

In the Opposition Ranks

International Left Forms Provisional Bureau

For some time now the press of the Left Opposition has discussed next steps for the unification of the International Opposition of the Left. The *Militant* on various occasions has presented this question and has put forward a number of concrete proposals for discussion. Now preliminary steps have been taken which have resulted in the formation of a Provisional International Secretariat which, as an initial act, is to issue an International Bulletin.

The Communist League of America (Opposition) is in full agreement with the steps thus far taken at Paris, France, on the initiative of representatives of the Left Opposition of the United States, the Russian Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists), and the French Opposition. Comrade Max Shachtman, member of the National Committee of the Communist League, represented the American League at the preliminary conference and together with comrade Markin of the Russian Opposition and of the Russian *Bulletin of the Opposition* and Alfred Rosmer, representing the French Opposition and editor of the French weekly organ, *La Verite*, signed for the Provisional Secretariat.

The first circular of the Provisional Secretariat is printed below and outlines the steps taken to date and the ones proposed for the immediate future.

* * *

March 10, 1930

Circular No. 1.

To the National Committee of the Communist League of America (Opposition)

Dear Comrades:

In *La Verite* of February 21 and March 7, we raised the question of the organization of an International Information Bureau of the Left Opposition, which would edit an Information Bulletin, with the aim of preparing the Convocation of an International Conference at which all Left Opposition Groups would be represented. The Conference would lead to the unification of the Opposition.

The question of the unification of the Left Communist Opposition has become a very vital question at the present moment. Nevertheless its realization is rendered very difficult by important obstacles. The three principal kinds of obstacles against which we stumble, as the Opposition already has in the past, are:

1. The Opposition Groups of the different countries developed independently of one another, almost without contact. They know each other very little and resolve problems of international importance without concerning themselves about each other.

2. In a number of countries there are several groups which claim to be of the Left Opposition and combat each other.

3. In the U. S. S. R., the Opposition lives in illegality which involves very considerable practical obstacles, which transform themselves into political difficulties.

All these obstacles can only be surmounted by a lively democratic preparation of the International Conference. For this reason only, we have taken on ourselves the initiative in publishing, under the control of an International Secretariat, an Information Bulletin, where all the questions that interest the Opposition will be raised.

In consequence we ask you, expecting a reply in the briefest possible time, to express an opinion on the following questions:

1. What appears to you to be the best way of going about to realize an International union of the Left Communist Organizations?

2. What are the principle problems which you consider necessary to discuss toward the end of working out a single platform of the Opposition? Send all your theses, documents, resolutions, which you decide to place on the agenda of discussion for the International Opposition, without delay, their text in your own language.

3. To send to the Provisional Secretariat regularly, all the publications of your organization: papers, reviews, pamphlets, leaflets, notices, etc. (two copies).

4. To indicate to what extent your

group can help finance the necessary expenditures of the publication of the Bulletin.

5. The approximate circulation of the Bulletin in your country.

It is understood that the role of the Provisional Secretariat to issue the publication of the Bulletin would be purely technical. It would have charge of the control of the Bulletin and the convening of the conference, as soon as possible after reaching an understanding with the various organizations. It only has the right of initiative, but no power to define the questions to be debated.

We ask you to follow attentively all the news and information concerning the Bulletin appearing in *La Verite*.

We ask for an immediate reply owing to urgency of these plans. Make suggestions, etc.

With Fraternal Greetings
Provisional International Secretariat
(Signed)

Shachtman (Communist League of America)
(Opposition)

Markin (Russian Communist Opposition-
Bolshevik-Leninists.)

Rosmer (Left Communist Opposition of
France)

Φ

Northern China Organizes Opposition

In the previous number of the *Militant* we were able to report the development of the Left Opposition in South Africa. Now we have just received word of the formation of another body of the Opposition in North China, with their centre at Peiping. The Chinese comrades publish their paper, *The Proletarian*, at Shanghai, and now their ranks are augmented by the Oppositionists of the North.

We send fraternal greetings to the growing Chinese Opposition. History gives to the Chinese Opposition the task of revitalizing the Chinese revolutionary movement, of leading the Chinese workers and

THE PERIOD OF THE RIGHT-CENTRISTS

(Continued from Page 4)

mixed with scholasticism at that. What sort of significance did the "stabilization" have, in its application to English economy and politics, especially in the year 1926-27? Development of the productive forces? Improvement of the productive situation? Better outlook on the future? Relative satisfying and pacifying of the working masses? Not in the least. The whole so-called stabilization of English capitalism, held out only with the aid of the conservative power of the old labor organizations with all their currents and shadings, with the simultaneous weaknesses and irresoluteness of the English Communist Party.

On the field of the economic and social relations of England, the revolution is already fully matured. The question now stands politically. The cornerpillars of the stabilization are formed by the heads of the the Labor Party and the trade unions, which, in England, present a united whole, though with a division of labor. Under such a condition of the working masses, which became obvious through the General Strike, the highest rank in the mechanics of the capitalist stabilization is no longer occupied by MacDonald and Thomas, but already by Purcell, Cook and Company. They start things off and Thomas carries them to the end. Without Purcell, Thomas would hang in the air and along with Thomas also Baldwin. It is the false, diplomatic masquerade—"Leftism" of Purcell, which sometimes in rotation, sometimes simultaneously, fraternizes with sextons and Bolsheviks, and is always ready not only for retreats but also for betrayal, that forms the principal brake of the English revolution. Stabilization is Purcellism. From that we see what theoretical absurdity and blind opportunism is the reference to the existence of "stabilization" as an

apology for the political bloc with Purcell. Yes, just in order to shatter the stabilization. Purcellism has to be destroyed, before all. In such a situation, even a shadow of solidarity with the General Council is the greatest crime and a mark of infamy against the working masses.

Even the most correct strategy cannot, by itself, always lead to the victory. The correctness of a strategical idea is judged by whether it fulfills the real development of class forces and estimates the elements of those forces realistically. The most disgraceful defeat, which has the most grievous consequences for the movement, is such a typical Menshevik defeat that is based upon a false estimation of classes, an underestimation of the revolutionary factors and upon an idealizing of the enemy forces. Of such a type were our defeats in China and in England.

Peiping, China
February 12, 1930

The Militant

Dear Comrades

We, the Oppositionist Group of North China, who stand on the same battle-field with you, here present our warmest revolutionary salutations to the Communist League of the United States of America.

We are happy to hear of the *Militant*. We believe that your paper is setting forth the important truth about the opportunism of the Stalinists throughout the world. The *Militant* spreads the message from which the proletariat of the whole world will trace the correct path of Leninism and will finally turn from the path of opportunism. It is the compass to guide the Opposition in the struggle against our enemy, the opportunists.

We sincerely hope that all issues of the *Militant* will reach us in good order; for it is our reference in revolutionary theory which we need so much. We expect you will do your best to help us theoretically. We will report to you about the political and economic changes of China from time to time.

With warmest Communist Greetings
(Signed) The North China Executive Committee of Chinese Leninists (Opposition)

Φ

CHARLESTON, S. C.—Machines installed in a Charleston cigar factory have caused many colored women workers to lose their \$4.33 a week jobs.

"If the reactionary trade unions of England are ready to conclude a bloc with the revolutionary trade unions of our country against the counter-revolutionary imperialists of their country, why should we not greet such a bloc?"

Were the "reactionary trade unions" capable of conducting a struggle against their imperialists, they would not be reactionary. Stalin lost the distinction between the conceptions-reactionary and revolutionary. He characterizes the English trade unions as reactionary from old memory, but entertains in reality miserable illusions with regard to their revolutionaryism.

After Stalin, the Moscow Committee also declared to the workers of Moscow:

"The Anglo-Russian Committee can and will undoubtedly play an enormous role in the struggle against all possible interventions directed against the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. It will become the organizational center that embraces the international forces of the proletariat for the struggle against every endeavor of the international bourgeoisie to begin a new war." (Theses of the Moscow Committee.)

What did the Opposition reply?

"The sharper the international situation will come to a head, the more the Anglo-Russian Committee will be transformed into a weapon of English and international imperialism."

This criticism of the Stalinist hopes in Purcell as the guardian angel of the workers' state was later characterized by Stalin at the same plenum as a deviation "from Leninism to Trotskyism".

Voroshilov: "Very true."

A Voice: "Voroshilov has affixed his seal to it."

Trotsky: "Fortunately that will all be in the stenogram."

Yes, indeed, all that is included in the stenogram of the July Plenum, at which the rude and disloyal opportunists dared to accuse the Opposition of "defeatism".

This dialogue, which I had to quote here briefly from my earlier article "What Did We Expect and What Did We Get?", as a strategical lesson is far more useful than a whole seminarist chapter on the strategy in the draft program. The question: What did we expect and what did we get? forms one of the principal strategical criterions in general. It must be applied at the Sixth Congress to all questions that have stood on the order of the day in recent years. It will then be shown unflinchingly that the strategy of the Central Committee of the Communist International, especially since the year 1926, was a strategy of unreal dimensions, false calculations, illusions with regard to the enemy and incitement against especially reliable and persevering co-fighters. In a word, it was a rotten strategy of Right-Centrism.

JUST RECEIVED!

NO. 9

The Bulletin of the Opposition

(IN RUSSIAN)

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