EDITORIAL NOTES

THE MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

Twelve new members have been enrolled in the New York branch of the Communist League since the national conference. In this can be seen the first tangible result of the emphasis placed by the conference on the organizational side of our work. It is a gratifying manifestation, and it shows that our modest program for the enlistment of fifty new members by the first of the year has excellent prospects to be crowned with success. Every Oppositionist will set his heart on the attainment of this goal.

The American section of the Internatoinal Opposition has conducted three years of solid propaganda work. By this an unshakeable foundation of principle has been laid under the organization, and a fairly wide circle of symathizers have been gained for the Marxist program. It is time now to begin a deliberate and systematic campaign to enroll at least a part of these sympathizers into the ranks of the Communist League This is the next step. It stands first on the order of the day.

The discussion now taking place in the Spanish section of the Opposition on the character of the Left faction has an interest for us. The circumstances and the relation of forces are not the same here as there. In Spain the situation, as we see it, is such that the Left wing has expectionally favorable opportunities to grow and expand as an independent force in the class struggle. For that reason all our sympathies are with the tendency for the organization of a "broad" faction, enrolling the revolutionary workers of Spain directly into its ranks without routing them through the needless detour of the Stalinist official party.

Our own experience over a period of three years, on a smaller and more limited scale, argues against ultra-conservatism on the question of recruitment. In the formative period of our movement, it is true, we made a somewhat strict and narrow selection of forces. And necessarily so. Without a firm kernel to begin with, one already trained in have been impossible to maintain a conment of revolutionary workers without a national scale. previous party experience. In the New

...... York branch, especially, it can be said that a number of the best workers and defenders of our cause belong to this category. Lack of party experience undoubtedly has its shortcomings, and some very glaring ones. On the other hand it has compensating advantages. The that the duration of a directly revolutionworker who comes directly to the Op- ary situation will be measured not by positon, skipping over the official party, weeks or by months, but by long years has fewer distorted and perverted teach ings to unlearn.

The strength of the Marxist Opposiideas which lie at its foundation. This has been said many times and cannot be repeated too often. From this it fol lows that the Communist League can by no means open its doors to anyone and everyone. Those with ideas directly pre judicial to Communism, or in serious conflict with the League on settled basic questions, cannot be regarded as proper candidates for membership. The admission of such people would only confuse the issues and compromise the principle struggle. The Left Opposition cannot be a debating ground of diverse tendencies. We do not speak for "broad" faction in this sense.

The acceptance of unschooled but conscientious workers, who want to become Communists, does not present the dangers mentioned above. The League, for such workers, can and will become a as has been concretely demonstrated al ready.

It is to be hoped that all the branches

—J. P. C.

The Reply of Trotsky to Weisbord

To Albert Weisbord

New York, N. Y

(Copy to National Executive Committee, Communist League of America (Opposition)

Dear comrade:

I have received a number of documents and letters from you. I apologize for answering so late and in German at that; to write in English would be too long and too ungrateful a task. Now to the point.

I cannot adopt your standpoint. Your criticism of the League seems to me onesided, artificial and terribly exaggerated. You throw the League and the Right wing together, which shows that you utterly disregard the fitness of things. You make fun of the publishing activity of the League and contrapose your "mass action" to it. Have you any mass activity behind you? Before one turns to the masses, one must construct the revolutionary movement and to his ing masses of China not yet exhausted experience, the inopportuneness of the ection of mass action.

In addition, your international connections, sympathies and semi-sympathies our paper. Systematic building of our speak against you. For even if I cannot circulation is what is needed. claim to be an adept in present day American affairs, still I know well enough what the Landau group and the other do not record here those who sent in similar groups in Europe mean. "Tell their own sub. or their own renewal. me with whom you go, and I will tell you who you are."

The International Opposition has no use for two organizations in America. Your group is new, has only recently split off from the Right, differs from the Left Opposition on a number of questions and flirts with those elements which split themselves off from the International Left Opposition. Can you ask us to prefer you to the Communist League of America?

You declare yourself obedient to the International Left Opposition. Organizationally this is not the case. This can therefore be understood only in the sense of a general solidarity of ideas. But toward the social-democrats and the unite!"-Communist Manifesto.

excludes internal criticism on the basis of a healthy revolutionary democracy.

With Communist Greetings, L. TROTSKY.

Kadikoy, October 10, 1931

Militant Builders

Militant builders and our subscription list is growing. When one of our sup- surrection. porters secures a new reader for The Militant, he has rendered a service to circulation, his service will count that advance of the revolutionary struggle. much more: it will give more power to All this obliges the plenum of the Cen-

Below we record the subscriptions secured by the efforts of our builders. We

C. Schechet, Boston V. R. Dunne, Minneapolis C. Skoglund, Minneapolis J. D. Deutsche, Perth Amboy R. Sacharow, Chicago H. L. Goldberg, St. Louis A. A. Buehler, Kansas City L. Goodman, Philadelphia Morris Lewitt, New York

H. Capelis, New York From time to time we will make comparison of results obtained by the various builders.

........... "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly denow you must ask yourself a question, clare that their own ends can be attainhow this will be expressed organiza- ed oaly by the forcible overthrow of all tionally. In your letter to the League existing conditions. Let the ruling class Conference, you propose a united front tremble at a Communistic revolution. but without the leading comrades. This The proletarians have nothing to lose had declined abruptly, and that before is the famous united front from below but their chains. They have a world to the Canton insurrection. The campaigns which the Stalinists practice (in words) win. Working men of all countries, of Ho Lun and Yeh-Tin were already de-

Young Spartacus Read! Published by the National Youth Committee, Communist League of America (Opposition) YOUNG SPARTACUS New York, N. Y. 84 East 10th Street Enclosed please find fifty (\$0.50) cents for one year's subscription:

The Chinese Revolution

The Permanent Revolution & the Canton Insurrection

In November 1927, the plenum of the Central Committee of the Chinese party decided that

"The objective circumstances existing at the present time in China are such The Chinese revolution has a lasting character, but on the other hand, it has no stops. But its character, it constitutes tion lies first of all in the system of what Marx called a permanent revolution".

Is this right? Intelligently understood, it is right. But it must be understood according to Marx and not according to Lominadze. Bucharin, who showed up the latter precisely for hav ing employed this formula, was no closer talist society, every real revolution above all if it takes place in a large itself into a permanent revolution; in other words, not to come to a halt at any of the stages it reaches, not to confine itself to national bounds, but to extend and to deepen itself up to the complete transformation of society, up to the final abolition of class distinctions, consequently, up to the complete and school serving a double purpose wherein final suppression of the very possibility Communists, in conformity with the dir- offensive and thus prevented the revolu- persed by the encounters, abandoned the they will acquire their education in the of new revolutions. That is just what elementary questions of Marxism at the the Marxian conception of the proletarsame time they assimilate the standpoint ian revolution consists of, being disof the Opposition on the more compli- tinguished by that from the bourgeois had every chance of being extended suc- tions, the leadership could and should es are departing. They must be groupcated problems which have divided the revolution, limited by its national scope cessfully to the point of becoming a gen- bave staked everything so as to be able ed together again, fight defensive battles, Comintern since Lenin departed from its as much as by its specific objectives. leadership. The Opposition can teach The Chinese revolution contains within them far better than the Stalinists can itself tendencies to become permanent in so far as it contains the possibility of the conquest of power by the proletariat. To speak of the permanent revolution of the Communist League will see the without this and outside of it, is like question as the National Comittee sees it trying to fill the cask of the Danaides. and begin an earnest campaign for Only the proletariat, after having seized new members among the sympathizing the state power and having transformed workers. Every honest worker who has it into an instrument of struggle against given practical indications of his friend- all-the forms of oppression and exploitship for our cause should be invited to ation, in the interior of the country as join the organization. The accession of well as beyond its frontiers, gains therethe Communist party principle, it would fifty new members by the first of the with the possibility of assuring a conyear will provide us with the necessary tinuous character to the revolution, in sistent line and work out a uniform pol- forces for an expanded program of ac- other words, of leading it to the conicy for the conduct of the struggle. But, tivity. The gratifying results of the re- struction of a complete socialist society. proceeding from that, we have already cruiting campaign in New York point the A necessary condition for this is to carry had a fruitful experience in the enroll way and give the hope for success on out consistently a policy which prepares the proletariat in good time for the conquest of power. Now, Lominadze has made of the possibility of a permanent development of the revolution (on the condition that the broadest policy be correct) a scholastic formula guarantrade unions. On top of this you at revolutionary situation "for many years". tack the League for not applying the pol The permanent character of the revolu- act to attempt to consider the Canton icy of the united front. This does not tion thus becomes a law placing itself insurrection as a putsch. It was a heroic give the impression of being serious. If above history, independent of the policy rear-guard (?) battle of the Chinese the solidarity of ideas with the Left Op- of the leadership and of the material proletariat, fought in the course of the position really means anything to you, development of revolutionary events. As period which has just passed in the you must build a bridge back to the always in such cases, Lominadze and Chinese revolution; in spite of the agrarian revolution". The Com- and to conquer power. We have here a League in common. This by no means company resolved to announce their metaphysical formula relative to the per- this uprising will remain the standard manent character only after the political of the new Soviet phase of the revoluleadership of Stalin, Bucharin, Tchen tion." Du-Siu* and Tang Ping Shan had thoroughly sabotaged the revolutionary sit-

More active workers have joined The any further doubts, deduces from this but of the overthrow of the government formula conditions favorable to the in- of the Kuo Min Tang.

> tral Committee of the Chinese Communist Party to recognize a directly revolutionary situation exists today (November 1927) throughout China."

The Objective Conditions on the Eve

of the Insurrection The Canton insurrection was deduced from a similar evaluation of the situation with a perfect inevitability. Had a revolutionary situation really existed, the mere fact of the defeat of Canton would only have been a special episode, and in any case, would not have transformed the uprising of this city into an adventure. Even in face of unfavorable conditions for the insurrection at Canton itself or its environs, the leadership had as its duty to all that was necessary to realize the revolt most rapidly in order thus to disperse and weaken the forces of the enemy and to facilitate the triumph of the uprising in the other parts of the

However, not after "many years" but after a few months, it had to be acknowledged that the political situation veloping in an atmosphere of revolutionary decline, the workers were separating themselves from the revolution, the centrifugal tendencies were gaining in strength. This is in no way contradicory to the existence of peasant movements in various provinces. That is how

it always is. Let the Chinese Communists ask themselves now: Would they have dared to decide upon fixing the Canton insurrection for December had they understood that for the given period the fundamental forces of the revolution were exhausted and that the great decline had Canton insurrection of 1927 with that all this. commenced? It is clear that if they had of Moscow in 1905. During the whole the policy of the leadership in fixing and masses. The October 1905 strike was an when Zetkin declared that at that mo-

By Leon Trotsky

manent Revolution and the Cauton Insurrection", from the book on the Chi sky because of the general interest in days .- Ed.).

by "putschistic moods"? The Chinese ections of Stalin and Bucharin, judged the circumstances in which China found December 1905.

The Duplicity of the E. C. C. I.

as a result of the defeats suffered.

itself towards the second half of 1927,

In Moscow, they could prattle about the "directly revolutionary situation", fore the bourgeoisic, accustoming the accuse the Oppositionists of being liquidators, while providing for themselves beforehand against the future (especial- party capitulated before Chiang Kaily after Canton) by making reservations on the subject of "putschism",. But on weakening its own; it discredited the the theater of events, in China itself, banner of Marxism; it converted itself every honest revolutionary was duty into an auxiliary instrument of the bourbound to do everything he could in his geois leadership. The party extinguishcorner to hasten the uprising, since the Communist International had declared that the general situation was propitious for an insurrection on a national scale. It is in this question that the regime of duplicity divulges its deliberately the organization of Soviets so as not to lowing of but one conclusion, that is, criminal character.

At the same time the resolution the Congress says:

"The Congress deems it entirely inex-

Here confusion reaches its zenith. The heroism of the Cantonese proletariat is placed in evidence as a screen to-cover After having assured the continuity of up the faulty leadership not of Canton the revolution for many years, the (which the resolution casts off complete plenum of the Central Committee of the ly) but of Moscow, which only yester-Chinese Communist Party, freed from day spoke not of a "rear-guard battle"

Why is the appeal to insurrection de ". . . Not only is the strength of nounced as putschism after the experithe revolutionary movement of the toil ence of Canton? Because thanks to this need of a new lesson by example in quite clear without it. But are not these supplementary lessons for behind-handed people, given in life, too costly to the proletariat?

> Lominadze, one of the infant prodigies of revolutionary strategy, swore at the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that the Canton insurrection was necessary, the German Communists to turn their accomplishment of this task is one of right and salutary, precisely because it backs on the Thalmanns. In actuality, the conditions for the triumph of the inaugurated an era of the direct struggle of the workers and peasants for the insurrection is the question of the teach- the victory of the latter will restore the conquest of power. He met with agreement. At the Sixth Congress, Lominadze recognized that the insurrection of the German proletariat was at stake, and the poor peasants. did not inaugurate an era of triumph but concluded one of defeat. Nevertheless, just as before, the uprising is considered necessary, right and salutary. Its name has simply been changed: from a clash between the vanguard of the forces at hand, they made a "rear-guard battle". Everything else remains as in the past. The attempt to escape the criticism of the Opposition by hiding behind the heroism of the Cantonese workers has as much weight as, let us say for example, the attempt of General Rennenkampf to take shelter behind the heroism of the Russian soldiers whom he drowned by his strategy in the Masurian swamps. The proletarians of Canton are guilty, without having committed mistakes, simply of an excess of confidence in their leadership. Their leadership cline in the workers' movement, made a was guilty of having had a blind confidence in the leadership of the Communist International which combined political blindness with the spirit of adventurism.

The False Comparison Between Mescow, 1905 and Canton, 1927

It is radically false to compare the

The following is a charter, "The Per-, the subject, and particularly because December marks the anniversary of the Canton Insurrection. This material has never before appeared in the English lannese Revolution to be issued in the near guage. Further information on the comfuture by the Pioneer Publishers. We prehensive book on the Chinese Revolureprint this chapter now by L. D. Trot- tion will be forthcoming in the next few

carrying out this revolt, is that it did immense victory, having a world his not understand the meaning and the con- torical importance. The Russian prolesequences of the defeats of Shanghai tariat had its own party, which was not and Hupeh. There can be no other in subordinated to any bourgeois or petty terpretation of it. But the lack of un- bourgeois discipline. The self-esteem, to Mark than the author of it. In capi- derstanding can all the less excuse the the intransigeance, the spirit of offensive leadership of the Communist Internation of the party, rose from stage to stage, tional, since the Opposition had warned The Russian proletariat had created Sovcountry, and more particularly now, in in good time against the new situation jets in dozens of cities, not on the eve the imperialist epoch, tends to transform and the new dangers. It found itself of the revolt but during the process of accused for this by idiots and calumn- a strike struggle of the masses. Through ceded the Canton insurrection? The iators of having the spirit of liquidators. these Soviets, the party established con- leadership was duty bound to explain to The resolution of the Sixth Congress tact with vast masses; it registered the revolutionary workers that as a confirms the fact that an inadequate re- their revolutionary spirit; it mobilized consequence of defeats, due to an erronesistance to "putschistic moods" produced them. The czarist government, seeing ous policy, the relationship of forces the fruitless uprisings of Hunan, of that each day brought a change in the had veered entirely in favor of the bour-Hupeh, etc. What is to be understood relationship of forces favorable to the geoisic. The great masses of workers revolution, passed over to the counter- who had fought tremendous battles, distionary leadership from being able to field of battle. It is absurd to believe that the situation in China was directly gain the time needed for continuing to that one can march towards a peasant revolutionary and that the partial revolts mobilize its forces. Under these condi- insurrection when the proletarian masseral insurrection. In this way, the to test by deeds the state of mind of avoiding a general battle, which obviouslaunching of these surprise attacks re- the last decisive factor: the army. This ly does not hold out any hope. If in sulted from an erroneous estimation of was the meaning of the insurrection of spite of such a work of clarification and

> In China, the events developed in a directly opposite way. The Stalinist policy of the Chinese Communist Party consisted of a series of capitulations beworkers to support patiently the yoke of the Kuo Min Tang. In March 1926, the Shek; it consolidated his position while ed the agrarian movement and the workers' strikes by putting into practise the directions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International on the bloc of the four classes. It renounced crushing of Shanghai, the party, in concoup d'Etat,

No. all this does not resemble the in surrection of December 1905 at all.

An Inopportune Insurrection

If an opportunist calls the events of the Communist International. a principle basis. One begins as a pro- class. If he stays actively within the but it is precisely only now that it is uprising was confirmed. The leader- Canton an adventure it is because it was The Canton insurrection showed at paganda group and develops in the dir- ranks of those building up The Militant beginning to manifest itself in a new ship of the Communist International had an insurrection. If a Bolshevik employs the same time that at the decisive mothe same designation for these facts, it ment, the proletariat was unable to find order to discover what already appeared is because it was an inopportune insur- even in the petty bourgeois capital of rection. It is not for nothing that a Sun Yat Senism a single political ally German proverb says that when two having a distinct form, not even among men say the same thing it does not mean the debris of the Kuo Min Tang, of the the same thing. The officials a la Thal- Left or the ultra-Left. This means that mann can continue, on the subject of the the vital task of establishing the alliance Chinese revolt, to recount to the German between the workers and the poor pea-Communists the "apostacy" of the Op- sants in China devolves exclusively and position. We will know how to teach directly upon the Communist party. The the question of evaluating the Canton coming third Chinese revolution. And ings drawn from the Third Congress, in power to the vanguard of the proletariat, other words, of a lesson where the life supported by the union of the workers

In March 1921, the Communist Party of Germany sought to engage in an insurrection by basing itself upon an active minority of the proletariat in the of the Canton insurrection are those face of the passive spirit of the majority, which was tired, distrustful, exings of this uprising in order to conceal pectative, as a result of all the preceding the crimes of the leadership. The lesdefeats. Those who directed this attempt at this time also sought to take shelter behind the heroism of which the workers gave proof in the March battles. | China is capable of carrying out the However, the Third Congress did not uprising and of capturing power. The congratulate them for this attempt when it condemned the spirit of adventurism of the leadership. What was our judgment in those days of the March events? "Their essence," we wrote, "is summed up in the fact that the young Communist party, alarmed by a manifest dedesperate attempt to profit by the inter- the poor peasants behind it. vention of one of the most active detachments of the proletariat in order to 'electrify' the working class and, if possible, to bring matters to a decisive battle." (L. Trotsky, Five Years of the Communist International, page 333.) Thalmann has not understood a thing of

From July 1923 on, we demanded, to understood in good time this radical of 1905, the Russian proletariat rose the great astonishment of Klara Zetkin, break in the situation, they would in no from one plane to the other, wresting Varski and other old, very venerable ledged the incorrectness of his position, se have put on the order of the day concessions from the enemy, sowing dis- but incorrigible social democrats, that and accepted the viewpoint of the Left the appeal for the armed oprising in integration in its ranks, concentrating the date of the insurrection in Germany Opposition. His statement Canton. The only way of explaining around its vanguard ever greater popular be fixed. Then, at the beginning of 1924, printed in the Militant-Ed.

ment she envisaged the eventuality of an uprising with much "more optimism" than during the preceding year, we could only shrug our shoulders.

"An elementary truth of Marxism says that the tactics of the socialist proletariat cannot be the same in face of a revolutionary situation as when this situation does not exist." (Lenin, Works, Vol. XV, page 499.)

Today, everybody acknowledges this A B C verbally, but how far they still are from applying it in reality!

The Tasks of the Leadership

It is not a question of knowing what the Communists must do when the masses are rebelling of their own accord. That is a special question. When the masses arise, the Communists must be with them, organizing and instructing them. But the question is posed differently: What did the leadership do and what should it have done during the weeks and months that immediately preeducation, contrary to it, the masses of Canton had rebelled (which is very unlikely) the Communists would have had to put themselves at their head. But it is just the reverse that happened. The uprising had been commanded in advance, deliberately and with premeditation, based upon a false appreciation of the whole atmosphere. One of the detachments of the proletariat was drawn into a struggle which obviously held out no hope, and made easier for the enemy the annihilation of the vanguard of the working class. Not to say this openly, is to deceive the Chinese workers and to prepare new defeats. The Sixth Congress

did not say it. Does all this signify that the Canton insurrection was only an adventure, aldisturb the situation at the rear of the that the leadership was entirely incom-Chinese generals. It thus delivered to petent? No, that is not the sense of our Chiang Kai-Shek the workers of Shang- criticism. The Canton insurrection showhai, bound hand and foot. After the ed that even after enormous defeats, with the manifest decline of the revformity with the directions of the Ex- olution, even in non-industrialized Canecutive Committee of the Communist ton, with its petty bourgeois traditions International, placed all its hopes in the of Sun Yat Senism, the proletariat was Left Kuo Min Tang, the socalled "center able to rise in revolt, to fight valiantly and the peasants' uprisings. They thus the proletariat in its own right, how prepared a new and still crueller de great is the political role which it can vastation of the revolutionary masses, eventually play, even if the working class After all this, an instruction entirely is relatively weak in numbers, in a hispenetrated with the spirit of adventur- torically backward country, where the ism, was issued, ordering an immediate majority of the population is composed orientation towards the insurrection. It of peasants and scattered petty bouris from this that was first born the ad- goois. This fact, once more after 1905 venture of Ho Lun and Yeh-Tin, and and 1917, completely demolishes the the even more painful one of the Canton philistines a la Kuusinen, Martinov and consorts, who teach us that one cannot dream of speaking of the dictatorship of the proletariat in "agrarian" China. Yet the Martinovs and the Kuusinens are at 'the present time the daily inspirers of

Rebuild the Chinese Communist Party

If "apostacy" must be spoken of, the traitors to the heroes and the victims who seek to rid themselves of the teachson to draw is the following:

(1) The Canton insurrection showed that only the proletarian vanguard in revolt showed, after the experience of collaboration between the Communist party and the Kuo Min Tang, the complete lack of vitality and the reactionary character of the slogan of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, opposed to the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletarian drawing

(2) The Canton insurrection, conceived and executed contrary to the course of development of the revolution, accelerates and deepens the decline of the latter, facilitating the annihilation of the proletarian forces by the bourgeois counter-revolution. This stamps the inter-revolutionary period with a painful,

* Tchen Du-Siu since then has acknow-