

# The Spanish Opposition Conference

MADRID, SPAIN.—

A new stage in the life of the Spanish Communist Left Opposition (which has since adopted the name Spanish Communist Left) has begun with the Third National Conference. The decisions adopted envisage the going over of the organization from the stage of organic formation and propaganda, which obtained up to the date of the Conference, to a position of activity and direct intervention in the social and political struggles of the Spanish proletariat. For this purpose it was necessary to establish an organ of struggle in the form of *El Soviet* which has reappeared with redoubled combativity.

The intervention of the Communist Left Opposition in the workers' struggles of course drew in its wake, as was to be expected, an accentuation of the governmental reprisals against our best militants. The reprisals were not late in coming and have showed that the bourgeoisie has a clear idea as to what our organization is and represents and as to how dangerous the working class can become under the leadership of the authentic Bolsheviks.

**The Police and the Conference**

The conference in itself had the great pleasure of mobilizing the police of the republic against itself. It was only natural that although our organization did not participate very actively and persistently as an organization in the various political movements (although its militants have always been in the front ranks of the revolutionary struggle) our Conference very seriously disturbed the police of the republic. They were afraid, no doubt that there would be a representative of Trotsky and they mobilized the whole guard to snoop him out and to arrest him. Fortunately, our comrades delegates from the International Secretariat are not Stalinists to preoccupy themselves more with the uproar that their arrests may produce than with the execution of the mission that the organization had entrusted to them. Our comrades came to our National Conference as representatives of the French Opposition and the International Secretariat and were interested in fulfilling their duties. And they accomplished their task, notwithstanding the strict vigilance of the Direction General de Seguridad (police). They participated in the sessions of the Conference whenever they considered it necessary. The vigilance of the police was a clear indication of the beginning of a chapter of reprisals against us. The police held watch, trying to find out the attitude of our organization. Up till a short time ago, we had in Spain a small nucleus of comrades who defended the ideas of Bolshevism with great vigor, criticizing the mistakes of the party, a matter which was of little consequence to the police. But since then we have started to transform ourselves into a serious force—and the Conference was proof of that. We have begun to take on the character of a formidable organization, we have laid the basis of the organization, which con-

stituted at the time of the Conference, about 1,000 militants, prepared and disciplined in the struggle. Our conference decided to mobilize this force, to set it in motion.

**Governmental Reprisals**

The present governmental reprisals do not, therefore, take us by surprise. On the contrary, it was to be expected and it is logical that this should happen. The Stalinist bureaucrats can now, if they wish, bandy about accusations and calumnies of "counter-revolutionary Trotskyism". Neither the working class, nor the members of the party will believe them. The Communist Left Opposition is in the vanguard of the revolution, it functions as such and suffers the heaviest blows of the repression. Arrests follow one after the other. Our comrades pass incessantly through the mill of prisons and police stations in Spain. Our press is continually being censored and suppressed by the police. The case of our weekly *El Soviet* is symptomatic of this fact.

After the Conference, we succeeded in publishing four issues of our weekly and all four issues were censored and suppressed by the police. Thanks to the ability of our comrades and their preparation for illegal work, we have been able to save part of the copies, but we can see their determined intention in all this to destroy our organization by every possible means. Since our economic resources are very limited (something that the Spanish police is well aware of) they are trying to crush us with this method and adding to this the imprisonment of the responsible comrades of our organizations. The police knows very well what is going on. It is not for nothing that a Spanish policeman has recently written a book about Communism in Spain, a book that is recommended for all the Spanish police to read, to guide them in carrying out their functions, in which it says literally that the most capable and most dangerous militants (keep in mind what the word "dangerous" means for the police) belong to the Communist Left Opposition of Spain.

**El Soviet** is suppressed, arrests are made for merely selling it in the streets. Our comrades of Seville almost live in the fortress of Puerto de Santa Maria, to which they were sent only for selling our weekly. It is a case without precedent in Spain. Not even during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera were prisoners transferred from prison to fortress, without a trial and without any justification by the police for the arrests. More than 60 comrades of our organization have gone through the jails of the republic since our National Conference alone, some of them had the "good fortune" to be arrested twice or three times.

**The Opposition's Growth**

But our organization has been inured to hardships in the fight. It grows and develops in quality as well as in quantity. It is a hard test and purifies our ranks of accidental and cowardly elements, but brings to our side other elements, more combative, real fighters who formerly were somewhat misled by the calumnies of the Stalinist bureaucracy and had believed that we were really counter-revolutionists and insignificant. But in this respect, the congress of the official Communist party, held shortly before our National Conference could not be excelled by any better advertisement for us. Without "counter-revolutionary Trotskyism" the congress of the Stalinized Spanish party would not have had anything to discuss, or nothing was discussed there except calumnies against us. The honest Communist militants who did not know anything about "Trotskyism" who had heard only some fantastic and slanderous remarks about the "Trotskyists" began to think more seriously about us. Since then, they have been able to see in practise what we are

and how we work. They have understood us and have come to us. Elements who had attacked the Communist Left Opposition at the party congress without knowing what it stood for, now come to us. Police repression grows parallel with the adherence of new elements to our banner. And so, the reprisals, instead of destroying our organization, fortify it organically. There are examples to prove this. In Estremadura, at the time of the Conference, we had about a hundred comrades. Now we have more than three hundred. In Salamanca we had about fifty. Now we have more than a hundred in several groups. The same thing holds true for Galicia and other places.

Our organization has learned to stand the test, because it is composed of real Bolsheviks, many of them old militants, tested in the active struggle. Our organization now is a genuine Communist party, destined to play a highly impor-

## Spanish Opposition Youth Makes Appeal

The National Youth Committee has considered the letter of our Spanish youth comrades and decided to appeal for funds to aid them in the publication of the contemplated magazine, *Joven Espartaco*. We pledge ourselves to raise twenty-five dollars for the drive and are therefore appealing to our comrades and sympathizers to aid the Spanish comrades in their valiant efforts to establish a Left Communist youth paper in Spain. Now is the time to display a bit of real internationalism. Make your donations as soon as possible. Every little bit will help. Send all contributions to:

Albert Glotzer, Secretary,  
The National Youth Committee,  
84 East 10th Street,  
New York, N. Y.

To the National Youth Committee,  
Communist League of America (O.):  
Dear Comrades:

We have started to organize the youth sections of the Left Opposition. At the present time we have numerous groups in Madrid, Barcelona, Cadiz, Sevilla, Salónica, Astillero, Sama de Lango, Lugo, Gijón, Oviedo, Magullá (Bodajoz) etc. In the organ of the Left Opposition starting with the next issue, we will begin to publish our page, *The Young Soviet*. But the big progress achieved in the organization of youth sections of the Left Opposition obliges us to break with the small and narrow frame of a monthly page and to widen our sphere of activities with the publication of a 16-page magazine. The publication of the magazine which will be a monthly, will permit us to come in more close contact with the working youth in general and the young communists in particular. But this imposes big economic sacrifices upon us. The situation of the young workers, due to the deep crisis that Spain is going through, is desperate. For the publication of our magazine we need 300 pesetas. We are counting upon your help and for this we are sending a subscription list. In assuring the first issue, for which we need to collect 300 pesetas, the magazine will be able to live on its own account and its publication for the future will also be assured.

We await material that you will send for publication in the magazine which will be called *Joven Espartaco* (Young Spartacus), not only informative articles about the life of the working youth in America and of the young communists, but also articles of collaboration. We will do likewise; for which purpose the National Committee of the youth delegated comrade Eugenio F. Granell. We await also the names of three or four comrades to be included in our list of collaborators.

tant role in the Spanish labor movement. While the other working class organizations are becoming demoralized and begin to disintegrate, while the depression in the labor movement is becoming accentuated and the C. N. T. is going through a sharp crisis and the Communist party witnesses defections from its ranks in great numbers—our organization continues to grow and to increase its activities. But we also are going through a crisis, an economic crisis which obstructs our action. The great majority of our comrades are unemployed. Our groups, in increasing their local membership, also increase their local needs, and therefore their support of the Executive Committee from the economic point of view, is more feeble than before.

The Spanish Communist Left has before it a great revolutionary future of which it must not fail to take advantage. But it also has enormous responsibilities, a perspective of titanic struggle with all its consequences. As the proletarian vanguard, it will know how to fulfill its duty.

—HENRI LACROIX.

# With the Food Workers

In a recent issue of *The Militant* we pointed out that the maneuver of the Trade Union Unity Council to take the co-op camps out of the hands of the union was a scheme to force a wage cut. Events have fully confirmed our forecast.

About two months ago a proposal was made to the leading food workers fraction of the Communist party by the T. U. C. that the work at the Co-op camps this year would be on a voluntary basis. The leading fraction, however, emphatically rejected the proposal and appointed a committee to interview Browder, the secretary of the party and explain to him the disastrous consequences that would result to the Food Workers Industrial Union from the decision.

**A Bureaucratic Reply**

Bureaucrat Browder replied to the committee's arguments with an attack on the food workers. He charged the union with ruining the camps by insisting on a union wage scale; that the food workers were as bad as the printers who were sucking the life-blood out of the Daily Worker. Browder was merely repeating the arguments of the camp managers who for years have agitated for the open shop, while the managers were drawing over \$50 a week in salaries along with board and room for their families.

After the tussle with Browder, the Central Committee of the party handed down another decree to the union in the form of a wage cut. And what a slash!

Chiefs and cooks whose wages were from \$50 to \$75 a week were reduced to \$12 a week and unskilled help from \$22 to \$10.

**The Party Workers Hit Back**

The general fraction unanimously rejected this decision and elected another committee to take up the question with the Central Committee. The fraction condemned Browder's attitude, pointing out that he and the Central Committee were subordinating the interests of the union and the industrial line of the Party to the making of profits.

Joseph Zack, Lenin School graduate, who is in charge of the Co-op activities of the T. U. C., was not present at the general fraction meeting, due, it is believed, to an unpleasant experience he had some time ago with the Co-op employes in the Bronx when he locked out the union workers because of their refusal to accept a wage cut. Zack made a "united front from above" with the managers and was bitterly denounced by the workers. So he assigned Sam Weissman, former secretary of the Food Workers Union to the task of braving the wrath of the general fraction meeting of the food workers. Weissman was unable to control the members so the meeting was adjourned until the following evening when the committee was scheduled to report on how it fared with the Central Committee.

The committee reported that the Central Committee refused to grant an interview, so they decided to call on Israel Amter, New York district organizer. Amter greeted the committee with threats of reprisal for daring to disagree with the decree handed down to them from the C. E. C. He also expressed his indignation over their impudence in criticizing Browder, evidently acting on the theory that whatever quarrels bureaucrats may have with one another they must present a united front against the worker-Communists.

Pointing an index finger at the camp, Amter told the committee to scream, "If you don't like the decision," he roared, "get out. There is the door."

When the committee made its report, the members of the General Fraction were vigorous in protesting against the bureaucrats treatment accorded them by the party functionaries and renewed their criticisms of Browder. Then George Siskind appeared on the scene as the party representative and took the members for a trimming. He denounced them as enemies of the party and trotted out the well-known formula that sooner or later they would find themselves in the camp of the enemy.

**The Managers Sit Pretty**

Here we might as well insert the fact that while the C. E. C. was engaged in the "revolutionary" task of reducing the wages of the Co-op employes to the starvation point, there were two managers in Camp Nitgedaiget alone drawing forty dollars a week each with room and board for their families thrown in, while the number of guests in the camp did not total more than twenty-five, it being early in the season.

On June 25, a special membership meeting of the cafeteria department of the Food Workers Union was called to vote on the wage cut decision. The party fraction was mobilized and forced under threats of discipline to put over a decision that is a disgrace to the Communist movement and a heavy blow at the task of organizing the workers into industrial unions under the leadership of the party. As pointed out in a previous article in *The Militant* this decision and others of the same kidney strengthens the anarchist and syndicalist elements who hold that the Communists are not interested in organizing unions to help the workers better their living conditions but use them as milch cows for the party. Fourteen Party members voted against the wage cut in defiance of the bureaucracy and a considerable number abstained from voting. Now for an interesting postscript to this wage cutting decision. After the wage cut went through, the C. E. C. notified the union that its members would be employed at the camps for one week only, that is the week of July 4, at \$18 a week. After which date bungalows would be rented to the guests and they could prepare their own meals.

This sounds fishy to the members of the union. They wonder if this is a subtle maneuver to get rid of the union and return the camps to the open shop conditions that existed prior to the organization of the industrial union. We urge the comrades to insist on maintaining union conditions in the camps whether they remain in the hands of the party or are turned over to private enterprise.

The whole time of the union leadership and a good part of the party's time is occupied with the co-operatives despite the optimistic statement made by John Steuben at the close of 1931 when he told the delegates to the convention that the union had made such an advance that it was now necessary for the convention to devote only a small part of its time to a discussion of the union problems in the co-operative institutions of the party.

The serious situation that exists in the Food Workers Union demands the attention of all militants. The policy of organizing workers into unions so that they may be exploited to maintain their bureaucracy, must be thrown in the garbage can.

—FOODWORKER.

Young Spartacus, official organ of the young comrades of the Communist League of America (Opposition) is out and ready for distribution. All those interested in the paper should communicate with the YOUNG SPARTACUS, 84 East 10th St., New York, N. Y.

# A Letter from China

I write you this letter in the hope that it will be published in the *Militant*. It will at least show the general movement of the Chinese Opposition during this year.

At the outset, there were three factions. Of course, each of them bore the banner of comrade Trotsky. They were "The Proletarian", "The October", and "Our World". But after receiving the proposals of comrade Trotsky, all these were at once united together to form a strong organization.

Unfortunately, the terror was immediately launched against our united organization. At first, we lost our central propaganda bureau, organizer, and nearly all the members of the Central Committee to the White terrorism of the Kuo Min Tang, the ruling class of China. The second time, one of our district secretaries and several worker-comrades were imprisoned. The last time, the Hong-Kong organ of the Opposition was smashed by British imperialism and the Canton government.

But we are still at work. The fiercer the White Terror, the wider our ranks extend. In Peking, Tientsin, Wuhan, Canton and Shanghai, we have a considerable number of comrades at work. Shanghai is our center and everything is proceeding more rapidly.

Comrade C. is our central secretary and he is working for the movement energetically, enjoying the trust of all our comrades.

However, there have recently developed two views on the political situation in China since the Kuo Min Tang, ruling China, settled the Shanghai war. Our Central Committee contends that the Chinese revolutionary movement is bound to grow at an uninterrupted pace day after day, and at the same time warns us not to neglect the influence of the Red Army. But the others oppose this view. They declare that the Chinese ruling class will not suffer bankruptcy so soon. The economic crisis of the Chinese nationalist bourgeoisie, arising out of the Manchurian and the Shanghai wars, will be gradually overcome. The Chinese revolutionary move-

ment will be able to grow after a restoration of the economics of the country. I incline to oppose the latter view.

Furthermore, we can consider the Chinese Stalinists are always glad to engage in their work of division. Two years ago, they strove to crush Tsu-bekism; one year ago, they worked to smash the leadership of Li Li San. Regardless of anything else, Tsu-bekism and the leadership of Li Li San are what Stalinism was originally. Stalinism is incapable of advancing the general principles of the movement beforehand; it is always engaged in "correcting" the errors after the fact. In a word, Stalinism is good for hunting down historical shadows and for burying the Chinese revolution.

The Shanghai Stalinists have not much work to do. If what I learn is right, then they are just loafing in wait for the Red Army. But curiously enough, in the places where we have comrades working, they have some, and where we haven't any, they have none. They always put the names of our comrades in their papers, sometimes unconsciously, but often deliberately, enable the police of the ruling class to jail them.

These are certainly hard times. But dear comrades, I ask you not to worry. The Chinese revolutionary movement will gain its triumph in any case. The guidance of comrade Trotsky will carry our banner to its final victory.

Most of the revolutionary Chinese intellectuals agree with us. They continue to discuss our theses, although the ruling class oppresses them cruelly. We have organized a literary society to help guide them, and comrade D.-W. and I bear the responsibility for it. I shall not write more about it here because it is too long to write about.

My letter must stop now. But I hope you will regularly send me the *Militant* and other literary and social magazines. I should also be happy to receive some of comrade Trotsky's works, like "Literature and Revolution". "The Permanent Revolution", etc.

Shanghai, June 7, 1932. —Y. M. T.

**PICNIC**

to be held at  
TIBBETS BROOK PARK  
NEW YORK — PLOT 2  
JULY 10th, 1932 from 10:00 A.M.  
till dusk

for the benefit of  
Spanish Left Communist Youth

Auspices: Spartacus Youth Club  
of New York

Directions: Take Lexington Avenue  
I. R. T. Subway Woodlawn-Jerome  
to last stop, Woodlawn. Take  
trolley, bus or walk to park,  
Plot 2.

## Nine Years of the Struggle of the Left Opposition

# The Break in the Right-Center Bloc and the Left Zig-zag of Stalinism

(Continued from last issue)

With that Marxian penetration and foresight that marks out the whole course of the Left Opposition, it had forecast this very struggle long before it broke out. A good three years before, in September 1926, Trotsky had written with prophetic exactitude in the Opposition document "On the Unity of the Party":

"The aim of all these discussions and conclusions leading to displacements in the organization, is the annihilation of the nucleus which, up to very recently, was called the old Leninist guard, and the substitution for it of the personal leadership of Stalin, leaning on a group of comrades who always agree with him. Only a blockhead or a hopelessly hardened bureaucrat can believe that the Stalinist struggle for the unity of the party can guarantee this unity, even if it were only at the price of the annihilation of the former leading group and, in general, of the whole present Opposition. The closer Stalin appears to be to this aim the farther away, in reality, he will be from it. A party leadership reduced to a single individual, which is what Stalin and his group of intimates call 'the unity of the party', requires for its establishment not only the destruction, the elimination and the decapitation of the present united Opposition, but also the gradual removal from the leadership of the most authoritative and influential representatives of the faction now in power. It is quite clear that neither Tomsky, Bucharin nor Rykov, by

reason of their past, their moral authority, etc., are capable of playing the role under Stalin's rule which devolves upon Uglanov, Kaganovitch, Petrovsky and consorts. To cut off the present Opposition would mean, in fact the inevitable transformation into an opposition of the remnants of the old group in the Central Committee. A new discussion would rise upon the agenda, during which Kaganovitch would expose Rykov, Uglanov would do as much with Tomsky, while the Slepikova, Stalin and Co. would lash out at Bucharin. Only a blockhead can fail to see how inevitable this forecast is. In the meantime, the more openly opportunist elements in the party would begin to fight Stalin as too contaminated by the 'Leftist' prejudices and for preventing too rapid and public a downfall."

With the transposition of one or two names, this "Trotskyist calumny" was borne out some three years later with almost mathematical precision. The three leaders of the Right wing were presented by Stalin to the Russian party and the whole world as the banner-bearers of the capitalist restoration. The president of the Communist International, the head of the Soviet government, and the leader of the Soviet trade unions, were depicted by Stalin as the agents of the Thermidorian counter-revolution! But it is precisely this "trio" with whom Stalin had for five-six years been in the most intimate "indissoluble" alliance against the Left wing of the party. If Stalin's indictment of the Right wing had

any meaning at all—and it did—it was at the same time a murderous arraignment of the Centrist faction itself. For what pretense could it make to Bolshevism when it had admittedly been in distinguishable solidarity for half a decade with restorationists? Where in all history could an instance be found of the genuine revolutionary tendency having been in an inseparable bloc with another tendency which, within virtually twenty-four hours, proved to be the champion of black reaction?

Given the fact that both sections of the leadership had a common principle basis, given the fact that to cut off the Right wing Stalin had to borrow openly from the ideological arsenal of the Left Opposition (the Right wing did not hesitate to accuse him of "Trotskyism" just as Trotsky foretold in 1926!) Stalin's campaign against the Right wing served at the same time as a deadly self-revelation of Centristism, and an involuntary tribute to the justice of the whole Opposition struggle.

**The Kulak Uprising**

Let us return to the Fifteenth Congress. All its proceedings were conducted under the flag of denouncing the Opposition as panic-mongers for warning against the growing Kulak danger. Just as Rykov before him had taunted the Opposition with the question: If the Kulak is so dangerous why hasn't he played some bad tricks?—So Molotov cried impatiently in December 1927 that the Kulak was nothing new, that there was no need of alarm or of special measures beyond those already in force. Everybody "agrees" argued Molotov, who, together with the other Stalinists, insistently minimized the magnitude of the exploiting farmers, "it exists, and there is no need to speak about it."

This bureaucratic self-contentment, turned to fury when the Opposition which did find a "need to speak about

it", had to be expelled, waited only a few brief weeks before the whole Soviet Union was shaken to its base by a demonstration of the tremendous power which the Kulak had amassed all the while that Bucharin-Stalin-Molotov-Rykov had been covering him up from Trotsky's criticisms. In January 1928, right after the congress and emboldened, as we have said, by their success in having the Left wing cut off from the party, the Kulaks rose in what came to be known as their "bloodless uprising". Powerful and confident, they refused to turn over their hoarded stocks of grain and, in effect, declared: Unless the Soviet power yields to our demands for prices above those fixed by the proletarian state we shall keep our stores and starve the cities the working class centers, into submission!

So effective and alarming was their resistance that for the first time in many long years, the Soviets were compelled to requisition the villagers's grain by armed force. All the official philosophy of "Enrich yourselves!", the vicious self-consolation about the insignificance of the Kulak, the rabid howling of the Opposition for its timely warnings, were now whipped to tatters by the sharpness of the visible realities.

On February 15, 1928, the leading editorial of *Pravda* was compelled to hang its head and acknowledge: "The village proved to be perverted in a whole, has grown and become rich. The kulak, above all, has grown and become rich. . . . The line of our party in the villages of districts. . . . In our organizations, certain elements alien to the party have grown up in recent times, which see no classes in the village, which do not understand the foundations of our class policy, which strive to carry out the work in such a manner that nobody in the village is alienated, so that they live in peace with the Kulak, so that they

in general, popularity is preserved amongst 'all the strata'."

What *Pravda* was compelled to admit after having violently denied the truths contained therein when the Opposition advanced them, was only a mild expression for what the most advanced sections of the working class, despite having been lulled with Stalinist drugs for years, were now thinking. The revolutionary, class spirit which had by no means been entirely eliminated by the campaign against the Opposition, forced its way into the open in spite of the obstacles put in its path by the bureaucratic regime. It is this pressure from below which gave the real impulsion to the break-up of the hitherto solid Right-Center bloc. This still unclear revolt against the previous line of yielding to the capitalist elements inside and outside the country, jerked the helm out of the hands of the Right, forced a change in the course and marked the inauguration of the subsequent zig-zag to ultra-Leftism undertaken by Stalin.

At the same time it revealed the still unexhausted revolutionary forces in the party and the country as a whole, forces still at the disposal of the Marxian wing of the party in its fight for a radical reform of the party and its course. An unprecedented combination of factors, which made possible the organizational crushing of the Opposition, also prevented it from guiding these forces towards firm and stable ground. But on the basis of this Leftward current in the masses, the Stalinist faction opened up a new phase of its development, the "third period" of its blunders on a Soviet and an International scale, which only dragged the revolutionary movement from one rut into another. It is to this stage of the struggle that the next article will be devoted.

—SHACHTMAN.