

«Austro-Oppositionism»

The Austrian Opposition movement is certainly not lacking in surprises. Unfortunately, these surprises are rarely rejoicing. At the very moment when, after two years of efforts to overcome incredibly petty and unprincipled quarrels the question of creating a united section of the International Left Opposition assumed concrete forms in Austria and the International Bureau began to elaborate its concrete proposals, the leadership of the Austrian Communist Party (Opposition) announces in a letter signed by Frey and 16 other comrades, their formal withdrawal from the International Left Opposition. The declaration is formulated to these words:

"To the International Secretariat of the Left Opposition, Paris:

"Since their visit to Vienna, we announced to comrades Molinier and Mille that while being in political agreement—this political agreement still exists now—we have for some time considered with growing doubt and without confidence the false and dishonest organizational methods which comrade Trotsky and the International Secretariat employ in practice.

"We hoped that this would be changed after the impressions comrades Mille and Molinier obtained in Austria. But we have been greatly deceived. The letter of comrade Mille of November 12, and above all, that of comrade Trotsky of November 16, 1930, as well as the supplements it contained, have deprived us of the last bit of confidence.

"Consequently, we formally withdraw our adherence to the International Left Opposition.

"A supplement on the decision on the expulsion of Stiff is enclosed.

"The above letter was adopted by the unanimous decision of the Opposition leadership.

The letter speaks of false and dishonest (that is, anti-Communist) organizational methods of the International Opposition, and above all of its secretariat and comrade Trotsky. The lightness and unspeakable lack of scruple of this accusation which requires no comment for any serious Left Communist, are shown by the fact alone that the accusers are in no position to give their estimate a precise political expression, based on facts and couched in Communist language. They resort to diplomatic figures, speaking of "growing doubts", "confidence", "personal impressions" and the like. Instead of answering for their charges before the international tribunal, they reveal themselves in a ridiculous and shameful manner. Certainly these are not the methods of the International Left Opposition.

It is not the first time that Frey (we speak of him as the representative of the administration of the A. C. P. [Opposition]), believes he must feel himself greatly deceived." From the very beginning, Frey gave his adherence and his "confidence" to the International Opposition on the sole condition that the latter express a priori its confidence in his organization and his whole past activity, and that it proscribe all the other Austrian Opposition groups, with which Frey had had or still has more or less important differences — differences which, in any case, have no importance now for the International Opposition. On this question, there was an exchange of letters between comrade Trotsky and Frey and his friends which lasted for months, in which comrade Trotsky, given the absence of any programmatic or tactical divergences, recommended a broad unity move on the basis of a common platform, as the only possibility of rallying in a revolutionary manner the Left Communist elements. The conclusions drawn by Frey, at various periods in the correspondence, were rich in changes as to his formal attitude towards the International Opposition.

In September 1929, he declared that he wanted to retain a "free hand" towards the International Opposition and to remain a "sympathizing" member. In April 1930, refused to participate in the International he had to "settle" the "disputes" in question of the Left Opposition, because of his ties with the Russian Opposition. After the "final" formal adherence, he again played (during the sojourn of the French comrades in Vienna) with the idea of resigning, in order to preserve "elbow room" for "settling" the nasty Austrian affairs. Now he takes refuge in abandoning the "last bit of confidence". This puerile and formalistic hocus-pocus can only arouse astonishment and regret. But if one considers further the obstinate refusal to collaborate actively in the international work, one concludes that Frey, by now occupying the position of national-Communist, only quits the position of a fictitious internationalism. He does not see in his adherence to the International Left Opposition the consequence of a community of action and program, but a formal

organizational maneuver useful for covering up private factional interests. So that we see in Austria a very unedifying spectacle where, in alternating cycles, one of the Left Opposition groups makes the best of its solidarity with the International Opposition while it hopes thereby to hit a blow at the other group.

As to the letter of comrade Trotsky, including the supplements of November 16, it doubtlessly concerns the copy of a letter from comrade Trotsky sent to the administration of the A. C. P. (Opposition) and addressed to Stiff and four other comrades expelled from the A. C. P. (O.) following upon internal disputes in which, considering themselves as expelled, these comrades continued to call themselves members of the International Opposition and partisans of any movement for Austrian unity, and had appealed to the International Bureau. Without desiring to anticipate the formal decision of the International Bureau or expressing any final opinion on the differences (considering that some had attributed capitulationist tendencies to these comrades), comrade Trotsky, in a most cautious manner, had admitted the possibility of modifying the internal régime of the Austrian Opposition. (Moreover, for the united Opposition which was to be formed, he had made quite precise proposals as to the internal régime and the relations with the International Opposition.)

It seems that these doubts, which comrade Trotsky expressed in a very prudent manner, concerning the organizational methods of the administration of the A. C. P. (O.) were enough for Frey to resume his old lamentations on the methods of Zinoviev-Bucharin-Stalin in the International Opposition and to take flight "formally". To call the International Left the "caricature of the Comintern" is the favorite method of the Brandler-Neuraths, who have created a caricature of the pre-war International under the form of a flexible union of the various national currents who are greatly concerned about their own "autonomy". Frey, on his part, demands for the A. C. P. (O.)

more than "autonomous" complete "non-intervention" of the International, exclusively under the form of an unrestricted sanctioning of all his measures. Obviously these are not the methods of the International Left.

In Austria, considerable sections of the present Oppositionist groupings (above all the group around Frey) were at one time (since 1922) already engaged within the party in violent and ceaseless faction fights which, while being objectively the expression of the regroupings in the Communist camp, nevertheless revolved around specifically Austrian questions. The traditions of the old factional groupings are today still the basis of the internal friction of the Austrian Opposition movement, and have given birth to a species of Austro-oppositionism, the principal character of which is the lack of international orientation based upon very marked factional principles and pettiness, which is well illustrated by the resignation of the administration of the A. C. P. (O.) which came in 24 hours. But Frey and his comrades are not the only ones in this case: the Mahruf group which, not without internal obstacles, declared its adherence to the International Opposition, has not yet come to the point of translating it in its journal, which does not appear as the organ of the Left Opposition but as the "organ of the workers' struggle"

Frey and his comrades, in quitting, say at the same time that they are politically in complete agreement with the International Left. They believe it possible to substitute for the community of struggle with the Left, which is indissolubly bound up with its program and its activity, the isolated existence in one country. In other words, they want to put a national-socialist basis under the revolutionary program of the Left Isn't it absurd to speak in such a case of political agreement? No, the International Left Opposition has nothing in common with this opportunism.

The document underlines the unanimity of the decision. It is sad that among the leading comrades nobody opposed this clear turn to nationalist Austro-oppositionism. Thus, one can only hope that the worker-members of the A. C. P. (O.) will know how to defend internationalism against Austrian provincialism. —JAN FRANKEL.

the greatest political mistake of his party career, was he allowed to remain in the leadership.

At the time of Mella's occupancy of the general secretaryship, the C. E. C. for the first time discussed seriously a definite break with the national bourgeoisie. During the whole past period, the orientation of the party on trade union questions had continually been towards work within the CROM, and in an "autonomous" sense only inasmuch as a close collaboration with "progressive" state governors made this possible.

At the time of the breakdown of the CROM, when whole labor federations of states and of trades, (Puebla, printing trades, etc.) were declaring themselves independent of the reformist center under the Left slogan of "against the bureaucracy," etc., the convocation of a unity conference of the autonomous unions became quite opportune. Such a step, if taken at the right time, would have served to separate not only "our own" unions of Jalisco, Tamaulipas, etc., from the local politicians, but also would have prevented the Obregonists from establishing their hegemony over the organizations recently rebelled from the CROM.

Mella against the Right Wing

At this time it was inevitable that large sections should reorientate themselves on this question, and comrade Julio Mella was among the first to come forward in the Mexico City branch in support of the calling of a trade union unity conference for the formation of a new center. For this reason, and through a revival of the old "Trotskyist" accusations, the Right wingers denounced him as disloyal and he was removed from the C. E. C.

In September 1928, an emergency conference of the party was called to discuss the change in the political situation. At this conference, Martin demanded the expulsion of Mella for the crime of working against the party line in the direction of "dual unionism." The Right wing proposed a united front with the reformists against the Obregonists (and Left wing CROM members) who were splitting the unions. But instead of Mella being expelled from the party at that time, he was successful, together with the Mexico City delegation, in rallying the whole conference, with one exception, to a struggle against the opportunist tail-endism of the Central Committee. This is not the time and place to discuss at length the manner in which the C. E. C., still dominated by the Right wing, carried out the decisions of the September 1928 conference. From a policy of sabotaging the decisions they soon flopped over, under the influence of the new winds from Moscow, to an adventurist sectarian position. Lack of mobility in the most opportune moment, and lack of serious organization afterwards, wrecked from the start what might have become under a more able leadership, the greatest force in the Mexican labor movement.

Much of Julio Mella's activity while in Mexico was wrapped up in the organization known as the ANERC (Association of New Revolutionary Emigrés from Cuba) and the publication of its *Cuba Libre* (Free Cuba). Numerous differences arose between the comrades of the Communist fraction of the ANERC in Mexico and the C. E. C. of the C. P. of Mexico, and the relations between Mella and the party leadership became exceedingly tense towards the end of 1928. In the very last days of the year, barely two weeks before his assassination by the agents of President Machado, comrade Julio Mella was expelled from the party by the decision of the C. E. C. They had taken advantage of a very rash letter in which he had declared his inability to collaborate with the party leadership, tendering his resignation. No excuses for this great mistake on Mella's part can be made but it goes without saying that the C. E. C. adopted anything but the correct attitude when he was so summarily expelled. One week later, that is about January 3, 1929, Mella requested a reconsideration, making a complete recognition of this error on his part. It was decided to reinstate him in the party, with the stipulation that he was to hold no posts of responsibility for a period of three years. On January 10th he was shot dead in the street by Machado's assassins.

—RUSSELL BLACKWELL.

THE CLASS IN MARXIAN ECONOMICS

Our class in Marxian Economics has been reorganized, with comrade Arne Swabek (recently arrived from Chicago) as instructor.

This class, sponsored by the Communist League of America (Opposition) N. Y. branch, is open to all class conscious workers desirous of obtaining a serious and correct Marxist education. A method of student initiative is being pursued.

All workers interested in taking the course communicate with the local office 84 East 10th Street.

Julio A. Mella

This January tenth is the second anniversary of the death in Mexico City of comrade Julio Antonio Mella, assassinated by hirelings of the Machado regime in Cuba. With Mella's death the Latin-American and world Communist movement lost one of its ablest and most devoted fighters. The murder was only one of a long series committed by the Wall Street-supported Cuban dictator on the persons of working class leaders. Too numerous even to mention have been the Communist party members and leaders and the militant trade unionists assassinated by the "tropical Mussolini" in his attempt to impede the growth of a strong working class movement capable of overthrowing what is doubtless the most odious of all the puppet régimes of Latin-America. Assassinated on the streets, tortured to death in their cells, fed to the sharks of Havana Bay, massacred in the streets, the number of Cuban revolutionists murdered in this struggle is already legion and the total continues to mount under the pressure of the general industrial crisis and general mass discontent on the island.

For a number of years comrade Mella was the outstanding leader of the Cuban movement. Even in his student days, he distinguished himself notably for his educational activities among the Havana workers with the organization of the "Universidad Popular—José Martí", and for his leadership in a number of student movements, so intense in their agitation against the Machado régime, that Machado had to close the National University in 1925.

Exiled from Cuba

Julio Mella, together with a number of other comrades, mostly Communists was framed up by the Havana police in a sup-

posed "bomb plot". They were held illegally without trial for some time in spite of the efforts of the workers and students to have them freed. Finally, through a 19 day hunger strike, which brought about a continent-wide protest movement, Mella's liberty was granted on condition that he immediately leave the country. He was sent to Honduras, from which county he was deported to Guatemala and then re-deported to Mexico. The Mexican government of Calles, at that time posing as an anti-imperialist government, offered him asylum.

In Mexico, in spite of continual disagreements with the opportunist heads of the Mexican party, Mella soon became one of the outstanding leaders. Because of instructions, the Mexican party practically compelled Mella, as well as many other foreign comrades, to dedicate themselves to anti-imperialist work almost exclusively. Mella was for a considerable period general secretary of the Continental Secretariat of the All America Anti-Imperialist League, and in this manner his energies were to a great extent side-tracked from the fields where he would have been most useful to the movement. Later, however, for a period in 1928, Mella occupied provisionally the general secretaryship of the C. P. of Mexico. But upon the return of the delegation from Moscow after the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern, comrade Mella was not only removed from this provisional post but was also summarily removed from the Central Committee, upon the insistence of the right wing C. E. C. led by Martin (Stirner) and Carrillo. In a former period Mella had been accused of "Trotskyism", and only through a formal renunciation of the point of view of the Left Opposition which was probably

DEBATE

"IS THE PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP NECESSARY?"

James P. Cannon
Communist League of America
says, YES!

Walter Starrett
"Road to Freedom"
says, NO!

at the
LABOR TEMPLE
14th Street and Second Avenue
on
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1931

Admission: 35 Cents

AUSPICIES; JOINT ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE.

8 P. M. sharp