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COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF AMERICA (OPPOSITION)

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Note: Internal Bulletin #7 was skipped through an error in numbering. Bulletin # 8 followed #7

GERMANY AND THE U. S. S. R.

(For the information of the sections of the International Left Opposition)

1) The complete absence of resistance on the part of the German workers has provoked certain troubles within our own ranks. We expected that the on-march of the Fascist danger would surmount not only the perfidious policy of the reformists but also the ultimatum sabotage of the Stalinists. Those hopes were not confirmed. Were our expectations false? This question we cannot put in such a formal manner. We were obliged to proceed from a course based upon resistance and to do all in our power for its realization. To acknowledge a priori the impossibility of resistance would have meant not to push the proletariat forward but to introduce a supplementary demoralizing element.

The events have brought their verification. The first lesson of this proof is drawn in Trotsky's article "The Tragedy of the German Proletariat". Now one can say almost with certainty that only a change of conjuncture would create an impulse toward a real mass struggle. In the meantime the task is mainly one of criticism and of preparation. The Fascist terror regime will be a serious test for our cadres as a whole and for each member in particular. It is precisely such a period which steels and educates the revolutionists. So long as the Fascists tolerate the existence of the trade unions it is necessary for the Left Oppositionists at all costs to penetrate them and take up definite conspirative work within them. The transition to illegality does not simply mean to go underground (establishment of an organ in a foreign country, smuggling and distribution, illegal nuclei within the country, etc.), but also ability to undertake the conspirative work within the mass organizations to the extent that these exist.

2) The question of the possible role of the Red Army is posed sharply for many comrades. It is evidently not a question of revision of our principled position. If the internal situation in the U. S. S. R. had permitted, the Soviet government, at the time of Hitler's first approach toward power, should have mobilized some army corps in White Russia and the Ukraine, naturally under the shield of the defense of the Soviet borders. Based upon the indisputable idea that the Red Army can only assist and not replace the revolution in another country some comrades incline to the conclusion that in the absence of open civil war in Germany it would be inadmissible to take recourse to a mobilization in the U. S. S. R. To put the question in such a manner is too abstract. Naturally the Red Army cannot replace the German workers in making the revolution, rather it can only assist the revolution of the German workers. But in the different stages this assistance can have different manifestations. For example, the Red Army can assist the German workers to commence the revolution.

What paralyzed the German proletariat was the feeling of disunity, isolation and despair. Merely the perspective of armed assistance from the outside would have exercised an enormously encouraging influence upon the vanguard. The first serious act of resistance against Hitler on the part of the German workers would have provoked a breach between Fascist Germany and the U.S.S.R. and could have led to a military solution. The Soviet government cannot have the slightest interest in acting the aggressor. It is not a question of principle but a question of the political expediency. To the peasant masses a war with the objective of assisting the German proletariat would have been little comprehensible. But it is possible to draw the peasants into the kind of war which commences as a defense of the Soviet territory against a menacing danger. (All that was said in the "History" by Trotsky on this

subject, the defense and the attack in regard to revolution, relates no less to the question of war.)

The form of the Red Army action in the German events naturally would have to be entirely in accordance with the development of these events and in accordance with the spirit of the German working masses. But just because the German workers felt themselves unable to break the chains of passivity, the initiative in the struggle, even in the preliminary form mentioned above, could have belonged to the Red Army. The obstacle to this initiative, however, is not the present situation in Germany, but the situation in the U. S. S. R. It appears that many foreign comrades give insufficient attention to this side of the question. It is more than a year ago that we spoke of the necessity of the intervention of the Red Army in case Fascism should arrive in power. In this we based ourselves upon the hope that not only in Germany but also in Russia the necessary political change would be produced which would improve the economic situation, and that thereby the Soviet power would have acquired the necessary freedom of movement. In reality, however, the internal developments have during the last year assumed an extremely unfavorable character. The economic situation as well as the spirit of the masses renders a war difficult to the highest degree. All information from the U. S. S. R. affirms that under the present conditions the slogan of military assistance to the German proletariat would appear even to the advanced Russian workers as unrealizable, unreal and fantastic.

We do not yield one iota of our principled position. But the position of active internationalism serves us today above all for the purpose of pursuing an unmerciful criticism of the Stalinist bureaucracy which in the decisive hour paralyzes the workers' state, yet we can in no case leave the objective situation out of consideration: The consequences of the mistakes have become transformed into objective factors. To demand the mobilization of the Red Army under the present conditions would be sheer adventurism. But so much more resolutely must we demand a change in the policy of the U. S. S. R. in the name of the consolidation of the Proletarian Dictatorship and the active role of the Red Army.

March 17, 1935.

G. G-off.

THE INTERNATIONAL PRE-CONFERENCE
of the
INTERNATIONAL LEFT OPPOSITION

The representatives of eleven European and American sections met at Paris from the 4-8 of February for the Pre-Conference of the International Left Opposition.

Although the purpose of the Pre-Conference was one of organization and was consequently limited by the resolutions adopted, by the discussions held, by the will to struggle for the triumph of our ideas and the spirit of comradeship which was displayed at this international meeting, the Pre-Conference was a significant stage in the life of the International Left Opposition.

* * *

At first only a faction in the Bolshevik Party, a number of groups scattered through the capitalist countries of Europe, then a truly international organization with ramifications in more than twenty-five countries of Europe, America, Asia and Africa--such has been the evolution of the International Left Opposition from its beginning up to the present time.

Its strength and political influence in the revolutionary movement far surpass its organizational crystallization.

Where does this diffusion and penetration of our ideas come from?

Why, despite every sort of obstacle, despite incredible persecutions and hardships, does the International Left Opposition give evidence of so much vitality and strength in the mapping out of its road and in its march-forward, all the while overcoming crises, purging its ranks and strengthening its organizations?

Precisely because of this it is the answer to an imperative need of the international revolutionary movement: the existence of revolutionary Marxism as a doctrine and in practice. This need is answered by the International Left Opposition which is simply the living incarnation and continuation of Leninism, the strategy and tactic of the proletarian revolution.

The International Left Opposition has already deeply buried its roots in the international Communist and working class movement. Now that the contrist current of the C. I. with its reactionary theory of Socialism in one country and its wretched policies in China, Germany and the entire world has reduced the C. I. to passivity and impotence, the vanguard of the Communists and the proletariat begin to see more and more in the International Left Opposition living revolutionary Marxism, the ideological continuator of the Communist International of the first four congresses.

The International Left Opposition already has its traditions: these are the resolutions activity and policy of the Communist International while Lenin was alive. These are its perspectives on the world movement and world revolution, which have been verified during the last ten years. And if its positions and its strategy and tactic had been applied by the C. I., we would today be reading a different chapter in history's books.

Our activity and our policy on the most important problems of the working class movement in the last period, the German revolution, suffices to indicate what is the position and the historic role of the International Left Opposition.

As the representative of revolutionary Marxism, it is within the ranks of the C. I., led today by the centrist faction, the sole guarantee for the real defense of the first workers' state, for the return of the C. I. to the policy and teachings of Lenin and Trotsky.

Let us have no illusions. Our task is historic but our road is not bordered with flowers. We are still at the beginning and we are passing through a stage of formation. Up to a certain extent the Pre-Conference indicates the progress achieved, the mistakes and crying needs existing, the measure necessary for the improvement and forward march of our international organization.

The carrying out of its resolutions by all sections, preparation for active participation in the international discussion which will precede the International Conference—these will be the decisive test of our decision to accomplish our task.

* * * *

One of the first tasks of the Pre-Conference was to improve the functioning of the Opposition's leadership, by the establishment of an organ composed of the five most important European sections. The very fact that in a resolution on the I. S. there is emphasized the need for closer relations between the I. S. and the sections and the necessity for the sections to furnish financial means for the regular functioning of the I. S.—this itself indicates that the sections realize the importance of the role which the I.S. must play.

One of the most important questions which was dealt with by the Pre-Conference was that of the organization of the International Conference. As can be seen by the resolution pertaining to it, it is to be held in July after a previous discussion in the sections on the theses which must be prepared by April 15th.

We call the attention of the sections to the document approved by the Pre-Conference containing the principles which can be considered the basis for the definition of the International Left Opposition. This document must be affectively and definitely formulated by the I.S. after being submitted to the sections which, within four weeks, should suggest corrections to be made upon it.

The resolution on the Bordiguists is merely a brief resume in the spirit of the decisions made by the sections upon several occasions. The decision concerning the Spanish question is divided into two parts: 1) On the internal struggle on which, due to the lack of documents, the Pre-Conference cannot declare itself for one tendency or the other. It insisted upon extensive documents to be furnished to the I.L.O. and broad discussion in the ranks of the Spanish Opposition with the participation of the national sections of the I.L.O. before the holding of the next conference. 2) As a reply to the position of the representative of the leadership toward inimical groups (Rosmer, etc.) as well as to the attitude shown during the entire discussion on the Spanish question, the Pre-Conference adopted a resolution wherein is pointed out the dangerous path along which the leadership of the Spanish section is straying and the danger of estrangement from the ranks of the I.L.O. in case it should persist on this path.

situation

As for the internal ~~situation~~ of the German Opposition, after a thorough-going discussion, a resolution was adopted which calls upon the sections to aid the German Opposition in the period it is now passing through.

All sections are called upon to give it financial aid. Moreover precautions and concrete proposals have been included in the resolutions for the better organization of the forces of the German Opposition, among other things the need for the convocation of the next National Conference.

In the resolution on Greece, the Pre-Conference wanted to throw into relief the extremely significant situation from the standpoint of revolutionary possibilities in Greece and the Balkans. It also wanted to emphasize the activity of the Greek section, which, in the face of this situation, is an example for the other sections to learn from.

The resolution on Czechoslovakia which, since the split, considers none of the existing groups as an official group of the I. L. O., was made absolutely necessary by the experience gained during the last period.

With justifiable interest the Pre-Conference heard the report of the representative of the North American section and of the I. S. on the situation and the differences within the leadership of the American section. Due to the lack of material at its disposal, the Pre-Conference decided to request more extensive documents prepared by the two tendencies, which will be published in the internal bulletin. The question will be brought before the Conference of the American section after a discussion on the national and international scale.

From all which has gone before, it is evident that positive work has been accomplished by the Pre-Conference. The conscious application of the resolutions adopted by the Pre-Conference will contribute effectively to the consolidation and crystallization of its forces as well as the increase of its membership and the formation of new cadres in our ranks.

EXTRACTS FROM THE THESES ON " THE INTERNATIONAL LEFT OPPOSITION; ITS TASKS AND METHODS" ADOPTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL PRE-CONFERENCE AT PARIS. (FOR INTERNAL BULLETIN ONLY. OTHER SECTIONS OF THESES PUBLISHED IN THE MILITANT)

I. To be inserted after section on "Left Opposition in Austria"

On the Spanish Section of the Left Opposition

(in "the Sp Revol" p191 and Doc. of FI, p32)

The Spanish Revolution had created exceptionally favorable objective conditions for a rapid development of Communism. But the lack of cadres who were in any way trained made it difficult for the Left Opposition as well as for the official Party to utilize the completely extraordinary historical situation. Although our Spanish section excels a number of other sections in the number of its members--which must be credited to the revolutionary flood tide--its ideological consolidation and the character of the leadership offer an utterly unsatisfactory picture.

In order to understand the reasons for this, we must determine the most important mistakes of the leading cadres of the Spanish Opposition:

In Catalonia, whose proletariat is a natural milieu for the rapid growth of the influence of the Bolshevik-Leninists, the leading comrades lost time in an inexcusable manner; instead of coming out under their own banner at least as a small nucleus, they played hide-and-seek with principles during the most critical months of the revolution, and hung on to the tail of the petty bourgeois nationalist and provincial phrase-maker, Maurin.

The case was not much better in the other parts of Spain, where the Left Opposition, while ignoring the official Party and substituting revolutionary sentimentalism for the Marxist education of cadres, for a long time failed to draw the necessary border line between itself and the Right groups.

No less harmful was the fact that the leading comrades submitted to the influence of the worst side of the Spanish revolutionary tradition, turned their backs on the international experience, and while declaring in words their solidarity with the Left Opposition, in actual fact, directly or indirectly, supported all the middle-heads and deserters (Lundau, Rosmer, Mill, etc.).

In the question of faction or independent Party the Spanish section at its last conference took a position which is ambiguous, to say the least, by declaring itself in favor of setting up its own list of candidates at parliamentary and other elections. This decision, which is contrary to the policy of the Left Opposition and was in no way prepared for in practice, remained a platonic but harmful demonstration.

On the road of alienation from the Bolshevik-Leninists the leaders of the Spanish Opposition went so far as to consider it possible to change the name of their organization. By assuming the name of "Left Communists"--an obviously false name in theory--the Spanish comrades put themselves in

contradiction to the International Left Opposition and at the same time approached the kind of name of the Leninbund, the Rosmer group, etc. No serious revolutionary will believe that such an important step was taken by accident, without a political reason. At the same time, no Marxist will approve a policy which does not openly declare its purposes, but takes refuge in diplomacy and compromise, in questions of principle.

By its demand that all groups which count themselves as adhering to the Left Opposition, those split off as well as those excluded, be drawn into the International Conference, the Spanish Opposition shows how far removed it has been and is from the real development of the International Left and how little of its internal logic it has appropriated.

While accusing the other sections of wrong organizational policies, without attempting to justify its accusations, the Spanish comrades have at the same time in fact proven the entire falsity of their own methods. The struggle of the two groups in the Central Committee which suddenly broke out has led the Spanish section to the verge of a split, while the organization was taken utterly by surprise since neither of the struggling groups has up to now been able to formulate the principle foundations of the bitter struggle.

On its present ideological foundation the Spanish section cannot develop any further. Taking clear account of the fact that the correction of the mistakes which have been made and the creation of an organization, permanent in principle and consolidated in a revolutionary manner, can only be the result of long and systematic work, the Pre-Conference proposes the following immediate measures:

a) All important international documents on the questions in dispute must be translated into Spanish and be brought to the knowledge of all the members. We must stop concealing facts. What is said here refers particularly to the Mill case, where the leaders of the Spanish section not only supported an obviously unprincipled person against the International Opposition, but even now in defense of the mistakes which they have made, permit themselves completely inappropriate insinuations directed against the International Opposition.

b) Both struggling groups within the C. C. must give up the idea of an unprincipled split and of organizational measures, and make the necessary provisions so that the discussion on the questions in dispute will run through the normal channels and be participated in by all members without exception.

c) The internal discussion must be carried on in an international bulletin whose editorial staff must guarantee the most complete impartiality toward each of the contending groups (joint editorial committee).

d) All the principle questions of the International Left must be placed on the order of the day and the substitution of sympathies, antipathies and insinuations for clear political position must not be allowed.

e) An all-sided discussion participated in by the entire membership and also by the International Left Opposition must prepare the new national conference.

The Pre-Conference charges the International Secretariat to follow the internal development of the Spanish section with especial attention, to help it carry out the measures stated above and other suitable measures, in full agreement with the tasks and the methods of the International Left.

P. S. The delegate of the leadership of the Spanish Opposition (Nin group) declares that he accepts in principle the fundamental general principles adopted by the Pre-Conference--with reservations as to those parts which deal with the application of these fundamental principles, with reservations as to the methods employed by the International Left Opposition, as to the attitude toward the groups of Rosmer, Troint, etc., with reservations as the change of name of his organization, as to the estimation of the policies and methods of the Spanish Left Opposition, and as to the organizational measures adopted by the Pre-Conference on the Spanish question.

This statement includes the essential differences between the leadership of the Spanish Opposition and the International Opposition. These differences have a real and far-reaching political-principle character, and their logical development can lead the comrades of the leadership to the road of a practical break with the International Left.

The Pre-Conference states that this method of accepting principles abstractly, with reservations as to their practical application, represents the most dangerous kind of diplomacy in serious political questions, a method whose continuation can lead to nothing else than the negation of the principles themselves.

The Pre-Conference warns the Spanish comrades of the genuine danger which the attitude of the present leadership represents, and expresses the hope that, through a discussion carried out in the spirit and practice of revolutionary internationalism, the principle and organizational bonds between the Spanish Opposition and the International Left Opposition will be strengthened and consolidated.

The Lacroix group has until very recently shared the full responsibility for the position of the Spanish leadership toward the International Opposition. Now the delegate of this tendency, who had been invited to participate in the Conference, in order to clarify the internal situation of the Spanish section, declares that this attitude was false to the core, and that his tendency places itself without reservation on the ground of all the positions expressed by the Pre-Conference in its theses and resolutions (including the Spanish resolution). The Pre-Conference takes note of this statement; but it is of the opinion that the true value of this statement can be checked up only by a far-reaching discussion and by real activity over a period of time.

The presence of the two Spanish comrades at the Pre-Conference has made it possible to obtain a preliminary clarification which suffices to make it clear that genuine political differences of opinion within the Spanish Opposition exist, but on the other hand does not suffice at the present moment to express a final opinion as to the content of these differences of opinion. This is additional confirmation of the necessity of carrying through without delay the practical measures in points a. to e.

I. The Pre-Conference declares that, in spite of exceptional favorable conditions and correct initial positions, the German section has been far from utilizing the possibilities which were open to it. The crisis connected with the Capitulation of Weill and Co. has proven that the cadres of the German Opposition need a serious re-education. While the overwhelming majority of the plain members of the organization, after the first serious information as to the crisis, immediately assumed the correct attitude toward Weill's clique, expressed in the word "Outside", the leadership and the editorial staff, on the other hand, showed impermissible vacillation and lost time, failing to inform either their own local organizations or the foreign sections in adequate manner. With such methods on the part of the leadership a revolutionary organization cannot win. The Bolshevik-Leninists are being bit early persecuted not only by all the forces of the old society, including the Social-Democracy, but also by the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Opposition can open a road to the masses only through the greatest energy, unreserved devotion to its ideas, and constant readiness to defend its banner to the end. To tolerate in the leadership those who are vacillating, passive, tired or candidates for capitulation, as an out and out crime. In the leadership there must be assured a predominance of revolutionary workers who are closely connected with the masses and are permeated through and through with the great mission which history has imposed on the Left Opposition. The forthcoming conference of the German Opposition must be carried through from this point of view.

II. The taking over of power by Hitler places the Left Opposition before a heavy responsibility. Even if Hitler has taken into his hands all the levers of political, military and police machinery, even if he is and every day rapidly consolidating his positions and breaking the power of resistance of the proletariat, it would still be politically false and criminal to believe that Fascism has already been erected in the present stage of development.

In order to achieve this, it must first destroy the proletarian organizations. The establishment of Fascism can be realized only on the day when it has smashed the proletariat, through a victorious civil war or through a general abandonment of the battle by the proletariat, betrayed by the Social-Democracy or given up by the growing opportunism of the present centrist leadership of the C. I. to Fascism in struggle. Such a betrayal of the interests of the proletariat by the leading fraction of the Comintern would be the result of the policy of "Socialism in one country", which has already gone through the stages of capitulation before the General Council and before the Kuomintang.

The establishment of Fascism would inevitably mean war against the Soviet Union, and the struggle against this danger must stand in the foreground of the entire activity of the Left Opposition, not only in Germany but also on the international scale. The paralysis of the proletariat in this critical period is to be traced above all to the abandonment of a real united front policy within the proletariat, and especially in the splitting policy of the Red Trade Union Organization.

This policy of the R. T. U. O. is all the more criminal since it prevents the workers from using the weapon of the strike, particularly of the general strike, and since the workers are less armed than in the historical years 1923, 1919, 1918. The latest experiences with proclamations of a general

strike have proven that it is the Social-Democracy which has the dominating influence over the workers who are still occupied in production, while the influence of the C. P. G. in general mainly rests on the masses of the unemployed. The Oppositionists, who join in the mistake of the R. T. U. O. policy, support, whether they want to or not, the handing-over of the masses to Hitler, and the execution of the betrayal of the Stalinist fraction.

The most recent case of capitulation, by Well and Co., has shown the weakness of the whole German Opposition and of its leadership, and is the result of an insufficiently sharp separation between the Left Opposition and the Stalinist fraction. In the present stage of development of the German Opposition, the Pre-Conference considers it necessary to organize a broader leadership, made up principally of worker elements--tested and clear-sighted Oppositionists--who are bound up with the factories and the trade union organizations.

To prevent the repetition of such a case as Well's capitulation, the German Opposition must unconditionally stop leaving the responsibility of the leadership to a few members. In collective, conscious work the possibility must be found of overcoming every sign of weakness, which might appear in this or that responsible element, so that the development of activity will not be set back by vacillation or by individual inadequacy.

The same method must be applied in publishing the newspaper. In the editorial staff as well as in the leadership the proletarian element must be permitted to predominate. The newspaper will also have to undergo changes. Above all, the spirit of conciliationism must be wiped out in the criticism of Stalinism. Our political irreconcilability must correspond to the tragic seriousness of the situation and to the seriousness of the responsibility of the Stalinist fraction. Stalinism must not be confused with the Party. In its orientation, the newspaper must not only reflect the activity with regard to the Party and its leading fraction, but also with regard to the entire life of the working class, the events in the factories, partial struggles and street fights. This can be done only if every member of the organization collaborates regularly and sufficiently. The content of the newspaper must be checked over by the provincial groups, who must create responsible press commissions to collaborate with as well as distribute the newspaper. All members must take an active part in these questions, as well as in the whole activity of the groups. An infraction of this rule must not be tolerated.

In its general policy, the German Opposition must stop carrying on an exclusive policy of tasks within the Party. Its activity must be orientated not only on the members of the Party but also on the workers in general.

The Opposition must represent the general aims of the proletariat before the Party and the working class in its entirety, and must endeavor to become the ideological leader of the historical interests of the proletariat. Wherever possible, action must be carried on in this sense, without making it possible for this to appear as a struggle against the Party as Party.

III. The Pre-Conference proposes to the German Opposition that it hold its national conference as soon as possible and concentrate its discussion on resolutions covering the following points:

- a. Present stage of the German situation, of the situation of the proletariat and of the C. P. G.

- b. Relation between the Left Opposition and the C. P. and joint tasks.
- c. United front tactics.
- d. Trade union tactics.
- e. Organizational tasks of the German Left Opposition (relations with the provincial groups, creation of a leadership consisting of workers bound up with the proletarian movement).

This resolution should be laid before the groups in ten days, and the Conference be held fourteen days thereafter, to render possible a real discussion within the groups.

IV. The German situation is becoming the axis of international attention to the International Left Opposition, and it is the task of every member of the International Left Opposition to contribute to the struggle of the German Opposition. Therefore the Left Opposition has set a contribution, to be paid once, by every member irrespective of what section he belongs to, in the amount of one day's pay, which is to be collected before March 15 and sent to the International Secretariat, which will forward the amounts to the German section. Every section must begin a campaign of support for the German Left Opposition.

On the Situation of the American Section

(DF1, p38)

I. The Pre-Conference, after hearing the report of the American delegate and of the I. S., declares that the American League has during the most recent period made substantial progress (increased number of members, creation of new local branches in Pittsburgh, etc., political activity in connection with the Amsterdam Congress, German question, unemployed movement, Illinois miners).

II. It approves the decisions of the leadership of the League for a better organization of forces, for the establishment of responsible and collective work, for more energetic and closer participation in the movements of the working masses. The Pre-Conference regards these measures as the best means for the selection and training of cadres.

III. Under these conditions, it regards it as wholly indispensable that the League should supply adequate information as to the internal conflict as soon as possible, so that the sections can express themselves. Since both sides have maintained hitherto that there are no serious differences of opinion as to the policies of the League in the class struggle and that this internal struggle is harmful to the development of the organization, the Pre-Conference has decided:

- a. The I. S. is to call upon both sides to prepare a document as to the differences of opinion for the International Bulletin.
- b. The leadership of the American League is to prepare for its next Conference, at which the question of the internal question is also to be brought up, after a discussion in which the entire membership of the organization and the sections of the I. L. O. are to take part.

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**REPORT OF PRELIMINARY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE INTERNATIONAL LEFT OPPOSITION
(BOLSHEVIK-LENINISTS) Held February 4 to 8, 1933**

Necessity of Conference--Representation--Objectives

Among the reasons which made a preliminary international conference necessary were first of all the fact that the International Secretariat and its work had become seriously interrupted by the developments of the Weill capitulation and its necessary removal from Berlin to Paris. Secondly difficulties grew out of this within the German section which now has a task of enormous responsibility. Difficulties of a serious character resembling a situation of a split had developed within the Spanish section. The only way to reorganize the international center and to prepare the international conference was through this gathering for preliminary purposes.

The Copenhagen conference of hastily gathered comrades will occupy an important place in the history of our development, but it had its physical limitations. It had worked out certain proposals for this preliminary conference.

Participating in this conference were delegates, one from each of the following sections: English, French, German, Belgian, Russian, Italian, Swiss, Bulgarian, Greek and American. From the Spanish section were, in accordance with the conference regulations, two delegates, one with a regular vote representing officially the National Executive Committee (Nin tendency) and one delegate with a consultative vote representing the Lacroix tendency. From this it will be noted that we had here a genuinely representative gathering.

The capitulation of Weill adds further to the chapter in our history which is characterized by elimination of chance elements. It proceeds so far from Landau through Mill to Weill. These were the elements who came into conflict with our concepts and methods of judging the problems of the revolutionary movement from the standpoint of fundamental political considerations. They have gone and the Left Opposition is strengthened by their departure. But we are still in a formative stage. We yet face the problem of selecting the elements which are to make up our cadres. We must take the elementary political-organizational steps which will begin to give substance and form to our sections. It is essentially a task of transforming what still remains of the early character of more or less personal groupings, loosely connected, functioning quite exclusively in a propagandistic sense, into organs working collective with an organizational authority and discipline, to prepare them for an effective participation in the problems of the parties and of the class struggle. That is, to begin to raise up cadres which will be capable of assimilating the Left Opposition platform and apply the lessons of our experiences to the problems we face. That task could be approached correctly only from its international perspective. To make an earnest effort in that direction became the objective of the Pre-Conference. I am sure that the results attained will justify my belief that a good beginning was made.

Status of the International Left Opposition Today

In order to first of all give a picture of the Left Opposition today I am briefly sketching the reports made to the preliminary conference. First I state the actual organization data, giving the position of the sections, and later the problems, those of a general and those of a specific character, as well as the way in which these problems were dealt with. This will not

include a report of the Russian section as such was not made and could not be made. A report of the Russian section would by and large be a report of the history of our movement.

England: Here we have one of our youngest sections. It was constituted the latter part of 1931 by 6 comrades. It has today 27 members in London and 2 in the provinces. Several of the members are still in the Party. It has about one dozen sympathizers ready to join the section. It publishes a monthly mimeographed paper circulating in 300 copies, mainly to Party members and the comrades participate actively in certain united front activities in which they have themselves successfully taken the lead and initiative.

France: This section has gone through serious struggles of internal development mainly due to its being composed of elements who came to the Left Opposition from various directions. The formative process toward stabilization has so far been quite difficult and consequently resulted in great fluctuation of membership. Today there are groups outside the French Ligue which at one time or another separated from it, mostly still claiming agreement with our platform. But they can hardly be said to have a political existence, (Groups of Treint, Rosmer, 15th Rayon). The leader of the Gourget group which at one time split from the Ligue has capitulated to Stalinism. Comrades, members of the Ligue, who formerly directly or indirectly assisted disintegrating tendencies or became a part of such tendencies (Neville) are now apparently making efforts of serious collaboration in the Ligue. The section, which began its existence in 1929, has so far succeeded in liquidating these internal difficulties and is beginning to tackle more specific political organizational problems. But it has very great weaknesses of looseness of organization. It has a total of 100 members, 70 of which are in Paris. Outside of Paris one cannot speak of regular branches, but rather of groups of comrades, some places single comrades. It is, however, characteristic that practically all the members in the provinces have considerable influence in the general working class movement. On the other hand in the Parisian branch are weaknesses by many of the elements being of foreign nationality.

Among these our members are familiar with the position of the Jewish group. My observation has verified all the criticism made of this group. Its actions have been in every sense of the word those of a political federation group existing within the Ligue. Finally the Ligue decided for the suspension from membership of the three leading comrades of this group for a period of 3 months. Upon this decision the group as a whole presented a signed declaration solidarizing all its members with the three leading comrades and declaring for the withdrawal of the whole group for that period.

The Ligue publishes a weekly organ La Verite in an edition of 4,560 with over 3000 regular steady readers. It publishes a theoretical organ with a smaller edition. Most of the members are active in party auxiliary and mass organizations. The Ligue has excellent contacts with the Party and has had successful public (mostly non-official) debates and discussions with it. One such recent four cornered debate including local right wing group, Socialist Party and Young Communist Ligue together with our Ligue had an attendance of 1500. Our position was excellently defended.

Belgium: Our section here began its existence with the separation from the numerically strong Van Overstraeten group--a sort of an Urbahns group. It was then small and without any means of publicity. The section has now 100 members of which 70 are in the Charleroi mixing section. The Party in Bel-

was then small and without any means of publicity. The section has now 100 members of which 70 are in the Charleroi mining region. The Party in Belgium lives a particularly miserable political existence while the Van Overstraeten group is still a serious militant group. Our Belgian section has just gone through a great experience by its very active participation in the leadership of the recent Belgian miners' general strike--a strike which had some of the characteristics of an insurrection. It was initiated from and centered largely around the Charleroi territory. Our section has founded an organ ("La Voix Communiste"). It started as a monthly, progressed to a semi-monthly and became a weekly. It rose to over 5,000 circulation during the general strike but has now become stabilized at 2,500. It is needless to add that our Belgian section enjoys considerable respect from the working class of the country due to its effective applying the L. O. platform to the general strike. Practically all of our members there are very active in the general labor movement.

Germany: Before the Landau split our section here had 120 members, located mainly in Leipzig and Bruchsal. Now the total membership is 700. Branches are functioning in all important industrial centres except in Wurtemberg. In the Ruhr region there has been rapid growth for our section and particularly of recent date. Branches are at work in practically every important city, though these branches are not numerically strong. For example the branches in Dusseldorf, in Cologne and in Hamborn each publish their own printed organ. The branch in Muburg publishes a mimeographed organ. The biggest membership in one branch is in Bruchsal, about 100. Most branches have good party contacts. In several places, as for example Oranienburg and Bruchsal, our membership have successfully in a collective manner initiated united front activities against the Fascist menace. In Hamburg and in the Ruhr region the branches have by their propaganda successfully penetrated the party ranks. The main work of the German section in general consists of propaganda activities. Several pamphlets have been issued in large editions. The central organ, Die Permanente Revolution, is distributed in 3,000 copies. The section undertakes regular leaflet distribution and distribution of circular letters to the party.

While the provincial units are relatively well developed the center of the German section is weak and its leadership has seriousness weaknesses. That alone was attested to in the developments of the Well capitulation. But the greatest difficulty in this respect arose out of the fact that while Well for a considerable time asserted his difference of views he always cautiously avoided putting himself on record on paper. The majority of the Berlin membership also supported Well for a long time particularly in his views on the trade union question. Many of them do not yet clearly understand that Well had a conscious capitulation line. This line finally became definitely expressed in his differences with us on three decisive issues: the Amsterdam Congress, the estimation of Bonapartism in Germany and the question of the Party policy of independent revolutionary unions. In those questions the road to capitulation became definitely prepared. With the capitulation completed, however, Well received very small support from within our German section. Outside of Leipzig where 26 members supported his declaration he found only a couple in the rest of the country. The units in the provinces generally speaking reacted strongly against Well, but there is not yet sufficient clarity. There are also here and there developments of ultra-leftist tendencies particularly caused by the position of the German party today. But the problems of the German section in regards to present developments of the growing Fascist menace are mentioned elsewhere in this report.

Switzerland: A small section here is beginning to make its way. It has about 25 members and now publishes an organ regularly.

Italy: Our Italian section exists in the same manner as the party, among the emigrants abroad, in illegality or within the prison islands. Naturally it has enormous difficulties. It is numerically small but several of its members were influential previously in party leadership. Despite difficulties some of our literature is penetrating Italy and the prison islands. Bourgeois papers reports Trotskyists struggling for their views in those islands. The Bordigist group does not accept the Left Opposition platform but it can be considered by us only as a sympathetic group.

Bulgaria: Existing in practical illegality we have here a section of 67 members some of them of former serious influence in the party. The section has a weakness in the fact that it comprises very few industrial workers but mostly artisans, peasants or intellectuals. Several of the members have gone through the White Guard torture and several of them are now in prison. The section publishes a small weekly organ. Previously it has been based exclusively upon the party but it is now endeavoring to change its orientation in the sense of taking up more of an independent position. The persecution in the country is very heavy enormously hampering the activities and work of our comrades.

Greece: Here we have our best organized, most experienced, most highly developed and strongest section. Its history dates back a good deal prior to the development of the other European sections outside of the Russian. Since, however, several articles on the history and activities of the Archio Marxists have already appeared in The Militant. I shall mention here only a few points. The numerical strength is 500 regular members and 500 candidates--of the membership 45 are in prison--. In addition the Archio Marxists have organized in closely sympathetic organizations over 5,000 workers whom they can mobilize for their campaigns, activities and struggles at any moment. The methods of our section and its discipline is of the highest quality. Its leadership in the class struggle means that it is virtually carrying on the functions of the party. The party itself never became a C.P. From being a Social-Democratic party it changed its name to C. P. to come completely under the domination of Stalinism. Our section naturally wields considerable influence in the trade unions and has the full direction of several of them. The Archio Marxists have experienced steady growth and have absorbed the best elements from the party, and from two other existing independent groups. These groups are the Spartacos and the Fractionists. The former came into being as a split off major section from the party. It is now very small, has affiliated to the Landau-Rosmer "International" and functions mainly as informers for the bourgeoisie against our comrades. The fractionist group is extremely small, and it has now practically accepted the Stalinist program.

Spain: The section here is numerically our largest with a total of 1,500 members but it is yet weak in ideological development and still very much in a formative stage. Its growth has been remarkably rapid and its weakness of development must largely be ascribed to the lack of Communist tradition in Spain, partly also to the fact that a proportion of its membership are peasants. But it is necessary to mention also that the methodology of the leadership did not serve the best manner of development. It had a long standing conflict with the International Secretariat growing out of its estimate of opponent groups like Rosmer, Troint, etc., its attitude to Mill and its disagreement with the proposals of the Gurov letter, which were accepted by the other sections, and concerned the composition of the international conference. The lessons of this conflict were not made available to the membership of the

section. While its leadership insisted upon acceptance of discipline at home it did not accept such discipline in international relations. Finally these developments brought serious internal conflicts to the section and with it disagreements on policy. The latter was particularly expressed in the orientation toward a second party as established by the insistence upon candidates in elections opposing party candidates and by the change of name of the section. The internal conflict led to a split in the leadership. La Croix resigned from the central committee which was removed to Barcelona and the majority group (Nin tendency) assumed full responsibility. But the question of pre-conference attitude to this internal situation will be taken up under the heading of special problems.

The Spanish section published a theoretical organ "Communismo" with a considerable circulation. It has also published most of the Left Opposition literature in general. It formerly established a weekly organ "El Soviet" which was suppressed but preparations are being made to resume publication.

From other countries where sections exist, or are in formation, or where good contacts are established, but from which no delegates were present, reports were made available briefly as follows:

Czecho-Slovakia: The original small groups (Lenorovichs, Pollack, Friedman) declaring their agreement with the L. O. platform were previously united but so far not on a lasting basis. A separation has again taken place. There now exists the group around the official leadership with about 30 members. Lately the Neurath group, the German speaking section formerly a part of the Czeck Right Opposition has declared its agreement with the L. O. platform. This group has about 250 members. These various groups can be considered only as sympathizing groups until such a time that greater clarity in the disputed questions is possible.

Austria: From the two groups which formerly adhered to the L. O. but by their methods and concepts separated from us elements have of very recent date crystallized into a new group accepting our platform. It has about 35 members and while not yet formally a section of our international movement, it can be considered as a basis for development of such.

Hungary: The conditions of the Communist movement are illegal. A group of about 80 members in opposition to Stalinism has been in existence for some time. It is, however, very much ultra-left with a rather outspoken Korschistic tendency. It holds to the necessity of creation of a Fourth International. It favors work in the trade unions specifically for outright Communist demands. But there is within this larger grouping a smaller group of about one dozen comrades consciously fighting for the Left Opposition platform and insisting that it has good possibilities but great difficulties, lacking also the necessary material means.

Poland: A strong group with considerable influence in the party and the working class and with members in several cities has developed recently. Under conditions of illegality exact data are difficult to obtain. This group is in agreement with the L.O. in the most important questions, specifically, the theory of Socialism in One Country, the Chinese revolution, the Anglo Russian committee, the Amsterdam Congress, but it has not yet fully accepted our platform. The group is carrying on very active propaganda. The party is stirred throughout and has produced much sympathy for the group which must be said to have very good prospects.

From the other countries with which our contacts are not yet well established only a few brief notes are available. Our Chinese comrades have succeeded since the interruptions of the arrest (Chen Du Shiu and others) to reorganize the central committee, resume the publications and resume the activities. In Japan a few comrades in agreement with our platform are endeavoring to form a group. In the republic of South Africa is a large group in existence, composed primarily of natives, with considerable influence in the working class ranks. From the South American countries no recent information is at hand except from Chile. There the majority of the official party with almost its whole leadership has separated from Stalinism, accepted the L. O. platform and proposes to affiliate with our movement. While the Communist tradition is in general not as yet well established in Latin America it is nevertheless well to remember that in Chile there have recently been revolutionary struggles carrying more of a proletarian character than has been the case in the similar recent struggles in South America.

Problems—Special and General

Among such problems were the reorganization and strengthening of the international center, preparations for the international conference and the special problems of the Spanish and German sections. I will begin with the latter.

It is clear that within our German section the general passivity and bewilderment of the working class has become somewhat reflected. This is so much more dangerous in view of the fatefully serious tasks which now stand before it. While the Weill capitulation no longer represents a crisis, its occurrence is nevertheless symptomatic. It created a certain disruption but particularly within the leadership which failed to sufficiently inform its local units and the other sections and warn of the danger. Yet the good reaction to this disruption by the local units shows that despite the certain weaknesses there is nevertheless virility.

The general situation in Germany, the position of the working class and the parties, I have elaborated upon in my article to The Militant. It is an exact account of the situation. It is understandable that the criminal failures of the C.P. could not be sufficiently counteracted by our propaganda alone, for that action of a mass character was required which our small section could develop only in a small measure. The complex Bonapartists stage (complex also for our comrades) is at an end. A period of differentiation between Fascism and the remnants of the elements of bonapartism will now take place. But unquestionably time is short and very precious. It would be false to say that correct action on the part of the party toward effective working class defense through a united front is entirely excluded. There are still possibilities that the very pressure of the serious menace may force that direction. But there are greater dangers that the pressure of the events will react to drive the Comintern in a more rapid tempo more distinctly toward the Right as well as dangers also of a repetition of the Canton experience on a smaller scale.

The Comintern has failed to speak. Not a word of guidance to the German proletariat and its party. Our pre-conference therefore addressed an urgent message to the Comintern in the name of all the sections represented, appealing for convocation of the Seventh Congress with the Left Opposition to participate in its deliberations and to have as one point on its agenda the calling of a conference to establish a united front of the Second International, the Amsterdam International of trade unions and the Comintern for the defense of the German Working class and the Soviet Union. The Pre-Conference also implored the German section, in view of the decisiveness of the immediate future and its needs, to take certain specifically proposed measures to pull its

ranks more tightly together, to speak more sharply to the party in regard to its criminal failures and to speak also more directly to the working class because of those party failures. (This is contained in the special resolutions adopted which are attached and which will make up material for the International Bulletin.)

In one decisive aspect concerning the situation and the tasks in Germany a serious discussion took place with differences of viewpoints presented. They came to a head in the elaboration of our appeal to the German party members and working class. A tendency appeared to emphasize the united front only in the abstract and leave the central place to the general strike. I personally particularly insisted on the position that while the general strike can occupy an important place as a first step in working class defense it has certain limitations; that the center of the appeal must be the united front to be presented concretely; that it must also include the proposal for specific united front organs which must themselves be the road to the Soviets. That viewpoint finally prevailed.

The pre-conference also decided to recommend to the German section the speediest possible preparation of its national conference, and that its main document for discussion should be the specific orientation proposed in regard to the menacing situation in the country. The pre-conference decided to call upon all the sections to come to the material assistance of our German comrades. This, of course, is very essential. Funds are necessary for the enormous tasks of the German section. The various national sections are called upon to assess itself to the amount of one days pay per member to be sent to the International Secretariat destined for Germany.

On the situation in the Spanish section. In view of the attitude of the attitude of the leadership of the section (Nin tendency) in the conflict with the International Left Opposition and internally within the section, which is described in my report from Spain, the pre-conference charged the leadership with certain definite responsibilities for the discussion and clarifying of the issues of conflict. It made a definite criticism of this attitude and the methods employed. It had before it and adopted a fundamental document, certain parts of which had a direct bearing upon the issues in the Spanish section and the question of its leadership. The delegate to the pre-conference representing this leadership declared on behalf of it for acceptance in principle of the contents of the document but reservations to its application, specifically on the following points: 1. The attitude toward opponent groups such as Rosmer, Treint, etc., 2. Regarding change of name of the organization as proposed in the document. 3. Regarding characterization of errors and methods of the leadership. 4. Regarding the practical measures proposed for discussion and clarification of the issues of the conflict. It is clear that with such reservations there would be nothing left of the principle. This method represents the kernel of the whole past conflict with this leadership on the one hand the international movement on the other. It is the method of diplomatizing with principled issues, acceptance in principles but rejecting its application. The pre-conference took sharp issue with this position and spoke decisively in the sense of this characterization.

The delegate representing the La Croix tendency accepted the position of the pre-conference and made no reservations. La Croix himself who had been a party to the false methods of the leadership in the past sent from prison (Nin is also now in prison) his acknowledgement of these errors. This the pre-conference naturally accepted with the declaration that the acknowledgement will have to be tested in action.

Unquestionably the issues within the Spanish section are of the most important character. Its developments contain many lessons from which our young cadres must learn. The fact that the Pre-Conference acted decisively will undoubtedly help the Spanish section in its crisis, help correct the errors made and help it find its way to a correct position, one which will correspond with the task of this section functioning in a situation of revolutionary possibilities.

On the reorganization of the international center: In regards to the International Secretariat it was, of course, necessary to acknowledge weaknesses of the past. It was not composed of representatives elected by the sections and responsible to them. It was largely a provisional body. It had been purely an administrative body without being able to exercise any political authority. As such it came at times to reflect too much the internal situation of the national section where it was located. (Conflict within the French Ligue). It was clear to the Pre-Conference that the real need was the creation of a political center which can begin to exercise some authority and which is able to make the arrangements and carry out decisions for the organization of the coming conference. We have not yet reached a point of development where our international center could function in the full sense of the word as a guiding political center. But it is necessary that it be sufficiently representative and be invested with sufficient authority to help in the development of the sections, to help estimate their actions and give advice, to help in the clarification and settlement of issues of development which cause conflict.

In this sense the Pre-Conference acted. It adopted a proposal which in its essence had been formulated in Copenhagen at the conference there for the creation of a plenum composed of one representative of each of the most stable European sections. That was decided to be the following five sections: Russian, German, French, Belgian and Greek. The plenum is to meet at least once every three months in regular session. Secondly the Pre-Conference adopted a proposal for the creation of a political secretariat of three members with full powers to act as a political body in the name of the Plenum between its meetings with arrangements made for special voting or convocation of Plenum when necessary. The members of the Secretariat were elected at the Pre-Conference subject to the approval of the Plenum. The members of the Secretariat are not necessarily members of the Plenum. The essence of this organization is that it is a beginning toward the creation of an international center which functions politically and has political authority. But it is also necessary for the sections to help make the functioning of the international center possible by first of all maintaining the closest possible contact, secondly by submitting to it all information and thirdly by taking up with it all the problems which develop. Material means are also absolutely necessary or there will be no center. The Pre-Conference decided upon a regular assessment for this purpose to be met by each section, equivalent to a Belgian Franc per member per month (Resolution on International Center also attached)

Concerning the coming regular international conference: The basic document before this Pre-Conference--already mentioned above in connection with the internal conflict in the Spanish section needs no comment. It is attached herewith and speaks for itself. It was adopted and is submitted to the sections for immediate discussion of the membership for adoption or changes if such are proposed. It was adopted at the Pre-Conference as a basic outline of our position in general, in regard to the specific problems stated and in regard to the coming conference which is quite clearly defined including the

questions of participation in it. You will notice the attitude to the Weisbord group and to other groups similar or different. They are not considered, by the contents of this document and those who adopted it as a basis, as part of the Left Opposition nor as having the right to speak in its name.

The tasks of the coming conference are mainly political. To approach it in that sense it is necessary that the sections have the most thorough discussion of all the international problems and that the participation be international. The basic material, theses, etc., is to be prepared with the aid of the various sections. The international thesis is to be prepared by the International Secretariat and the French Ligue. The Pre-Conference also decided for the preparation of theses on the following countries to be worked out by the respective sections: Germany, Italy--the two countries with specific Fascist problems, Spain and the Balkan states, the latter to be prepared by the Greek section. The thesis on the problems of the U. S. S. R. is already prepared. The American section is requested to make its contribution in the form of an analysis of the role and position of American imperialism to be available as material for the conference. The theses are all to be ready and to be published by April 15. There is to be three months' discussion in the sections before the international conference.

The Pre-Conference just held should mark a further step in our development. While we must not have too high expectations from our young movement it is nevertheless certain that we will emerge from this Pre-Conference with a strengthened international center. At the gathering the representatives of various sections had a further opportunity to become acquainted with one another, with the activities, the methods and the problems and experiences of the sections. It should become a further step toward the completion of our formative stage and above all toward the strengthening of international relations, which is the practical aspect of the process of becoming internationalists in the true sense of the word. Our formative stage has also been marked by what is notable from this report: Emergence of groups, adherence to the Left Opposition, departure; unification of various groups in one country and again separation. It is the process of selection and elimination. It naturally reflects our position and the conditions under which we function. But our sections should now be in a position also more positively to supplant the past personal groupings and personal relations with definitely functioning organizations, functioning through the means of organizational relations.

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