi-fascist government will arise, and the Party will be smashed. So we are obliged now to organise outside of the Party. We cannot come out openly as Trotskyites now, because the Party will carry on a terrific struggle against us. Later, when we are stronger we can appear openly as a section of the International Opposition. On international questions we are in agreement with the position of the Militant and the International Secretariat.

Question by Glotzer:

What do you think can be done in the outset to build the Opposition?

Aggravaila:

We shall start a monthly paper containing a review of international and national events. Ten pounds a month would be sufficient to issue this paper. At the same time we shall organise local branches, such as we now have in Paddington and Clapham. We shall discuss our political problems and organise slowly but surely the Opposition.

Question by Glotzer:

Do you think the Marxian League is the basis for the English Opposition?

Aggravaila:

There is nobody else except comrade Worrall, who was a former member of the Marxian League. There is no other group except the M.L. which supports the Left Opposition.

Discussion

Glotzer:

In this discussion the views I represent, I think generally are the views of the National Committee of the American League. We have been informed of the situation in England through numerous letters of English comrades representing all groups and from the Int. Sec. And I think we are in a position to judge more or less correctly the situation and tasks for us, there. Com. Aggravaila expressed here not only his views but the view of the ML and they are of extreme importance for us. It is necessary for us to understand the situation in England in order to

correctly formulate our policy. The process of decline in British capitalism offers great possibilities for work. Thus far the great organised mass of English workers follow reformism. They have twice put the Labour Party into office. But the favourable objective conditions offer great possibilities for Communism in winning these workers to its ranks.

The workers do not come to Communism in one jump - but in their disillusionment will find their proper place, depending too upon the work of the Party and its tactics. The problem for the Party in GB is to win the workers to its banner and away from reformism. It is not an easy task. But the Party did at one time make good progress. The minority movement with close to a million supporters wielded a great influence. The Party Press had a large circulation and possibilities for making headway was present. Instead of growth, we witnessed decline of the movement and this was in the main due to the subjective factor: the Party. The huge errors of the Party is in the main responsible. We agree that its line flowing from an internationally false policy and aided by an incorrect national line brought about these defeats in GB. But in spite of this we cannot accept the viewpoint that the Party will be a negligible factor in the future. On the contrary. We view the Party as the base for our operations. In the eyes of the masses it is the standard-bearer of communism. It is the representative of the Soviet Union in England, and it is the Party of the Proletarian Revolution. The Marxian League does not proceed from the Party as its base - but, we do. The meaning of com. Aggravaila's remarks is that we would then have to proceed with the organisation of dual Parties in other countries and we would have to accept his viewpoint of the eventual dissolution of the Comintern and the establishment of a 4th International. We are not of the same opinion. Our task is to prevent the complete degeneration of the CI and its parties. We are in complete accord with the views of com. Trotsky; that our approach must be that of reform. We must attempt to steer the Party upon a correct line. The Comintern stands upon a revolutionary basis. It stands upon the basis of the proletarian dictatorship. We do not wait only for a crisis in the CI to achieve the victory of our ideas, but we hammer for their adoption every day. The C.I. and its Parties do react to our pressure, Witness Spain: France, Greece, etc. Now to the problem of the Opposition in England. The Party, agreed, is weak. We will be able to make good progress there. But we must recognise that in England today there does not exist an Opposition organisation. The Marxian League does not represent the Opposition, nor do the other group of comrades. All of them represent points of view of the Opposition on its various international questions. But that is not sufficient today. The Trade Union question and the Party is also a fundamental question for us. And on these questions you are not in agreement with the views of the Opposition.

I would ask the Marxian League to discuss in the coming period, prior to my arrival in Britain, these questions on which we differ. On the Trade Unions we are in fundamental disagreement, and I advise the comrades to re-read Lenin's pamphlet "Left-Wing Communism", com. Trotsky's articles on syndicalism and the decisions of the early congresses of the CI on this question. The ML asks to liquidate the Trade Unions. This is an impossible position - yet it is the logic of their position.

I propose the Int. Sec. send copies of the proceedings of this meeting to

the English comrades so that they can prepare their discussions, and present their viewpoints at a conference to be held in the near future. That no definite steps be taken by the English comrades, such as, issuing a paper, organising definitely into an opposition group. We believe we are yet in the process of this development. There remain too many questions that should be clarified, otherwise we shall have a repetition of confusion that will hurt our movement more than it will help. However; in the meantime all the groups should discuss the questions so that when I arrive we can immediately call together the various groupings. I inform the secretariat that I shall take these questions up with com. Trotsky and hope that his views will help to clarify a number of problems for our English comrades.

Aggravails:

You ask me what are the prospects of the Party in England. Yes; there is a change in the situation. The objective conditions for the growth of the movement exist; but the subjective conditions do not exist. There is no Party. There is no revolutionary direction. Naturally we agree with the Opposition on international questions, but if the CI continues on its present course it is doomed to collapse and at present we do not see a change in its line taking place. The official Party carries on propaganda only for Russian products. We agree with the necessity of a program and of a discussion with all the comrades. On the trade union question, we do not say we should not go into them and work with the militant in their ranks, but we say that the unions cannot have a dominant role in the revolutionary struggle because they are completely under the leadership of reactionaries.

Document C

Copy of letter from Glotzer to Trotsky, dated from New York, December 26, 1931, reporting on his visit to Britain.

Dear Comrade Trotsky,

I will try as much as possible to complete this letter in detail in order to give you a picture of events as they transpired on the remainder of my trip. A good deal of what I say may be detailed, but I hope that you will excuse that because I happen to think that many of the things that I will say may interest you.

1. England: I met comrade Shachtman there and together we worked on the various connections. He stayed with comrade Beech and I with comrade Groves. I am quite sure that comrade Shachtman has written you at length with regard to the results obtained. I am writing only to supplement what he reports and present my views on the possibilities and prospects for the Left Opposition in England. In England there are three elements that form the bases for our activity - I refer to the period that I was there. First, there is comrade Groves and the Party comrades around him. Secondly, comrade Beech and his group, and lastly, the Marxian League.

a) With regard to Groves and his group my opinions are as follows: Comrade Groves I found to be the best element of all the groups. He confirmed all the opinions that I had before I reached England. First of all he is a Party comrade, has a Party ideology, and understands (at least so it appeared to me in the short time that I spent with him) the implications of being an oppositionist. Like many hundred other Party comrades, he works for the apparatus. At present he is employed by

one of the Russian enterprises in England. But Groves appeared willing to take the stand necessary irrespective of what this implies - practically it implies the loss of his job. I learn that in the past he was a member of the I.L.P., and joined the Party almost five years ago. Prior to the sixth congress he led the London comrades in a struggle against the CC of the Party. But Groves explains that he took it for granted that when the CI opened the struggle against the right wing in the Party, he accepted this as a genuine attitude of the Comintern. Naturally he says, he agreed to cease his opposition on the basis that the Comintern would depose the leadership of the Party, only to find later on that there was not a grain of truth in the line followed by the Comintern. But ever since then he has been a thorn in the side of the bureaucrats with the result that they have more or less isolated him in the Party with the object of destroying him completely. He is not an unknown comrade having participated in many of the campaigns of the Party. He writes well and can speak. But most of all he impressed me with his sincerity and the seriousness with which he approaches the problems of the movement. With him are three other comrades of the Party. Both of them are below his calibre but signify their willingness to take part in the work.

b) The Beech group has a different complexion. Beech is a Party comrade. His friends are not in the Party - some of them were, others never have been in the Party. However, all of them are in the labor movement, have been in or close to the Party and are well known in the movement there. One of them, Jack Tanner by name, I am sure you must know of. He was present at the second congress of the CI and participated in the discussion of the relations of the Party to the Labour Party - a discussion which involved the fundamentals of the character of the Communist Party. But this group must be characterised by their "trade union" outlook on Political policy and even to an extent on a political Party. I think that I am not far from wrong when I state that they have much to learn not only in connection with the Opposition and its program but generally in relation to Communism. They are sincere comrades with a good deal of experience. In that sense they are very valuable. Also, they have good connections in the labor movement generally and with Party people. Whether it is possible to effect a re-education of these comrades, is very doubtful. They are not young comrades. Nevertheless I am sure that they can be utilised and would prove to be valuable to us providing that this utilisation is a correct one. Comrade Shachtman is in a better position to give you a more rounded view of this group since he will have continued discussions with them for some time after I left.

c) The Marxian League proved a disappointment to me. This disappointment was indicated to me long before I reached England. But everything that I thought was confirmed when I reached England and learned of what had taken place. First of all, I should inform you that I did not get to see any of the present members of the League. I did see their former organiser who left the group and joined the Party, but who is quite ready to work for the Opposition. He informed me that when he learned of the differences between ourselves and the League he was already in the Party. But what caused him to leave the Marxian League was his difference with their conceptions; differences which arose concretely over their thesis. This comrade, whose name is Dewar, says that he is absolutely in agreement with the position of the Left Opposition generally, and in particular with your thesis on England. He gave me the following information which should prove of interest to

you: Ridley and Aggravaila first sent the thesis to you and then presented to the organisation for approval. With the exception of Comrade Dewar the organisation endorsed their thesis. When the reply to their thesis came, Ridley and Aggravaila did exactly what they should not have done. Namely they did not read the thesis to the membership of the Marxian League. Individuals did get to see it but the organisation as a whole were not permitted to see it nor to act upon. On the contrary, Ridley and Aggravaila both explained that you did not understand their position. In a word there were "misunderstandings" and therefore they would prepare another thesis to you and after you replied to a second one, they would take it up with the organisation. (I assume only in the event that it was favorable to them). In addition to Dewar, three or four other members of the ML have left them and made application to the Party. It is difficult to say just what can be done with the rest of the membership of this organisation. Dewar seems to think that the element composing the League are not a very good one and doesn't think that there is much to be gained from them. I am enclosing a leaflet issued by the Marxian League. This is very interesting and helps to explain the character of these "Oppositionists". The leaflet was issued some three months ago (I think, three months ago) and is titled "Communism and Chaos". A reading of it will show that these "friends" speak of the crisis in the world and of Communism, without one word of the existence of the Communist International, the Communist Party or even of the Left Opposition. I am quite sure that it doesn't speak well for them.

On the whole my stay in England was entirely too short to accomplish anything. I am not so sure that comrade Shachtman can do very much himself. But of one thing I am certain; we have found a basis by which to proceed. I feel that we can operate with Groves; and from the Beech group have a basis for building the Left Opposition. The extremely short time that I had at my disposal kept me from performing a number of things for Markin - but I took them up with Groves and hope that he may be able to do them for us. Was able to see Montague only once and did not get very much satisfaction from him. Just now I am awaiting the arrival of comrade Shachtman hoping eagerly to get some news from him with regard to the subsequent developments in England after I left...

1. We took up the question of a newspaper which in our opinion is absolutely essential. Without it we can hardly accomplish much. The age-old problem of finances makes this a difficult one. Groves, of course, understands that this is imperative and that without a paper it is difficult to proceed. We took up with them the practical steps regarding the issuance of a Left Opposition paper. What transpired later, I cannot say. Beech and his group were very sceptical regarding a paper. They consider it inopportune. In general they are hesitant regarding the organisation of an OPPOSITION movement. They think it is best to proceed in a round-about way. First to hide our identity and then suddenly, when we have grown, to surprise everyone by announcing ourselves. They feel that if we should come out now we would be attacked from all sides and in order to avoid such attacks from the Party, it would be best to begin in any other way but that of a Left Opposition movement. Naturally we did not budge one inch on the question of the character of an organisation of the Left Opposition and the need of issuing a paper. There is also a tendency in the Beech group that expressed itself as follows: That what we need to do is to win over the workers on the basis of daily struggles and by our programme of class struggle. We must not get into any hair-splitting struggle with the Party over

"Party issues". We must avoid wrangling with the Party. This seems to be an error of the whole international Opposition. The role of the Marxian League and the attitude of the Beech group toward the politics of the struggle only forces me to conclude and I think correctly, that Groves and his group will have to form the real basis of the Opposition. I do not hold any illusions as to the size of our movement. I think that the whole development will be a difficult one - but neither am I pessimistic.

2. The situation in England promises some lively periods. Realising that what transpires in Germany will have a decisive influence in England, nevertheless the impending breakdown of the "national" government will afford a destruction of a number of illusions. While I was there it seemed a matter of course, and was accepted in many of the newspapers that the "national" government was a thing of the past. The Conservatives are proceeding more boldly without giving much thought to whether they break the "unity" or not. I feel that in the inevitable swings that will take place, the Left will win support even if it does not entirely understand the developments or know how to utilise them. By Left, I refer to the Party and Left movements in the British working class.

The Party has made some gains in the elections, albeit very meagre ones. The circulation of the Daily Worker is still very small, but it too has gained readers. The possibilities for the Party were very good. Everybody with whom we spoke seems to agree to this. But that the Party failed to gain any results is obvious, and this seems to have discouraged and demoralised many. In England, there is an unusual apathy in the Party ranks. An extraordinary large section of the Party is corrupted through jobs given them in Party organisations or with the Russian companies. This condition, which necessarily creates a large strata of bureaucrats, is one of the most difficult problems to overcome. But among the membership of the Party I am quite sure that there are real possibilities for work. I feel that if we succeed to bring about an Opposition organisation in England, if our comrades proceed correctly and with audacity, they will win support. I rather believe that they underestimate the possibilities. An opposition in England would help to clear the light for the many hundreds of communists who do not understand what is wrong and why despite favorable opportunities the movement does not grow. I am quite sure that Groves will do anything you ask him. Should you require anything I think you can write to him.

Dick Beech was born in 1892 or 1893, and died in 1955. During his early life he is reported to have travelled the world as a seaman, grown tobacco in Mexico and prospected for gold in Australia and for copper in Colorado, U.S.A. After association with the I.W.W. he was present at the Second Congress of the Communist International in Moscow in 1920; he there represented Sylvia Pankhurst's organisation, the so-called "Communist Party, British Section of the Third International". This was the title which had been assumed, in the course of the negotiations between different groups with a view to bringing into existence a united Communist Party of Great Britain, by the Workers' Socialist Federation; this group had developed from a break-away early in the war from the Women's Social and Political Union, which at first took the name "Women's Suffrage Federation". At the Unity Convention at Leeds in January 1921 Beech was elected to the leadership of the Communist Party of Great Britain as a representative of this group. There is no indication of any contribution which he may have made to the discussions at the Second Congress or to his having played a prominent role in the leadership of the Party. During the 1920's he is believed to have worked in Britain on the staff of Russian Oil Products. He was personally friendly with Jack Tanner and with Alfred Rosmer, probably because of the syndicalist associations of their youth. Rosmer is believed to have suggested to Naville that the Left Opposition should contact Beech in about 1931. There is no reason to believe that Beech ever joined the Left Opposition or regarded himself as close to it.

In the early 1930's he is believed to have been associated with Jack Tanner in a scheme to promote a professional boxers' union, but this failed, and about the same time he became an official of a newly formed trade union, the Chemical Workers' Union. This resulted from a struggle in the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, as a result of expansion and of technological changes in the chemical industry to which the bureaucracy of that organisation was unable to adjust itself. Beech could play a useful pioneering role and look after himself in agitation, open-air meetings and direct contact with workers in struggle. In 1944-45 he was the President of the Chemical Workers' Union and in his later years edited its journal.

In 1934 he signed the appeal which the Communist League issued, calling for protests to the Chinese Embassy against the imprisonment of Ch'en Tu-hsiu.

Beech was a member for many years of the I.L.P., a friend of Fenner Brockway and, after 1945, associated with the Movement for Colonial Freedom. He married Moira Connolly, daughter of the Irish martyr, Jim Connolly. He wrote a short book of sea-stories entitled "Torpedo-ed".

The following autobiographical note has been kindly contributed by Hugo Dewar. Born 9 August 1908. Attended penny a week Infant School, Walthamstow. I have the impression it was Christian-Socialist orientated - the songs sung at assemblies were from J.R. Lowell's poems - The Present Crisis and Stanzas on Freedom. George R. Sims' Christmas Day in the Workhouse, recited by my mother, who knew him well, also made a strong impression. Won a scholarship to secondary school; left at sixteen. Worked as sales representative; attended evening classes (French, German) and came into contact with a Labour Party Socialist. A Cook-Maxton meeting (the post General Strike Maxton-Cook Campaign) brought me into the Clapham I.L.P. (1928). Started speaking at street-corner meetings. Introduced to Marx by ex-Wobbly wood-worker, Bill Gribble. Met F.A. Ridley at Hyde Park meeting. Ridley was pushing Trotsky literature and The Militant. We organised a grouping - propaganda at Speakers' Corner, lectures at a Carnaby Street basement, where we also held sixpenny "hops". Among the members were - Jerry and Lee Bradley (who later played a leading role in the Chelsea group of the Left Opposition, where issues of the new series were printed on a small press, type-set by hand): Graham and Nichols, who went into the Hackney local of the C.P. as members of the L.O.); an Indian student, Agarawalla (Chandra Ram in the Militant, i.e. L.T.'s article on the Ridley-Agarawalla thesis); and a couple of Ceylonese - Gunawardena and de Silva (my memory is a bit hazy here, because I think there was another name - however, these Ceylonese later played quite a prominent role in the movement in Ceylon later). There were a few others, whose names I don't recall, who also went into the L.O. after the split in the Marxist League over the Ridley-Agarawalla thesis). I was all this time still in the I.L.P. - had a job as sub-agent during 1929 General Election (Caterham - I.L.P. candidate called Mennell, a tea importer (I was unemployed for a short time, drawing dole and victimisation pay from N.U.D.A.W. - U.S.D.A.W.)).

The M.L. faded out after the split and 1931, when I and other members linked up with the Balham Group and went into the C.P. (A letter from Saklatvala reminds me that I was already in Nov. 1929 organising locally campaign on behalf of the Meerut Prisoners Defence (Indian trade union organisers - if I remember rightly a chap named Spratt was the leading C.P. er involved).

I was a member of N.U.S.D.A.W. from some time in 1929 till around 1946; for some time vice-chairman and then chairman of my local branch in Tooting (Labour Club premises), and a delegate to the Wandsworth and also the Battersea Trades Council. I was also on the management committee of the Balham L.P. (we made some converts there to the L.O. from the L.L. of Youth). When I took up teaching after the war, organised a branch of the N.A.T.F.H.E. (as it is now titled), of which I am a life member (retired).

After expulsion from the C.P. returned to I.L.P. Work in the I.L.P. was part of the activity of the Communist League/Marxist League (the change of name dictated by Labour Party banning of C.L. The Red Flag was the expression, overt, of our principled standpoint. In the I.L.P. we fought the C.P. influenced elements as well as the L.P. supporters, aiming at disaffiliation and adherence to the Fourth International. Considerable space was devoted in the R.F. to the I.L.P. problems. Organising secretary of Socialist Anti-War Front launched in August 1938, using Clapham I.L.P. quarters in Bedford Rd. as base

(first called South London S.A.W.F. - then S.L. dropped). Wrote pamphlet for S.A.W.F. Feb. 39; leaflet If War Should Come - Manifesto on outbreak of war (4 Sept. 1939).

Dismissed from job as salesman following visit of police to place of work. Then employed as warehouseman in clothing factory. Further visit from authorities but no action by employer. Expressed my views as political conscientious objector at Tribunal. Drafted March 1943, discharged July 1946. Various jobs in Army, finally in G.H.Q. 2nd Echelon in Brussels, P.O.W. section, where I used to give lectures - Army Bureau of Current Affairs (rank of corporal, and taught English to German refugees from Hitler in our section - I had taken a two-week course of teacher training. Kept in touch with I.L.P. by correspondence - the Free Expression was being published by us (I don't remember the date of the first issue, but I think some time in 1941. In 1946 while still in Army contested Battersea North by-election, supported by London, where we were in control, but not by N.A.C., where dominant concern was back to the L.P. As far as I remember the vote was 140.

During war contributed verses to Socialist Leader and Forward. Wrote pamphlet for I.L.P. - The Mask of Democracy (1947). Dropped out of active politics in the fifties and concentrated on writing with the object of debunking Russia as leader of world revolution. Now in retirement; contribute occasional verses to Socialist Worker and Socialist Challenge.

1938 married Margaret Watsova, Russian-born political refugee Hitler Germany, author of Labour Policy in the U.S.S.R. (1956); Soviet Trade with Eastern Europe (1951).

Received January 1978.

The following information has been given to the author by Reg. and Daisy Groves. Reginald Percy ("Reg.") Groves was born in London in 1908 of parents who originated from Essex. His elementary education, at the church school of St. Martin in the Fields, ended at the age of 14 and he worked as messenger-boy, assistant in a tobacconist's shop and later as "youth in training" as a telephone engineer. He left this job following the General Strike, feeling that he was being unfairly treated in reprisals for his activities in the strike.

He had joined the I.L.P. at the end of 1924, and first tried to join the Communist Party in October 1925, about the time when the leaders were under indictment: on this occasion he did not succeed in getting accepted, apparently through some misunderstanding, and he finally succeeded in entering the Party in July 1927. In the same period he had become associated with the circle round Father John Grosser, when the latter was curate at St. Michael's Church, Bow, and was vicar at Christ Church, Watling Street, in the City of London

Daisy (Political comrade of Reg. Groves, - they were married in 1932), an apprentice tailoress, joined the Westminster Branch of the I.L.P. at the age of 15, after attending the theatrical performances and meetings presented by the I.L.P. at the Strand Theatre on Sunday evenings. Finding the company in that branch too "intellectual" and not serious enough, she left to join the Communist Party, where she felt more at home, recruits received political training and systematic political work was undertaken. She first got to know Reg. Groves when he was already a member of the Communist Party and visited her branch in 1927 as a speaker.

In 1928 Groves, Henry Sara and Billy Williams appear all to have been members of the London District Committee of the Communist Party, where they were not entirely easy for the leadership to handle, but had general sympathy for the open expression of revolutionary ideas and for the "Third Period". Groves and Daisy have recalled many years later that the atmosphere in the Party at the time tolerated free comment and that members whose lives were devoted to political work could find their social relaxation in each others' company. At this time Groves as an admirer of Palme Dutt, who was not publicly prominent in the work of the Party, but whose "Notes of the Month", in "Labour Monthly", Groves regarded, like many others including left-wingers outside the Communist Party, as valuable day-to-day political guidance. Between January 1929 and November 1930 Groves had ten articles and reviews published in "Labour Monthly", as well as a pamphlet, "Four Years of Labour 'Opposition'", which appeared in support of the independent candidatures of the Communist Party just before the General Election of summer 1929. He held some lower-rank paid functions in the Communist Party organisation, but, as a result of his experiences in working for the Party and of the influence of the ideas of the Left Opposition, which reached him through the New York "Militant", he came increasingly into opposition to the Party leadership in the spring and summer of 1932, and was expelled in August 1932.

He contributed articles on the British political scene to the New York "Militant" from time to time, and, with Daisy, was a very active participant in the work of the Left Opposition and the Communist League. After a long period of unemployment, relieved towards the end by occasional intervals of a few weeks' paid political work for the Socialist League, he was found work by a sympathiser of the Trotskyist movement as assistant editor of World Film News, in 1935, and he

edited this journal from the following year to its collapse at the time of the Munich crisis in September 1938.

He played an important role in the leadership of the Socialist League in 1936 and the early part of 1937 and, at the same time, edited "Red Flag" new series from its first issue in May 1936 to its last issue in May 1937. He took part in the work of the Trotsky Defence Committee in 1936-38, and in that of the Socialist Anti-War Front in 1938-39. He was Labour candidate for Aylesbury in a by-election in 1938, in which the Communist Party supported a Liberal candidate in opposition to him.

About this time he found more stable employment in making documentary films. Having volunteered for and been rejected by the Friends' Ambulance Unit, he decided about the time of Dunkirk in 1940 not to pursue his original intention of registering as a conscientious objector because he felt, at this point, that "national defence" had become progressive. He spent the rest of the war in his reserved occupation of film-making, consistently refusing to accept the status of commissioned rank in the army which this function could have conferred upon him and retaining his civilian status.

He stood as Labour candidate again for Aylesbury, without success, in the General Election of 1945, and as Labour candidate for Eastbourne in the General Election of 1950: Denzil Harber, who was at that time a member of the Eastbourne Labour Party, had a hand in his selection as prospective candidate.

Groves has published the following books and pamphlets:

We Shall Rise Again (A History of the Chartist Movement)
The Peasants' Revolt (A History of the Peasants' Rising of 1381)
The Mystery of Victor Grayson
Rebels' Oak (A History of Ket's Rising in Norfolk in 1549)
Sharpen the Sickle (History of the Agricultural Workers' Union)
Conrad Noel and the Thaxted Movement
Seed-Time and Harvest
The Balham Group
The Strange Case of Victor Grayson
Articles in the "Labour Biographies" on Conrad Noel and on Victor Grayson

(Based on interview in August 1978)

Stewart Purkis (1885-1969) was brought up in London and worked as a railway clerk. He joined the I.L.P. in about 1900 but developed an interest in syndicalism. He served during World War One with the Royal Army Medical Corps. He was on the Executive Committee of the National Guilds League with Cole and Mellor. He played an active part in winning his fellow-workers in the Railway Clearing House to support the General Strike in 1926 and joined the Communist Party after the strike. During the "Third Period" he contributed to "Labour Monthly". He won such support among his fellow-workers that when the leadership of the Railway Clerks' Association expelled him for attacking its policies of collaboration with the railway companies, which he regarded as likely to endanger the jobs of his colleagues, it could not induce the members of his own branch to give them a majority in favour of his expulsion. He associated with the "Balham Group" and was expelled from the Communist Party at about the same time as Wicks, Groves and Dewar in autumn 1932. He was re-accepted into the Railway Clerks' Association and in 1936 was elected to its National Executive Committee for a three-year period, after which he declined to be re-nominated on the ground that no-one should hold a post more than once. At this time he was President of the Trades Council in St. Pancras, a working class district of London. He supported the Trotsky Defence Committee. In his early life he had come under the influence of the Church of England and after World War II he interested himself in a Socialist Christian Movement.

For an obituary of Henry Sara, see "Socialist Leader", November 28, 1953, where it is signed with the initials "R.G.". The obituary says that he died in 1953 at the age of 67, which would give his birth date as 1886 or 1887, but the author of the obituary writes that he was born in 1883. The main points in the obituary are that Sara was an outstanding teacher and lecturer. Before 1914 he was interested in Free-thought, Darwinism and industrial unionism and was associated with Guy Aldred. During the Great War "he took his stand, not with pacifists and conscientious objectors, but with anti-militarists and opponents of the war", and was imprisoned for refusing an order while in the Army. He was active in the Communist Party in its early years, "despite some uneasiness about the ruthless repression of the Kronstadt uprising by the Bolsheviks". For a time he was a lecturer-organiser for the N.C.L.C. There has survived a quantity of his lecture material, especially of papers dealing with the Moscow Trials of 1936-38, which he mercilessly criticised as fraudulent, in the Sara-Maitland archives at the University of Warwick, in a period in which he served the N.C.L.C. as a voluntary tutor.

In his last years, he was "occupied in a badly paid post among Post Office temporaries", and he was active in his local Labour Party in his later years. Mr. Charles van Gelderen has informed the writer that Henry Sara and Harry Wicks were the only surviving members of the leadership of the Marxist League to join with C. L. R. James in forming the Revolutionary Socialist League in February 1938.

John Frederick ("Jack") Tanner (1889-1965) was born at Whitstable in Kent and appears to have had an adventurous youth. He was a boxer and, after attaining craft status in his trade of engineering, spent some time sea-going. In 1914 he contributed "Letters from London" to Rosmer's syndicalist paper, "La Vie Ouvriere". During World War I he worked at his trade and became a shop stewards' leader. According to Rosmer he worked for a time in a factory in the suburbs of Paris. He went to the Second Congress of the Third (Communist) International in July 1920 in the delegation from Britain representing the National Administrative Committee of the Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committee Movement, and contributed to the discussion in the 9th session on the Trade Union question, opposing the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party and criticised the Communist International for being "too dogmatic". He was Chairman of the Founding Conference at Leeds of the Communist Party of Great Britain on January 29-30, 1921. As a delegate from his trade union, the Amalgamated Engineering Union, he attended the Annual Conference of the Trades Union Congress in September 1926, where he attempted to put the viewpoint of the Minority Movement and to attack the conduct of the General Council during the General Strike of May 1926.

He was first elected to a full-time organiser's position in the A.E.U. in 1931. He signed the appeal on behalf of the Chinese Communist leader, Ch'en Tu-hsiu, founder of the Chinese Communist Party and later of the Chinese Left Opposition. This appeal for protests against the imprisonment of the 58 year old Ch'en Tu-hsiu to be sent to the Chinese Embassy in London, was launched by the Communist League, the Trotskyist organisation in Britain at the time, in its paper, "Red Flag" in late 1933 and early 1934.

Tanner advanced rapidly in the Trade Union bureaucracy. In 1935 he was elected to the Executive Committee of the A.E.U. and in 1939 became National President, a post which he occupied until 1954. During World War II he contributed substantially to harnessing the workers in British engineering to the war effort. He was Chairman of the Trades Union Congress in 1954-55.

The following autobiographical note has been kindly contributed by Harry Wicks. Born in Battersea, August 1905. Attended elementary school which I left in July 1919 and started work on the railway in October 1919. Employed at Longhedge Junction Signal box, also in Battersea as a signal lad. Joined the Battersea No.1 N.U.R. at the age of 14. That signal-box, in a goods cutting, was the daily forum of railwaymen, discussing socialism, politics and religion. A formative influence. Through that influence I joined the Battersea Herald League and the Plebs League. Our branch of the Herald League sent three delegates to the Communist Unity Conference and when they reported back the majority of the branch constituted itself the Battersea branch of the Communist Party. Our branch Chairman was Raymond Postgate, who subsequently became the editor of the Communist. Within two years after several efforts we had a strong and viable Y.C.L. in Battersea of which I was a member, but continued my membership of the party. Elected to the Executive of the Y.C.L. at the Sheffield conference, 1926. Was the Y.C.L. nominee for the three-year course at the International Lenin School Moscow, 1927-30.

My first acquaintance with the Russian opposition and its struggle was in a Y.C.L. training class on Marxism that A.E. Reade conducted in Battersea in 1924. As a member of the Party District Committee he was instrumental in getting the London aggregate meeting called to consider the decision of the Party Council Dec. 1924 which attacked Trotsky. In that meeting by vote alone I supported the amendment of Reade. Subsequently at the Party congress in May 1925 the condemnation of Trotsky's position was carried without any discussion, the central point being made that Trotsky had made his peace with the party. From that time until I arrived in Moscow in November 1927, I heard no discussion either in the party local or the Y.C.L. Executive of the issue of the Left opposition.

On arrival first in Berlin then Moscow I discovered that the issue of Trotskyism was the dominant theme of debate. In the Lenin School the new students were given an induction course by Stewart Smith, a leader of the Canadian Comm. Party. After six weeks, at the end of the course, a resolution was presented summarising the results of our study. As that resolution contained a characterisation of L.T. as objectively counter-revolutionary, an amendment was moved to delete that statement by Joseph Zack (alias Cass). I seconded the amendment. We had but two votes but literally days of anguished debate. No disciplinary measures were taken; as with all the students in that school, which was essentially a Russian Party school, I was given a Russian party card. Although in academic work, i.e. on the issue of the Party Maximum and later on 1905 I was at variance with the interpretation of party history, at no stage could I be considered a Trotskyist. At the most I was intellectually aware of the issues, studied them more than most, and had a lively curiosity in all that was happening in Russian party politics. I did read Trotsky's Autobiography or extracts from it that were published in the Sunday Observer whilst in Moscow, also the first issues of the American Militant. In the second and third year of the school I was elected organiser of the English Landgruppe, that was all the students who at the time were studying in the English language. In the early 1930 purge or chiska of all the students before a panel of Red Army personnel I was censured and had my party card endorsed for a criticism of the school curriculum. On my return I was drafted by the Party C.C. into the Y.C.L. to constitute with Alex Massie the Y.C.L. secretariat. Following a year's work as London

Y.C.L. organiser, I became critical of the Y.C.I. and its political instructors. Sent to the provinces, Bradford and Yorkshire, then to the dole queues at my home pit, Battersea. Autumn of 1931 was drafted by the party into the economic department of Russian Oil Products, and it was there that I met Reg Groves and from the summer of 1931 we began joint critical party work on a higher plane than the previous effort. In October-November 1931 with Groves joined the first organised group of the Left Opposition. Expelled from the party August 1932. Was the delegate of the British section to the Copenhagen meeting with Trotsky in November-December 1932. Participated in the Communist League, then Marxist League, until the majority split with Groves in 1938 to join in the fusion with the C.L.R. James group, which launched the paper "Workers' Fight" (incorporating the Red Flag). From the moment of joining the L.P. somewhere in 1934 to the commencement of the war in September 1939, I was a delegate to the Trades Council and represented the Trades Council on the London Trades Council until that body was wound up by the Right Wing 1952 (?).

I broke with the Labour Party in 1939, having narrowly lost an internationalist resolution in the Battersea management meeting opposing the war as imperialist. In 1940 with other members of the Socialist Anti-War Front we successfully negotiated entry into the I.L.P. At all the I.L.P. conferences during the war I participated with our Trotskyist faction with the major Trotskyist faction in joint work. The issue that dominated our thinking, in hindsight mistaken, was that the conditions of 1918-1919 would be repeated. In such a case the small fragmented Trotskyist groups would be inadequate to the opportunities that would present themselves. We were not alone in thinking that the end of the war would produce a revolutionary upsurge. At the time when we made our decision to join the I.L.P., the R.S.L. leadership was in Ireland, escaping arrest or well-nigh extinct. Witness the memorial meeting in London in September 1940 for Trotsky. With Sara and others we attended that meeting, where the R.S.L. decided that Ridley would be the speaker. Although we were instrumental in defeating Brockway and Padley in the I.L.P. in their bid to carry the I.L.P. back to the Labour Party, by June 1946 it was clear that the rump that was left in the I.L.P. were not going in any revolutionary direction.

Free Expression in some ways documents our consistent Internationalist position throughout the war. The S.A.W.F. manifesto that we produced on the day the war was declared still embodies my position as it was then. With Bill Hunter and others those years were spent in open-air propaganda.

Dr. Ryan L. Worrall, M.B., Ch.M., D.P.H., qualified at Sydney in Australia, where his father, who had himself qualified at Queen's University, Belfast, was in practice. When five years old he had a severe attack of meningitis. He came to Britain in 1927 and joined the Communist Party. He was expelled in 1929 for writing a letter critical of the German Communist Party which was published in "International Press Correspondence". He was for a while in the Marxian League, and joined the British Section, International Left Opposition; is believed to have supported the "minority" but not actually to have joined the I.L.P. In 1933 he published, "The Outlook of Science" which is understood to have impressed Trotsky to the point of sending him a letter of commendation. In 1936 he published "Footsteps of War" and in 1948, "Energy and Matter".

The Amsterdam "Anti-War" Congress

An editorial note in De Gras, "Documents of the Communist International", Vol. III, p.239, describing the origin of the Amsterdam "Anti-War" Congress, says that, at the instigation of Muezenberg, of the German Communist Party, Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse organised an international committee to call an international anti-war congress; the committee included the names of Gorky, Upton Sinclair, Einstein, Mme. Sun Yat-Sen and Theodore Dreiser. Originally planned for Geneva in late July 1932, it was held in Amsterdam at the end of August.

According to De Gras, "There were present 2,195, of whom 830 represented communist organisations and 682 came from R.I.L.U. organisations (although, curiously enough, the E.C.C.I. Materials for the Seventh Comintern Congress states that the majority of the delegates - it gave the number as 3,000 - were pacifists) ... The congress elected a committee of 141 members and appointed a permanent secretariat with its seat in Paris and Barbusse as President. A number of national sub-committees were also set up (which subsequently organised regional conferences in London, Montevideo, Copenhagen, Shanghai and Melbourne)".

A detailed and critical account of the Congress appeared in the New York "Militant" of September 24, 1932, in two articles head-lined "Barbusse-Stalin Congress" and "What happened at the Barbusse Congress". One of these, signed "Pierre Naville", presented the Congress Manifesto (accepted, according to the official Bulletin of the Congress "amid delirious enthusiasm by more than 2,100 votes against the 6 votes of the French Trotskyists") as a "laborious assembling of paragraphs carefully doctored to give satisfaction to everybody". Members of the Communist Parties should demand that their parties repudiate it, wrote Naville. The alternative text which the Left Opposition presented was not put to the Congress and its supporters were not allowed to speak before the vote on it was taken. "Where in this charter", asked Naville, "is there anything precise or serious about the methods of struggle, on the revolutionary struggle, on the tactic and strategy of the struggle against imperialism?"

"The Party leaders reject the honest united front", runs the article signed "Naville", "that is, one based upon limited, precise proposals, made by the Party, and responsibly adopted by it, addressed to the responsible reformist organisations which embrace hundreds of thousands of workers. Instead of this, they camouflage themselves behind pseudo-united front committees, in confusion, and they are led to make a bloc from above with the enemies of Communism ... For the moment Centrism profits by this indefinite current started and exploited by it; but in the long run it is opportunism, the social-democracy, which will profit in the hour when the proletarian Communist wing will be obliged to extricate itself from the morass ... and when the social-democrats will exclaim: 'There you see now, how insincere they were: they are now breaking up a bloc which they made without expressing any reservations ...' ... Not a line can be read which denounces the Hitlerite Fascist reaction as the greatest war menace to the U.S.S.R. NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT THE GERMAN SITUATION."

The second article, which is dated from Paris but unsigned, opens by noting that the Trotskyists had chalked the pavements round the meeting hall with such slogans as "Long Live Trotsky" and "Free Rakovsky and the Deported Oppositionists". The presidium of the congress included such "a heterogeneous succession of personages chosen for their renown" as the German Baron von Schoenaich, a former Junker and naval officer, who was writing articles favourable to the Soviet Union and to pacifism, the aged Sen Katayama, Mme. Sun Yat-Sen and "the chief of the Hindu bourgeoisie, leader of its Right Wing", Patel, who opened and closed the debates. It continues: "Patel came to this Congress for good cause, he knew the political benefit he could gain from it to cover himself before the toiling masses in India, to obtain in Europe points of support for the negotiations of the Hindu bourgeoisie with British imperialism and to stifle the revolutionary class movement of the Indian workers and peasants ... This policy should be known to the Communists for whom the tragic experience with the Kuo Min Tang is still alive. In India the Congress of the Indian bourgeoisie and at its head, Patel, have already committed acts of class repression against the proletariat and its revolutionary militants. And Patel did not fail to mention it from the tribune. Notwithstanding, the congress answered him with a unanimous chanting of the International!"

After expressing regret over Gandhi, "whose place would be so distinguished at this congress", according to the report Patel declared that for himself India was the central point of the imperialist war-danger. To the idea that "the end of capitalism is the condition sine qua non of the end of all wars", he counter-posed the idea of "the end of the domination of England over India", which he interpreted in the sense of the Hindu bourgeoisie. Patel indicated that he repudiated Communism. On the eve of the Congress, according to the report, he had demanded for himself unlimited speaking time, threatening to quit the congress with a statement to the Press. At no moment during the Congress did he lose sight of his own policy. He served up the policy of the class he represented. When the Congress had concluded with the vote carried by the whole apparatus for the final manifesto, which included general references to revolution, Patel demanded and again obtained the floor to show that he in no way altered his position and that he still rejected violence. The English delegation had to protest against his declaration, and neither his final speech nor the protest against it were translated to the Congress. Under the heading, "The Opposition at the Congress", the report records an energetic struggle by the six delegates belonging to the International Left Opposition.

"They held conversations with the workers, summoning the Communist Party to define clearly its line of principle and action, and proposing concrete objectives of common struggle to the responsible workers' organisations ... One of our comrades, when he had gained the tribune, was brutally driven off it by the strong-arm squad ... the apparatus refused us and us alone the opportunity to distribute the writings of the Left Opposition."

However, "on the first day the floor was given to comrade Ra, delegate of a group of colonial workers", who defended the standpoint of the Left Opposition and attacked the "Comintern Centrist leadership's national reformist conception of 'socialism in one country' being revealed as anti-Communist". The report gives "the essence of his speech" as follows:

"In the imperialist epoch capitalism cannot avoid conquering and fighting with guns over the colonial countries, which are tremendous sources of raw material and markets for the capitalist states.

In the colonies capital creates a proletariat and a peasantry which it exploits harshly. The exploited colonials organise and struggle. Their desperate struggle in China, Indo-China, India, Africa, already honours the names of Shanghai, Canton, Yen Bay, Vinh, Chauri-Chaura. To the raising of the Indo-Chinese workers' standard, the imperialists oppose machine-guns, air-planes and the guillotine, and unite to crush the vanguard, the colonial Communist parties. Of this type are the decapitations at Yen Bay, the repression at Vinh, the arrest, followed by their death, of N'Guyan Al Quoc.

These bloody colonial wars are inevitably accompanied by class war in the colonies themselves. In this class conflict imperialism guarantees itself, by means of the Second International fakes, the aid of the native bourgeoisie and part of the petty bourgeoisie. The Tonkin socialist section demands bloody measures of repression against the Indo-Chinese revolutionists, at the same time that the Sarrauts and Leon Blums are urging the French Government to rationalise the exploitation of the colonials.

Among the reformist tendencies of the native bourgeoisie, those which the workers have bitterly experienced are Sun Yat-Sen-ism and Gandhism. Sun Yat-Sen states in his "Memoires" that in his suppression of revolts he assured himself the aid of French and American bankers. After him the Kuo Min Tang, with its leaders, Chiang Kai-Shek, Wang Chin-Wei and even Sun Yat-Sen, fulfilled its mission as imperialism's valet in the massacre of the workers in Shanghai and Canton as well as in the coups d'etat of March 26 and January 27. In India, Gandhi, by his concept of non-resistance, takes his share of responsibility for the peasant massacre at Chauri-Chaura. The colonial bourgeoisie, linked to imperialism in the exploitation of workers, in spite of their antagonisms, have interests which ally them to imperialism in the wars of conquest and the wars of liberation.

The struggle against war can only be led by the working class with its vanguard, the Communist International, in the direction of the dictatorship of the proletariat allied to the peasantry. The struggle against war has no meaning outside of the fierce battle for the overthrow of the imperialist regime. This struggle can be led only in opposition to the ideology and influence of the imperialists' valets and supporters - the 2nd International, the native bourgeoisie and (I hope I don't hurt Rolland's and Barbusse's feelings) all the petty bourgeois pacifist ideologies.

In the fight for liberation the colonial workers are assured the active aid of the world proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat in the U. S. S. R. is a vital source of help for them. A victory of the workers in the metropolis would give

them inestimable support and vice versa. Here too the Comintern Centrist leadership's national reformist conception of 'socialism in one country' is revealed as anti-Communist. The colonial workers will fight this wretched tendency and will set their sole vanguard, the C.I., on the road of the world revolution, without which the realisation of socialism is impossible and peace is utopian.

At this period, when the crisis of the bourgeoisie and its class contradictions force the German bourgeoisie to unleash Hitler's Fascists against the German proletariat, the struggle against war remains a dead letter if the C.I. does not realise a fighting united front of workers' organisations to crush Hitler's Fascism and defend the U.S.S.R. on a class basis."

The report concludes:

"Ra hailed the fight undertaken by the International Left Opposition and its leader, Leon Trotsky. The applause which first greeted our comrade, whose tendencies were still unknown to anyone, gave place to the booing of the Communist functionaries. The speech was not translated for the other delegates, who came in numbers to ask why the end of the speech has been hissed. Its appearance in the 'honest' Congress Bulletin was carefully expurgated and distorted completely."

On the second day, according to the "Militant" report, "the efforts of our comrades caused the apparatus to grant several minutes to comrade Molinier, who had credentials from the Greek organisations. He said, in substance:

"The comrades of the Greek organisations, because of police and financial difficulties, had to forego sending one of their own active members to this Congress; they sent their credentials to comrades of this political tendency, and it is in the name of the thousands of workers grouped around them that we express ourselves here.

On the question of the fight against war, the Greek veterans, the wounded, the revolutionary workers have a doctrine based on the revolutionary action of those among them who, when sent in 1917 and 1918 into Soviet Russia, fraternised with the Red Army, which breathed life into the Communist anti-war concept; the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war, under the guidance of Lenin and Trotsky.

On the convocation of this Congress, we consider that it can have positive results only to the degree to which it can disengage itself from these debates, we think that peace depends on civil war, that civil war depends on the proletariat's capacity for action, and that this capacity for action depends basically upon the unity, the strength and the correct orientation of its vanguard. That is why we assert that it is the duty of the C.I., which was born in the struggle against the socialist betrayal of 1914, to

take the initiative in summoning a common congress of all proletarian organisations, in order to make the masses, deceived by social-patriotism and pacifism, come over into the camp of defeatism and civil war. This road, outlined by Lenin and Trotsky, is the road we urge.

In the series of debates, this Congress has uncovered fatal deficiencies. Pacifism must be condemned and those who intend to defend the U.S.S.R. with their lives must be separated from those who seek notoriety by talking about its defence. The weakening of capitalism, the proletarian dictatorship, the true defence of the U.S.S.R. are subordinated to that.

The organisations we represent asserted their concept by giving their credentials to this Congress to two men whom the repression against their intransigent revolutionary struggle has denied admittance to this Congress. One of them was for several years Soviet Russia's ambassador to Paris, but French imperialism, the bloodhound of the counter-revolution, demanded his recall, because Christian Rakovsky signed a manifesto urging the conversion of imperialist war into civil war.

The second was Lenin's companion in arms in the decisive moments of 1917 - Trotsky, who vitalised the proletariat's answer to war by organising and leading the Red Army to victory.

These two names, the names of thousands of Russian Bolshevik-Leninists, are the expression of the program we urge upon the Congress - Loyalty to Leninism."

Now the "Militant" report closes:

"On the last day of the Congress, the sequences of speeches was brusquely interrupted by the announcement that the Presidium was going into session. The manifesto drawn up by Barbusse, who was convinced in advance that the Congress must close with a unanimous act, had been distributed the night before ... The Left Opposition's delegation, which had never ceased to protest against the gagging of the discussion and the pacifist confusion of the proceedings, was grouped round the foot of the tribunal, where it vigorously demanded a discussion and the reading of the resolution it had submitted.

It was surrounded by the strong-arm squad which endeavoured forcibly to impose silence upon it. In the tumult they proceeded to a show of hands. The comrades of the Left Opposition, arrayed in vigorous protest, demanded the negative vote. The six votes of the Left Opposition were the only ones cast against the Barbusse manifesto. The delegation immediately submitted a statement explaining its vote. These votes were recorded in the Congress Bulletin and in "Le Monde".

All the circumstances in which the Amsterdam "Anti-War" Congress was organised have some significance which might have earned it more

attention from historians. It was held at a time when the Soviet regime was desperately concerned to avert the possibility of foreign intervention. Revolutionary movements in the capitalist world, under the control of the Communist International, had been successively defeated. At the same time the Soviet regime was experiencing great internal difficulties in carrying through its "crash" programme of industrialisation in the First Five-Year Plan and the forced collectivisation in agriculture. The E.C.C.I. may well have felt the need, not only to mobilise some sympathy internationally for the regime but also to show to its masters that it could attract support from somewhere. Yet at the same time it was constrained by the conception, underlying the policies of the "Third Period", that the principal danger came from the victorious powers whose victory in 1918 had been sealed by the Versailles Treaty, from their allies, the Social-Democracy, and from pacifists who preached that there could be non-violent solutions to the antagonisms of the period.

Consequently the foreign policy of the Soviet Union tended to be directed against France and Britain and towards Germany. The attacks of the Communist Parties on Social-Democracy, denouncing the Social-Democratic Parties as nothing but agencies of the bourgeoisie and anti-Soviet organisations, and rejecting the possibility of drawing their leaderships into united activities on behalf of the working-class, could create the impression that the dominating policies of the "Third Period" were ultra-left. This would, however, be to overlook the opportunist aspects of the policy of the Communist International, which can be seen in the accounts of the Amsterdam "Anti-War" Congress, as an attempt to draw all and any of the opponents of Versailles into a common front, on the basis of a left-sounding declaration which committed no-one in practice to anything.

Andre Marty's obituary on Barbusse said that the idea came originally from Barbusse that the Communist International took it up, and that it was a forerunner of the Popular Front.

The "Militant" report shows that the organisers of the Congress accepted at face value the declarations of the pacifists against armaments and war preparations, but also that the same proposals had appeared shortly beforehand in resolutions of the meeting of the Second International at Zurich. The Trotskyist critics, accordingly, drew the conclusion that, for all the denunciation of Social-Democrats in the press of Communist Parties at the time, the principal result of the Congress would be to spread confusion among those who wanted to prevent war from breaking out without attracting reliable allies to the defence of the Soviet Union. The "Militant" report mentioned, for example:

"Among the pennants carried in the Congress Hall, one bore the inscription, 'Fight the international socialist reaction'. On the second day the word 'socialist' on the banner was obliterated. About three hundred of the delegates belonged to the Second International. They stood up against the cynical boycott of action against imperialist war by the Adlers and Vanderveldes. But they were summoned to speak only on the confused basis of Barbusse's speech and manifesto."

The Swiss Left Social-Democrat Nicole was able to declare himself in

agreement with the French Communist Cachin, and to urge the re-union of the Communist and Socialist Parties. "Extraordinary as it may seem, these declarations were received with great enthusiasm by the French Communists." Muenzenberg had to intervene; announced as a "leader of the Third International", he said, according to the "Militant": "I do not speak here in the name of the Third International, but in the name of this Congress, whose sentiments I am sure I express".

On the one hand Muenzenberg tried to answer Nicole by referring to the support which the Socialist Party in France gave to the government in 1914, and to answer Patel by saying that non-violence served the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie, but on the other hand he drew no practical conclusions from his demand that "the promises given should be followed by actions."

Barbusse also was placed in a difficult position in his attempts to find a formula to enable a unanimous declaration to be made and after Nicole attempted to justify the unification of the two internationals (a proposal which the Bulletin of the Congress inaccurately attributed to Molinier!), Barbusse said he was opposed to "the action he had undertaken falling under the power of any party or fraction of a party."

Muenzenberg's reply to the Trotskyists is reported: "It is the Trotskyist fraction which is most active in this Congress." He rejected their proposals with an appeal for devotion to the Party and, according to the report, "our comrades protested vigorously when he distorted our position."

Some of the pacifists who gathered at Amsterdam were not favourably impressed by the Congress. There is an article in a French pacifist monthly magazine, entitled "Evolution", (issue of October 1932), attacking the Congress. It is signed, Victor Marguerite, a writer perhaps better remembered as the author of a series of novels with such titles as "La Garconne" and "Ton Corps Est a Toi", which greatly excited respectable French society in the 1920's. His article, entitled "Quelques Observations sur le Congres d'Amsterdam", depicts it as a masquerade on behalf of Soviet militarism. He was not present, but relied on a report from a political sympathiser, a certain De Jong, of the "International Anti-Militarist Bureau" at the Hague, and wrote from the standpoint of anarcho-syndicalist anti-militarism. De Jong said that the Congress was dominated by the Third International. The large hall was only one-third full, he said, and little notice was taken of the speeches. He did not mention the efforts of the Trotskyists to get themselves heard. Victor Marguerite accepted that the Communist International really was preparing for revolution, to which he was opposed, advocating instead individual conscientious objection to participation in war and a referendum on any proposal to declare war. The article contains such expressions as: "By excommunicating imperialist war only by verbal maledictions, as they have done at Amsterdam, in order to elevate into a dogma the necessity for and beauty of civil war, the only means by which the Communist Parties believe that they can secure 'the conquest of power'... "To appeal eternally to violence to set up union and peace between men is not to fight against war but to make it inevitable, with all its hazards." Marguerite also makes the engaging point that the "Committee" included his name among the members of a French committee empowered to supervise the application of the decisions of the Congress, and that he had to write to Barbusse telling him to take it off! The issue of "Evolution" is in the

archives assembled from the Society of Friends in the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford.

There is also a report on the Congress in "La Révolution Proletarienne", a complete file of which is in the Musée Sociale, rue Las Cases, Paris VII^{me}, in the issue of September 25, 1932. The report appears to be by an anarcho-syndicalist delegate who was sent to the Congress by the Syndicat de la Banlieue de Paris. He says that when the Trotskyist Raymond Molinier came to the rostrum, mandated by certain Greek organisations, he was violently hooted by the French Stalinists. The President imposed order and Molinier was able to speak. On the third day of the Congress an appeal was distributed inviting the delegates from trade unions and the unorganised workers to a conference to discuss methods of carrying on intensive propaganda in the working-class against war: "they attacked those comrades precisely on whom they were calling to bring into existence the United Front against War"; the report adds that, in addition to pacifists, a German general spoke.

There is in the Sara-Maitland papers at the University of Warwick a copy of the draft of the "Declaration to the Anti-War Congress at Amsterdam". A preliminary draft was sent to the British section for discussion and amendment, and was copied for circulation to members. The manifesto was signed by twelve sections of the International Left Opposition: it is published in Trotsky, "Writings: 1932", p.148.

The writer has been unable to find out what happened about the English delegate, Wild, who was elected by the South-West London Anti-War Committee.

Reports in the "New Leader" suggest that there were underlying tensions between its leadership and the organisers of the Congress. "New Leader", June 17, 1932, reported the appeal:

"The Congress to encourage resistance to war, which Henri Barbusse, Maxim Gorky, Theodore Dreiser and other 'intellectuals' have taken the initiative of calling for Geneva on July 28, is meeting with wide support from other 'intellectuals' and working-class representatives. Among British signatories to the appeal are Bertrand Russell, Havelock Ellis, Middleton Murry, H.V. Nevinson, David Kirkwood, G. Buchanan and W.J. Brown. Every Congress which stimulates war resistance was to be welcomed, but, as Romain Rolland himself says, 'we must not deceive ourselves. It will not be a few intellectuals who will stop the war, but the organised vigour of the workers in the factories and transport services. That is the task on which the I.L.P. is concentrating."

When the Congress was over, "New Leader", for September 2, 1932, printed a letter which the National Council of the I.L.P. sent to the Congress, expressing regret that "it is now impossible for us to participate". The letter goes on to play off the attacks which the Communist Party of Great Britain was making on the I.L.P. against the organisers of the Congress:

"The I.L.P. has, from the beginning of its history, uncompromisingly opposed Militarism, Imperialism and War. We take pride in the fact that our founder, Keir

Hardie, was one of those who first urged the policy of an international general strike in the event of threatened war. Our Party has opposed every Imperialist adventure of the British Government within the British Empire, and throughout it resisted the Great War.

Our opposition to war today is stronger than ever. We have been carrying on an active campaign in our own country against the exportation of munitions to Japan, and have done everything in our power to make the workers realise the danger of war with Russia.

We shall continue these efforts, and should war occur you can count upon our members refusing to participate and urging upon the whole working-class in Britain organised mass resistance by refusal to answer the call to the colours and by the policy of the general strike.

We realise that in such a situation it is the duty of the workers to turn resistance to war into an attack on capitalism, aiming at the seizure of power and the establishment of Socialism.

We hope that your Congress will encourage all working-class organisations to adopt this attitude. The decision of the workers should be international solidarity against War and for Socialism."

The article in which this letter was reproduced is head-lined "The Anti-War Congress: Why the National I.L.P. Did Not Take Part." It followed the letter with a section headed: "The Dutch Position":

"The reason why the National Council of the I.L.P. did not participate in the Anti-War Congress may be stated frankly. The Congress took place in the same town and at the same time as the Conference of the Dutch Independent Socialist Workers' Party. To this Conference the I.L.P. sent Fenner Brockway and John Paton as fraternal delegates. The Dutch Independent Socialist Workers' Party had declined to take part in the Anti-War Congress because of the attitude which the Dutch Communists had adopted. The Dutch Party took the initiative some time ago in establishing United Front Anti-War Councils. The Dutch Communists refused to take part in them.

When the proposal to hold the Anti-War Congress was made, the Secretary of the Dutch Party - P. Schmidt - was asked to sign the appeal for support. He declined to do so as an individual, stating that, as secretary, he could only sign if an invitation were sent to his Party Executive and they authorised him to do so. He made it clear that if his Executive agreed to co-operate they would expect to share in the actual organisation.

No invitation was sent to the Executive, but branches of the Party were asked to participate in the Congress as part of a campaign conducted against the executive. When it became clear that the Communists were using the campaign as a manoeuvre, the Dutch Party declined to take part.

The Dutch Communists then announced that Maxton and Brockway, as well as 'Left' Socialist representatives from Germany and Poland would speak at the public demonstration of the Congress. This announcement was used as part of the campaign against the Dutch Party. In actual fact the international 'Left' representatives had not even received an invitation to speak at the demonstration.

Under these circumstances, the Dutch Party asked the National Council of the I.L.P. not to participate in the Congress. In view of the fact that Brockway and Paton were going to Amsterdam as the guests of the Dutch Party, and the first necessity for loyalty is towards our 'Left' Socialist comrades, the National Council of the I.L.P. agreed that their representatives should not attend the Congress.

The members of the National Council of the I.L.P. also agreed that in future they will consult with the Council before identifying themselves with international efforts outside the normal activities of the I.L.P."

