Writings of Leon Trotsky
Supplement (1929-33)
WRITINGS OF LEON TROTSKY

SUPPLEMENT (1929-33)
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Natalia Sedova, Leon Trotsky, Raymond Molinier, M. Mill.
In 1969 Pathfinder Press began publishing the writings of Leon Trotsky in his last exile, 1929-40. Our aim was to print in English everything from this period that had been published in any language, except for books permanently in print (such as The History of the Russian Revolution, My Life, The Revolution Betrayed, and In Defense of Marxism), plus any unpublished material of political interest that we could locate. (We could not locate everything unpublished because part of it was stored at Harvard University in the “closed section” of his archives, which Trotsky had stipulated should not be made publicly accessible until 1980.) This led to the publication of several books drawing material from the 1929-40 period and devoted to a single theme—for example, The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany, The Spanish Revolution (1931-39), The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, The Crisis of the French Section (1935-36), and Leon Trotsky on France—and to the Writings of Leon Trotsky series, a twelve-volume collection, chronologically arranged, of letters, articles, pamphlets, statements to the press, and transcripts of conversations not available in other Trotsky books. All together, these contained over 1,250 separate items, amounting to more than 6,000 book pages.

But between 1969, when the Writings series was started, and 1978, when the last of the twelve volumes was published, we came into possession of three hundred additional Trotsky letters and articles that reached us too late to be included in the volumes where they belonged chronologically. These are now published as the Supplement to the twelve volumes. Because of its length, the Supplement is printed in two parts, each with its own notes and index. Nine of these letters, complete here, were printed in incomplete form in previous volumes; fourteen other articles and letters, which were added to the second edition of Writings 34-35, are reprinted here because they will not be included in subsequent
editions of that volume; more than 200 of the remainder are printed here for the first time in any language.

Many articles in this volume were signed by pen names or were unsigned, usually for security reasons; some of the letters without signature were probably signed, but not on the carbon copies at our disposal. The date preceding each selection indicates when it was completed; if that is not known, the date when it was first published is given. Translations originally made in the 1930s and 1940s have been revised to correct obvious errors and achieve uniformity in spelling of names, punctuation, style, etc. Acknowledgments about the articles and translations, and explanatory material about the persons and events mentioned in them, will be found in the section entitled "Notes and Acknowledgments."

We are grateful to all of the many people and institutions whose help is acknowledged in the notes, and most of all to Louis Sinclair, author of *Leon Trotsky: A Bibliography* (Hoover Institution Press, 1972).

The Editor
February 1978
Leo Trotsky (or "Mr. Sadoff," as he persists in calling himself), has now abandoned the mystery with which he has surrounded himself since his deportation from Russia. Since yesterday [March 14] he has started receiving foreign newspaper representatives.

Heretofore he has been completely hidden. This is due either to the measures taken for his seclusion by his gaolers at the Soviet Consulate here, or in order to fulfill his undertaking with his Press agents in Paris, or both. The ex-War Lord of Soviet Russia is no longer a prisoner of the Bolsheviks. He is now, to all intents and purposes, an ordinary visitor to Constantinople, and is staying at its best hotel, Tokatlians.

Trotsky received me this afternoon in his bedroom, after my identity had been verified by his ambassador, his son. Owing to the reports current concerning his ill-health, I expected to find a frail and broken man. But I was astonished to meet a Trotsky apparently hale and certainly hearty—clean-shaven, with straight back and firm step, and looking in no wise displeased with his lot.

His appearance must be somewhat deceptive, however. He told me he was anxious to put himself in the hands of his German doctors, for he had need of medical attention. No reply has yet been received to his request for permission to reside in Germany. But the Red ex-leader entertains little doubt that a visa will ultimately be forthcoming. He explains the long delay as being probably due to the present Cabinet crisis in Berlin.

Reports that he has addressed requests for visas to France, Holland, and Czechoslovakia are, he assured me, utterly untrue. Germany is the only place he desires to reside in, he said. But he added that at some time he would dearly love to visit the British Museum, which throughout the world has no equal and "where, as Victor Hugo said, 'when this century was two years old' I
"Suppose I requested the British Government's permission to go to London to visit again the British Museum, do you think I should get it?" he asked me.

I replied that it was in the realm of possibility. On this he seized a blank telegram form and asked, "Will you sign on behalf of your paper, which is hostile to me, a recommendation that this privilege be granted me?" Naturally I declined to do any such thing.

Whereupon Trotsky went on to refer to the bracketed note, "Great laughter," in the papers on the occasion of a question being recently asked by a member in the House of Commons. This was whether favourable consideration would be given if Trotsky sought refuge in England, and whether his presence would be tolerated.

"What signifies in this 'great laughter' is that the possibility of my ever being allowed in England is such as to provoke nothing but mirth."

There is no doubt that Trotsky would regard securing a visa to England as a great personal victory. Little, I gathered, as he loves the British, it is equally certain, judging from the way he dwelt reminiscently on the attractions of the British Museum, that he would cherish the occasion to profit from them again.

With regard to the actual Anglo-Russian situation Trotsky made some strong comments on what he termed the lack of foresight displayed by Great Britain in persisting to ignore Soviet Russia.

"It is a primary necessity (for England)," he said, "to resume diplomatic and commercial relations with Soviet Russia, and for each to let bygones be bygones—to a certain extent."

My observation that I believed there were certain matters of considerable importance yet requiring solution, brought forth the remark that for England to start again drawing up and presenting a statement of outstanding accounts would be useless.

"It will lead nowhere," he said. "And what about the milliars of pounds Russia has lost because of Great Britain? Why, British soldiers and British gold were solely responsible for the civil war in Russia. But for their intervention Russia's revolution would have been bloodless. For up to the British intervening and inciting the Whites, the Reds were assuming control of the machinery of government in a perfectly orderly manner and meeting with no resistance. No, Great Britain is not an undisputed creditor."
Here what appeared to be the inevitable propaganda became evident. For Trotsky outlined what industrially and politically England stood to lose if she came second in the race with the United States for Soviet Russia's favour.

"The day will arrive—and it is not far distant, and it rests with Great Britain as to whether it will be too late or not—when she will have to come knocking at the door of Russia. She is in great danger of receiving a fatal push out of the way from America and once the latter makes up with Russia Great Britain's future outlook will become very cloudy.

"Russia naturally requires a foreign market in Great Britain or America: which it is, is to her immaterial, but to them vital. Furthermore, with a resumption of relations, Great Britain, fearing, as she does, the extension of Communism within her territory and making this one reason for holding aloof, would be no worse off than now. She is master in her own house, and ought to be capable of keeping it in order. Only children are paralyzed by fear; Governments, by their own strength, should overcome it."

Trotsky declares that he has done with active politics, and means to devote himself entirely to writing. He tells me he has had offers for articles from all over the world, and his future livelihood will be obtained by his pen. He is now engaged upon his autobiography.

HELP THE IMPRISONED BOLSHEVIK-LENINISTS

March 20, 1929

We must start a systematic and unremitting campaign of struggle to improve the conditions of the deported and arrested Bolshevik-Leninists. Their number now exceeds two thousand. They are confined in prison under foul conditions: no light (the shields on the windows are almost shut tight), damp rooms in which they crowd the prisoners to the extreme limit, bad food, extraordinary brutal treatment. It is even worse in the Tobolsk hard labor prison (Political-Solitary). It is the same as it was in
Dostoyevsky’s *House of the Dead*. In this prison there are only Bolshevik-Leninists. They have released the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. They have introduced military sentries. The cells are locked. No interviews are allowed. The Mensheviks had a common dining table, a common kitchen, free interviews, etc. Our comrades are deprived of all this. Unquestionably the authorities have adopted a policy of physical extermination of the Bolshevik-Leninists. Relations have grown very tense. Any moment you can expect not only physical conflicts, hunger strikes (which have no end) but also—yes, the firing squad. Fifteen men from the prison personnel of the Tobolsk Political-Solitary refused to apply repressive measures against Bolsheviks; they were replaced by guards specially sent from Moscow. The need among the families of the arrested is enormous, simply appalling. The families of prisoners and deportees who remain at liberty are literally starving. We haven’t our own labor defense organization. We must collect money abroad. We must fight for the right to have our own legal defense organization. Against these shocking practices, as against all such things, we must raise a mighty outcry. We must publicly expose the current officials of the Soviet government and the party leaders who are responsible for these crimes. Correspondence from Tomsk and Sverdlovsk tells of whole *crowds* driven into the hard labor prison, Narym, where they are sending Oppositionists taken from various places of deportation. Among the deported and imprisoned there are heroes of the October Revolution and the civil war decorated with the Order of the Red Flag (Greitser, Gaevsky, Kavtaradze, Yenukidze, and many others). Among those imprisoned in a hard labor prison is Budu Mdivani, fifty-three years old, the Old Bolshevik who served time under the czar, was president of the Soviet of People’s Commissars of Georgia under Lenin, and head of the Soviet trade delegation in Paris.
INTERVIEW GIVEN TO THE
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PRESS

March 24, 1929

A week ago a Constantinople correspondent for the German Social Democratic press called on me. I gave him roughly the following interview:

You yourself realize that my granting an interview to the Social Democratic press is something rather unusual for both sides. This first, and very likely last, interview has been brought about by quite exceptional circumstances.

As I am now applying for admission to Germany, where the majority of the government consists of Social Democrats, I am chiefly interested in making clear my attitude toward the Social Democracy. Obviously on this question nothing has changed. My attitude toward the Social Democracy remains what it was. Moreover, my struggle against the centrist faction of Stalin is only a reflection of my general struggle against the Social Democracy. Neither you nor I have any need of vagueness or of leaving things unsaid.

Some Social Democratic publications are trying to find a contradiction between the principles I hold in regard to democracy and my application for admission to Germany, i.e., to a democratic republic. There is no contradiction here. We do not at all "deny" democracy as the anarchists "deny" it (verbally). Bourgeois democracy has advantages in comparison with the forms of the state that preceded it. But it is not eternal. It must give way to socialist society. And the bridge to socialist society is the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In all capitalist countries, communists take part in the parliamentary struggle. Making use of the right of asylum does not differ in principle in any way from the utilization of the right to vote, of freedom of the press and assembly, and so on.

You are interested in my struggle for democracy in the party, the trade unions, and the soviets. Social Democratic publications have from time to time attempted to portray this as a step toward bourgeois democracy on my part. This is a monumental misunderstanding, the roots of which are not hard to disclose. The
Social Democratic formula of today goes like this: "Stalin is right against Trotsky; Bukharin is right against Stalin." The Social Democracy stands for the restoration of capitalism in Russia. But one can take this road only by pushing the proletarian vanguard into the background and suppressing its independent activity and critical voice. Stalin's regime is the necessary result of his political line. Since Social Democracy approves of Stalin's economic policy, it ought to reconcile itself to his political methods as well. It is unworthy of a Marxist to speak of democracy "in general." Democracy has a class content. If a policy aimed at restoring capitalism is what is needed, then that is incompatible with democracy for the ruling proletarian class.

An actual transition back to capitalism could only be secured through the dictatorial power of the bourgeoisie. It is ridiculous to demand the restoration of capitalism and at the same time to sigh for democracy. That is sheer fantasy.

You ask how I view the fact that in the capitalist countries the central committees of the Communist parties are introducing a dictatorial regime suppressing the independent activity of the party. Yes, I have more than once spoken out against this. But it should be clearly understood that neither the capitalist parties nor the Social Democracy have felt called on to accuse the leadership of the Communist parties of arbitrariness, since not only all the bourgeois parties (take a look at America) but also the Social Democracy are based on such a regime. All questions are decided by a narrow circle of people at the top. The masses find out about everything post factum. They are allowed to criticize and grumble, but nothing more.

You ask if it is not possible for the Comintern to be turned into an instrument of the Soviet Union's national policy. The question has been incorrectly posed. If the national-reformist line based on the theory of socialism in one country were to win out definitively in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, this would lead inevitably to the growth of national-reformism in all the Comintern sections, which in this case would be transformed, after the example set by the Social Democracy, into instruments of the national politics of their own countries. This would mean the destruction of the Comintern. This is why the Opposition is conducting a struggle against the revision of Marxism on the fundamental question of the international character of the proletarian revolution.

Such, fundamentally, is the content of the interview I gave. In accordance with my request, the correspondent submitted the
interview to me in written form. Except for two points, he had set forth my views more or less accurately—if in a slightly modified form. I requested the elimination of two paragraphs (about the regime in the Western Communist parties and about the relations between the Comintern and the Soviet government), because they had been presented inaccurately. The correspondent promised to eliminate these two paragraphs.

TACTICS IN THE USSR

October 1929

1. The declaration by Rakovsky and the others is an episode that will prove useful more than once in the future. (In speaking to the workers, we will point with justification to the goodwill shown by the Opposition and the ill will of the apparatus.) The perspective of the struggle by the Russian Opposition is determined, however, not by the declaration, but by factors of a more profound nature.

2. Stalin's left zigzag called for some necessary changes in the tactics of the Opposition more than a year and a half ago: (a) we stated out loud the fact that there was a left shift taking place; (b) we criticized the contradictions in it; (c) we declared our readiness to support every genuinely left step of centrism; (d) we showed this support through a clear and complete Marxist evaluation of the danger from the right and our merciless criticism of centrism itself, and it was precisely our criticism that forced and is still forcing the centrists to go further left than they originally intended to go.

The demand for a secret ballot remains, of course, completely valid. It is far more advantageous for the revolution if the Bessedovskys vote the way they really think than if we just happen to find out about their “thoughts” after they jump out a back window.

And the question of the leading of strikes, as it was at one time posed and clarified by the Opposition, retains all its significance. The Opposition did not invent this question. The resolution of the Eleventh Congress [of the CPSU in 1922], worked out by Lenin
and adopted unanimously, recognized the possibility, and in certain instances the inevitability, of strikes led by Soviet trade unions, insofar as one of the tasks of the latter is to protect the workers' interests against bureaucratic distortions within their own state. The fact that since the time of the Eleventh Congress the trade unions themselves have been bureaucratized to a terrible extent does not remove the question of strikes either practically or theoretically. The Opposition's attitude toward strikes was formulated by us at one time with absolute precision.\textsuperscript{17} There is no basis at all for changing this formulation, which is imbued with the genuine spirit of the party.

**OUR FRENCH PRESS\textsuperscript{18}**

October-November 1929

October 22, 1929

Dear Comrade Gerard:

No news from you. We rejoice here each week on receiving *La Verite*.\textsuperscript{19} The general impression that it gives, which is inevitable at first, is that the paper is still rather distant from the masses, too journalistic, not sufficiently proletarian and political. The first thing is to know what is going on in the working class, in the unions, and above all in the party. It is necessary at all costs to find or create links with party circles. I think the lack of contact or information can be explained by a certain tradition in the Opposition which consisted not only of denigrating, but also of ignoring, of not interesting oneself in what was happening in the party or around it. Thus "The Week in Politics," which is well done journalistically, would profit greatly if its first item each week were devoted to some episode or event in the life of the workers or the party.

Permit me to ask of you a small service, in the shortest possible time. I absolutely need, for an article, some results of the last French elections, which I can't find in the limited documentation that I have here. I will count on you, then, to furnish me the figures on the votes for the legislative and municipal elections of 1924, 1925, 1928, 1929 (total votes, Socialist votes, Communist
votes). I will expect from you the greatest precision and the greatest diligence.

Fraternally,

P.S. Figures for France, Paris, and the [Department of the] Seine. Also, perhaps, if it is not too great and too long a task, for the North.

October 31, 1929

I learn from the Turkish newspapers that Daladier\textsuperscript{21} has resigned because the Socialists refused to participate in the cabinet. So much the worse for the visa. All the same, I will keep expecting some news on that from you.

La Verite is improving visibly. We see that the articles are for the most part written with care and attention. I have already written you some impressions in my preceding letter. To present my ideas on its contents more precisely, I will say a few words this time on the book reviews.

A. A.'s articles are very good and very useful, but in the choice of books and in the manner of criticizing them more appropriate for a Marxist journal that for a political weekly. We would rather see in the book review columns of La Verite some articles on Les Cahiers du bolchevisme, La Revue marxiste, even L'Humanite and other papers of the party\textsuperscript{22}; also of course on all the publications of the Comintern, the Profintern, the CGTU.\textsuperscript{23} I think that by using the press and other party publications we could cast light on the essential features of the entire activity of the party.

The pompous Cahiers du bolchevisme, with their fancy paper, their original sketches, etc., with their inaccuracies, their blundering articles, etc., demonstrate material richness and ideological poverty in a manner that is both striking and sickening.

I also think that we should have two or three articles on L'Humanite based on a solid and conscientious study of the latter. I even think that we ought to study the financial contribution lists of L'Humanite, comparing them with the previous contributions by city, region, etc. This is a detailed, burdensome task but it could yield results of quite a singular importance concerning the changes in the party's influence, the composition of its sympathizers, etc. Without such studies (also from and
about the unions), our criticisms will remain abstract and even empty.

I was speaking in one of my letters to Naville about the necessity to make a serious division of labor between *La Verite* and *La Lutte de classes* by uniting them organizationally. Naville answered me that for this we must have a united organization, which is entirely correct. Unfortunately I do not see from the paper itself or from letters how we are moving to build toward this united organization, composed above all of active workers.

November 21, 1929

Dear Comrade Gerard:

Yesterday I received your letter of November 5 with the electoral statistics. I thank you very warmly. Now I am armed.

The last issue of *La Lutte de classes* is very interesting. The lead article and the statement on the Sino-Soviet conflict are good, solid articles. The polemic against Louzon is excellent. In the article on the English movement, there is a theoretical mistake. The author says: "The capitalists who sell the wage earners their products take back with the left hand what they offered with the right. Under these conditions profit is impossible..."

It follows from this that profit is not created in production, but in commerce. Even if society were composed of nothing but capitalists and workers, without foreign trade, profit would exist.

Neither could I sign the statement of A. A. (Andre Ariat, in other words Aime Patri) that "the new syndicalist minority tendencies in the CGTU arise from a very healthy spontaneous reaction to the errors of the Communist party."

whole is neither more nor less healthy than the Brandlerite reaction, which was directed at first against the same errors.

The defects of *La Lutte de classes* are the same as those of *La Verite*: it is outside the workers' movement, without inside information on what is happening in the party and the CGTU.

It is absolutely necessary to establish a systematic division of labor between *La Verite* and *La Lutte*, assuring the regular appearance and the theoretical character of the latter.

With communist greetings,
Dear Friend:

The American professor who asserted that in the epoch of War Communism even Churchill would have carried out the policy Lenin did is expressing a small grain of truth, which, however, quickly turns into a crude falsehood if one concludes that Churchill could in general, or even for a prolonged period, have taken Lenin’s place. That “economic necessity” in the long run forges its own road is indisputable. But only in the long run. It is also true that in the process it not infrequently compels the empiricists to make a 180 degree turn. But does this mean that one can reject Marxist politics and rely solely on economic necessity? No, it does not. First of all, what could be called “economic necessity” in the present instance? There are at least two kinds. There is the economic necessity flowing from the situation created by the nationalization, the monopoly of foreign trade, etc. This is the economic necessity of socialist construction. But there exists an economic necessity hostile to it, that of world capitalist development and its extension into the USSR. Which of these two economic necessities will be the stronger? For the coming years (but not in the last analysis), this problem will be wholly resolved by politics, i.e., by the science and art which provides the possibility of orienting ourselves in the struggle between the two economic necessities and of helping one of them against the other. The policy of the right-centrist bloc from 1923 to 1928 was dictated by economic necessity just as much as the current leftward turn that is not even two years old. Where can one look for guarantees for the correct development of the left turn? In bare economic necessity? But it has already produced the various zigzags. In the left turn itself? But precisely that turn was prompted not by bare economic necessity alone but by the presence of a political grouping that knew that “economic necessity helps those who help themselves.” I am talking about us. The serious guarantee that politics will tomorrow serve socialist economic necessity and not capitalist would be the
capacity of the official party to include us in its ranks just the way we are. There is no other political criterion for us and there cannot be. All else is tricks, a game of hide-and-seek with history, an attempt to replace the struggle for definite ideas with a general inspectorate over the course of development, or simply political cowardice and petty fraud.

Warm greetings,

DISCUSSIONS WITH MAX SHACHTMAN

March 1930

During our brief stay, we talked at some length about the situation in Russia and the movement in the United States. Trotsky had just finished writing his articles on the new course in Soviet economy and the prospects for the five-year plan. Just about the same time, the news began to arrive from Russia reporting the latest turn begun by Stalin towards the moderation of the plan. The question arose: How is it that Stalin, and even Bukharin of late, after having conducted a furious campaign for years against the Opposition by accusing it of being “super-industrialist,” finally adopted and began to carry out a plan for industrialization and collectivization which, at least on the face of it, was far more radical than any previously proposed by the Opposition? Comrade Trotsky explained it in this way:

The requirements of the economic situation that developed in the country after the presentation of the platform and countertheses of the Opposition, and the latter's subsequent expulsion from the party, soon demanded the formulation of a much more radical and far-reaching program than had originally been conceived. The centrist faction of Stalin, which had first adopted the timid and worthless plan of Rykov, rejected it under the pressure of the situation and proceeded with a five-year plan of considerably greater breadth. The startling successes of the first year—startling to the centrists, who never really believed such a rapid tempo possible—not only demonstrated the enormous latent possibilities for industrial development under a proletarian
dictatorship (nationalization of industry, banks, etc., etc.), but immediately produced an extreme boldness born precisely out of centrism's previous timidity. Almost overnight, the initial successes of the plan gave rise to the wildest kind of exaggerations. The kulak was going to be liquidated as a class. The five-year plan was to be realized in four years—or three and a half, or three as some said. Agrarian collectivization was now definitely accomplished in half of Russia. The NEP was to be abolished. Socialism was being completed in isolated Russia. These were only a few—and among the mildest—exaggerations contained in the Soviet press and repeated in the official Communist press abroad. The achievements of the first year were utilized to "prove" that the entire Opposition platform was bankrupt, the previous accusations of "super-industrialism" were converted into "Trotskyist pessimism," and on these foundations, a number of capitulations were realized out of the ranks of the Left.

But the very first signs of difficulties transformed the cocksure braggarts of centrism back again into timid, cautious bureaucrats. The rapid pace of collectivization and industrialization ran its head into the brick wall of a proletarian state isolated in a sea of capitalist world economy, proving not in abstract theory but in cold practice the absolutely untenable position of Stalin's and Bukharin's theory of national socialism. A crisis began to develop in agriculture, exactly along the lines indicated by the Opposition. Stalin forthwith sounded the retreat. So long as uninterrupted progress had been made, Stalin sedulously cultivated what he now, when obstacles were encountered, sought to unburden responsibility for: "dizziness of success."

That a retreat was necessary was already evident. It was already proposed by Comrade Trotsky to ward off an impending crisis in the country, the danger of which is by no means averted yet. At the same time he raised a warning against the retreat going too far. It now becomes increasingly clear that Stalin, who is on the road leading away from the recent ultraleft zigzag in Russia, will not come to a halt until he has reached the other extreme and accepted the original program of the right wing. That is now the great danger in the Russian situation.

It is equally clear that Stalin will not be able to gain the support of the whole party for this new bureaucratic turn about face. In the zigzag to the left, mass forces were of necessity unleashed which it will not be easily possible to put in chains again. The proletarian core of the party will resist the sharp turn to the right which has already begun. That is why Comrade
Trotsky spoke with the greatest confidence of the re-formation of a strong Left Opposition inside the Communist Party.

It is in connection with the big journalistic bluff and exaggerations about the five-year plan, and the capitulation of many Oppositionists who pleaded the “successes of socialist construction” as their pretext for leaving the Opposition, that a humorous but pointed conversation took place. A copy of the New York Nation had arrived one morning, containing an article, “Russia’s New Revolution,” written by Louis Fischer, one of the innumerable liberal journalists commuting between New York and Moscow and earning a livelihood by writing publicity for the Stalin faction.

We showed Trotsky a passage in the article which read: “Stalin’s ultra-radical revolutionary policy has won the hearts of the Trotskyists and they have come rushing back from Siberian, Caucasian and Volgan exile to participate in the pressing business of reconstruction. They have come back humbly, with clipped wings, acknowledging Stalin’s talents and Trotsky’s mistakes. . . . Stalin, my ex-Trotskyist friends tell me, had done more than they wanted of him, and more even than they expected of Trotsky.”

“You see,” we said jokingly while Trotsky was scanning the paragraph, “everybody is saying that Stalin has gone much further than you ever proposed.”

“That’s true,” he replied immediately. “When a man has a boil on his neck, a capable surgeon will simply lance the boil. A shoemaker will go much further and sever the man’s head from his shoulders. Yes, there is no doubt that Stalin has also gone ‘much further’ than I proposed!”

And the [ex-Oppositionist] capitulators? Would they play any considerable role in the resurgence of the Opposition within the party? Comrade Trotsky does not believe they will.

“The revolution is a great devourer of people,” he said. “It has burned out these men, used them up, exhausted them. They cannot even play an important part in the centrist faction. It must not be forgotten that these men are not newcomers in the movement. On the contrary. Many of them have gone through two, three revolutions. They spent a large part of their lives in czarist prisons and exiles. They were the militants who organized and led the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 and for years afterwards. They passed through the rigorous years of the civil war and intervention, then through the period of reaction after the death of Lenin, and finally through prison or exile under Stalin.
Discussions with Max Shachtman

They have lived through the intensest years of history. Very few have come out of them unscathed to one degree or another. The others have been burned out or the revolutionary fires in them quenched.”

Of course this phenomenon is chiefly noticeable and widespread in the ranks of the ruling apparatus. Trotsky mentioned one name after another of comrades in the most prominent party and Soviet positions, all of them imbued with the profoundest hatred for the “permanent revolution.” That formula runs against the grain of every self-contented bureaucrat who has squeezed his bottom firmly into a chair after the consolidation of the revolution’s initial political victories. All of them have sought to put themselves beyond criticism by the religious title of “Old Bolsheviks” or the “Old Guard.” Yet the overwhelming majority of the members of the present Central Committee of the Russian party are men who, inside or outside of Lenin’s party before the revolution, never went beyond the conceptions of revolutionary democrats or Mensheviks. Trotsky recounted an incident which adequately characterizes the “Old Bolshevism” of nine-tenths of the present party spokesmen.

It was during a meeting of the party Central Control Commission, where Trotsky was being “tried” and his “non-Bolshevik past” brought out against him. During his speech, he quoted from an issue of the Sotsial Demokrat, a journal edited and published in Yakutsk jointly by the Mensheviks and a number of now prominent “Old Bolsheviks”: Ordzhonikidze, Petrovsky (of the Ukraine), and the peerless Yaroslavsky. This paper was issued not in 1905, nor in 1912 or 1914, but in 1917, after the Kerensky revolution and on the eve of the October uprising!

He read from some of the articles written by these “old guardsmen,” all of which were pentrated by the most vulgar kind of bourgeois-democratic notions conceivable. The Kerensky revolution—if only it would introduce a few reforms—was hailed as the great people’s democratic government. When Trotsky mentioned the trio of “Bolsheviks” who wrote these articles, there was a sensation even in the Control Commission. Yaroslavsky tried to bluster and bluff it out, but the blunter Ordzhonikidze simply replied: “Well, what of that? We wrote lots of stupid things in those days.”

“Yes,” said Trotsky, “but I would let my arms and legs be cut off and my head taken from my shoulders if in all of my writings you could find anything half so bad as this!” A little while later, the copy of the paper from which Trotsky had quoted, which he
had found after considerable effort, was stolen from his room. The Yaroslavskys, so meticulous about literary records, real and forged, of Comrade Trotsky, had no intention of letting their own shameful records lie around where Oppositionists could make use of them. Fortunately, the protocol of the Control Commission still records the damning excerpts—unless that too has been put into the furnace reserved for everything embarrassing to the Stalinist regime! It is precisely such types that are now doing the job of corrupting a whole generation of revolutionists with their shoddy substitute for Leninism.

A considerable part of our conversation was devoted to the situation in the United States and the perspectives for the movement here. He asked about every detail of our work, our numerical strength, the circulation of The Militant, our work in the trade unions, the influence of the party, the strength of the Lovestone faction, etc., etc. The establishment of the weekly Militant, which he follows closely, he considers the greatest achievement of the American Opposition. When we spoke of the difficulties of the paper, to which every labor and revolutionary journal is subject, he even wrote to the American comrades urging that the greatest efforts be exerted to maintain and strengthen the weekly.

Trotsky does not know the American situation as well as he does, let us say, the Russian, or even the French, but he is very far from being unacquainted with it. Of the American party leaders, he is "best" acquainted with Pepper. He told of how Pepper came to him during the days of the great "farmer-labor party boom" in the United States, and tried to convince him that the revolution in this country would come about by winning over the revolutionary farmers, allying the Communist Party with the petty bourgeoisie, and neutralizing the working class! The question of a farmer-labor party (i.e., a party of two classes) had come up then for the first time in the Political Bureau of the party in Moscow. Everybody spoke hesitantly or tentatively about it. Stalin even said: "I am sure that if Vladimir Ilyich [Lenin] were present he would be for it." Trotsky intervened immediately and spoke sharply and at length against the whole idea. Kamenev, who has a flair for the left in a theoretical discussion, picked up the thread right away and as a result of the subsequent decision, the American party was, in part at least, dragged by the hair out of the opportunist swamp into which Pepper had led it.

Trotsky outlined—we repeat them here briefly—his ideas of the perspectives for developments in this country. "In my work on
the Russian revolution of 1905,” he said, “I remarked on the fact that Marx had written that capitalism passes from feudalism to the guild system to the factory. In Russia, however, we never knew the guild system, with the possible exception of the kustari [handicraftsmen]. Or one might compare the development of the working class in England and Germany with that in Russia. In the first two countries, the proletariat has gone through a long period of parliamentary experience. In Russia, on the other hand, there was very little of a parliamentary system for the workers. That is, the Russian proletariat learned its parliamentary history from an abridged handbook.

“In many respects, the history of the development of the United States is akin to that of the Russian working class. It is nowhere written, and theoretically it cannot be substantiated, that the American workers will perforce have to pass through the school of reformism for a long period of time. They live and develop in another period, their coming to maturity is taking place under different circumstances from that of the English working class, for instance. That is, the stage of a labor party or a powerful socialist party is by no means inevitable. The rapidity of the development of the American workers, of course, also depends to a large extent upon the degree of preparedness of the Communist movement and its clarity. The Socialist Party in the United States need by no means and will by no means ever reach the position of the British Labour Party or the German Social Democracy.

“It is not at all permanently established that the United States will be last in order of revolutionary primacy, condemned to reach its proletarian revolution only after the countries of Europe and Asia. A situation, a combination of forces is possible in which the order is changed and the tempo of development in the United States enormously accelerated. But for that it is necessary to prepare.”
To the Editorial Board of *The Militant*

Dear Comrades:

After reading the statement on the miners' situation and discussing this question with Comrade Shachtman, I tried to formulate my comments on this question in a sort of amendment, which is not destined for immediate publication but for such a use as the circumstances would indicate:

"The adherence of Howat and Brophy to the corrupt bureaucracy of Fishwick and Company is one of the indications of the weakening of the revolutionary positions in the trade unions. Howat and Brophy are not unconscious elements who honestly but confusedly swing from right to left, but they are experienced politicians who are now turning from left to right. They are careerists who no longer find it useful to cover themselves with sympathy for communism, because they consider it sufficiently weakened and compromised.

"In the present conditions, the principal danger in the trade unions is represented by elements of the type of Howat and Brophy. It is they that are, and above all will become, the whips in the service of the Green bureaucracy. They are beginning in the United States to play the same role which was played in England in the critical after-war years by Purcell, Cook, and Company, and by Edo Fimmen on an international scale. No illusions at all are permissible about these gentlemen who call themselves by the absolutely inconsistent name of progressives; in the best case it can signify an Americanized species of trade unionist centrism. It is an elementary duty systematically to unmask and discredit them before the masses on the basis of experience of the trade union movement itself. But precisely for that purpose it is necessary that the revolutionary elements take active part in the UMWA and utilize the present struggle between the two cliques for deeper penetration into the rank and file."
"The swing of Howat and Brophy to the right reflects the past period during which the working masses of the United States developed in a sense diametrically opposed to the revolutionary cries of 'radicalization' by the party. But it is very probable that the situation in the masses of the United States can seriously and radically change in the next period. After the years of prosperity and crisis, the unemployment, etc., can give great impetus to the leftward movement, along the revolutionary path. All the more necessary is it to exploit the contradiction within the reformist trade unions developing between the bureaucracy, especially the progressives, and the masses. We will be unable to isolate, to condemn to impotence the Lewis and Fishwick machines unless we crush implacably their whips, Howat, Brophy, and Company."

L. Trotsky

PROSPECTS OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF AMERICA

March 26, 1930

To the Editorial Board of The Militant

Dear Comrades:
The visit of Comrade Shachtman, unfortunately too brief, was a great advantage to me, that is, for my information and contact with the American movement. In my recent letter addressed to Shachtman (I hope you have received it) I expressed the assumption, based upon The Militant itself, that the development of the Opposition had become less rapid and perhaps stagnant. Comrade Shachtman confirmed that the development, although not stagnant, was, however, slow. This stage was inevitable after the League had concentrated all the elements prepared by the past for the ideas of the Opposition. Now we have the task of educating a new stratum. That requires a certain time but the second stratum will be more numerous than the first.

In one of my first letters, sent upon the appearance of the
weekly, I expressed the opinion that the League can arrive at the necessity to become an independent communist party. The relation of forces explained to me by Shachtman showed me that this "danger" is not imminent. I wish to correct my first assumption, but without any discouragement. If we begin in the United States and Canada with 200 or if we begin with 1,000 members, the difference is almost insignificant. The qualitative difference could be measured only by thousands and not by hundreds.

I learn from Shachtman your financial difficulties, which narrow my picture of a powerful America. The retreat from the weekly to a semi-monthly would be a certain defeat, and it is necessary, in spite of the summertime that is approaching, to exert heroic efforts to maintain the weekly, which has become not only of national but of international importance. Unfortunately, for the next period we cannot do all here that we would like to do, but we will do all that is possible. Shachtman will inform you of the details.

I have read your platform, although the unexpected departure of Shachtman found me just before the last section of it. At any rate, I have read the most important parts of it. (Unfortunately, I read it belatedly, not even knowing that the American comrades possessed a platform.) I find the platform by and large very good. Many parts, on the trade union question, for instance, are excellent. Certain doubts on the slogan of the labor party I have already spoken of to Comrade Shachtman; but I must study the question further with materials and more details at hand. But, summa summarum, I am sure and convinced that the platform is sufficient to assure the League political success, and the numerous signs indicate that the situation will become favorable for the genuine proletarian revolutionaries.

I hope that after the visit of Shachtman our relations with you will become closer, and I sign my best greetings and wishes.

Yours,

L. Trotsky
THE MUTE CONFERENCE

April 16, 1930

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

Belated thanks for your comprehensive report on the Berlin events. The picture you paint is not very rosy. Now I am informed (on Seipold’s authority) that the situation has taken a turn for the better. I have quite frankly expressed my suspicion to our Berlin friends that a number of agents of the official party bureaucracy are in their midst and are carrying out their unholy work as splitters. Moreover, I believe this sort of procedure is totally in the spirit of Stalinist bureaucratic practice and that we must be on our guard against it everywhere, including America.

Now on the international conference: It was a great disappointment for me in every respect. It really was not wise to call a mute international conference. If our opponents have only half their wits about them—and in this area they have quite creative minds—they will immediately and publicly draw the conclusion: The assembled representatives of the Opposition were so disunited or unclear or both that they did not dare give voice to a single political idea. After all, no one, no politically thinking person will believe that people come from New York, Berlin, Prague, Spain, etc., to Paris in order to say nothing. Travel undertaken for the sake of silence is really a superfluous political expense. To create a secretariat one would only need four or five postcards, nothing more. One can of course say that the majority of the delegates were present in Paris anyway. The reader of the official communiques doesn’t know this, however, and it alters nothing in the substance of the matter.

Why wasn’t a short declaration of principle or manifesto issued? Why? Such a document would be of the greatest political importance. It could be shown to every thinking worker in every country and serve as a basis for the propaganda work of the International Opposition. It must always be borne in mind that most of the national groups are relatively weak, without tradition, and without authority among the workers, which creates great obstacles and difficulties at the outset. We cite the authority of the Russian Opposition, which is rather abstract for the
workers. This authority is often given a personal turn, which is politically uncomfortable in every respect and impermissible on principled grounds. A worker who in general sympathizes with the Opposition but still has insufficient trust for the national group would breathe a sigh of relief if he could be shown a succinct, clear statement of principle. And we have robbed ourselves of this weapon for an indeterminate period of time. For what reasons? Comrade Naville in a hastily written letter cites only one: the refusal of the Italians and the half-refusal of the Belgians. I cannot in any case accept this argument. We held a conference to give expression to the views of those groups that had achieved clarity, not those that remained mired in confusion. Besides this, the Italians were not officially represented and the Belgians were divided. The manifesto could have been passed unanimously or with a negative vote from one of the Belgians. One might object that we didn't want to antagonize the people from Brussels. This I find even more difficult to understand since they are doing battle against the comrades from Charleroi to whom we are committed to give our complete support. Also insofar as the Italians are concerned, I consider the policy of patient "indulgence" to be completely wrong. If we had pressed the Italians for a decision through articles, by openly posing the question, we would now be a lot further with them than we unfortunately are now.

It must be admitted that we wasted too much time even before the conference. The Secretariat should have been formed at least six months ago. Urbahns would never have been able to make such relatively deep inroads into his organization if he had been under some kind of control from the International Opposition and if the members of the Leninbund had understood that it was a question of breaking with the entire International Opposition. By this inexplicable delay we have helped Urbahns against us, just as we are now helping the muddleheads among the Belgians and Italians and elsewhere with our mute conference (that's how it will go down in history).

I am insistent on this point because I sense that there are tendencies on this important question that are not in agreement with the active revolutionary internationalism of the Opposition and if they are not brought to light and eliminated in time, they may become dangerous.

If I am not mistaken, things are not quite in order in the formal sense as well, and here, my dear Shachtman, I must indict you directly. Through your good offices I made proposals to the
conference. But the conference never got to hear a word about them. Who decided, behind the backs of the conference, that an important proposal directed to the conference should not even be placed before it? That seems to me to be not quite "democratic" as regards the conference itself. What is really undemocratic (without quotation marks) is that 99 percent, if not more, of the membership of the International Opposition would undoubtedly be for issuing such a manifesto, were they asked. Moreover, a referendum on this question would not be very difficult at all since, unfortunately, there are not too many of us. So the whole procedure seems politically completely wrong and organizationally a bit arbitrary.

What you tell me on Comrade Pfemfert's authority about alleged proposals regarding the publication of my biography in Yiddish is a misunderstanding. The amount of money involved is a tenth of the sum you mention in your letter. I am very sorry that The Militant's profit will be much smaller than you had imagined on the basis of this misunderstanding.

I have received with gratitude Comrade Martin Abern's letter with its important information.

I received a very warm letter from Harry Winitsky and enclose a reply to him through your good offices. Unfortunately I had to write this in German too. If your consul thinks my answer is not prudent, don't hand over the letter, just report the practical contents orally.

My warmest greetings for you and the others.

Yours,

L. Trotsky

MORE ABOUT COMRADE BLUMKIN

Published May 1930

In Moscow only narrow party circles know of Stalin's violence against Blumkin. From these circles rumors systematically are spreading that Blumkin ended his life by suicide. Thus, so far Stalin does not dare to admit openly that he executed the "counterrevolutionary" Blumkin.
It is extremely noteworthy that the world capitalist press by no means rushed to make use of the Blumkin affair. It reasons, completely correctly, that the defense of left Communists from Stalinist reprisals does not enter its circle of interests. All the more persistently and irreconcilably, then, is the Communist Left Opposition obliged to campaign to expose the Stalinist crimes.

In the last issue we reported that besides Blumkin, two more Oppositionists were shot: Comrades Silov and Rabinovich. Thus the question possesses exceptional political sharpness: only publicity of his crimes among the progressive workers of the whole world can stop Stalin's bloody violence against the Bolshevik-revolutionists.

The ex-Communist Souvarine sped to Stalin's aid, claiming that inside the GPU Blumkin allegedly carried out the instructions of the Opposition, and that the very existence of the GPU dictates that it must execute treacherous employees. Souvarine draws the conclusion that "in the thirteenth year of the revolution" (?) it is necessary to abolish the GPU.

We have no reason whatever to indulge in a theoretical debate with Souvarine. We consider it sufficient to limit ourselves to the statement that follows.

Comrade Blumkin never carried out, and, because of the very character of his work, never could have carried out in the GPU or through the GPU the instructions of the Opposition. It is enough to say that Blumkin spent a considerable part of the last period in the Far East, mainly in Mongolia.

The prohibition against workers of the GPU, and also workers of the war department, having other views besides the present views of the Central Committee, is equivalent to a deprivation of elementary party rights for Communists working in the above-named institutions. Only Stalinist bureaucrats could defend such vileness.

The GPU is an organ of self-defense of the proletarian dictatorship. Inasmuch as the October Revolution even in its thirteenth year is surrounded by a world of enemies, it cannot renounce such organs—the dictatorship cannot stop being a dictatorship.

Only liberals and Social Democrats who are becoming liberals could see the question from a formal viewpoint. We look at the question from a class viewpoint: in the name of what are the repressions adopted? Against whom are they adopted? Whom and what do they serve? It is a matter of revolutionary expediency, and not supra-class justice.

The murder of Blumkin and in general all the repressions
against the Leninist opposition weaken the proletarian vanguard, undermine the party, and strengthen the class enemies. We conduct the battle against Stalin’s treacherous, cowardly murder of Blumkin in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

And let this be known to friends and enemies!

G. MANNOURY AND THE COMINTERN

Published May 1930

The Dutch Communist, Comrade G. Mannoury, was expelled several months ago from the Comintern for “Trotskyism.” Mannoury vainly tried to get a proper consideration of his views and objections through the party hierarchy. His trial was conducted behind his back, in the manner of a court-martial. G. Mannoury has published in a pamphlet a series of documents dealing with his expulsion, and he does not deliver a defensive speech.

All the “Trotskyism” of Mannoury consisted of the fact that he did not agree with the defamation of the Russian Opposition, its expulsion from the Comintern, and the repressions that followed against the Oppositionists. Mannoury’s own point of view on the disputed questions is very vague. In one of the documents he even claims that on the internal questions of the USSR he stands closer to Stalin than to Trotsky. It is necessary in this connection to keep in mind that this was written in the period when Stalin was allied with Bukharin, that is, before the present left course.

In whatever touches the theoretical realm, Mannoury appears an eclectic: he combines dialectical materialism with psychoanalysis, turning it into a philosophical system, and with idealist morality. There is no need to point out that all this is very far from the theoretical foundations on which the Marxist Opposition rests.
From these same documents of Mannoury we find out that the official representative of the Communist International proclaimed the most outstanding representative of “Trotskyism” in Holland to be... Wijnkoop, who always was only a left (now and then ultraleft) Social Democrat and, evidently, has remained so even to this day.56

It is no wonder that Comrade Mannoury asks several times in the course of his pamphlet, “Just what do you personally mean in the final analysis by Trotskyism?”

In order to give an idea of Mannoury’s mode of thought, we will cite several quotations from his pamphlet.

“Trotskyism is your invention. No one is always correct and no one is totally correct, neither Trotsky, nor Lenin, nor Marx. But in the main question Trotsky is correct, namely, that the revolution has hardly begun, and that communism has barely been born. . . . I know nothing of your ‘scissors,’”57 do you understand? Nothing, except what I have read about them in your own slanderous articles against Trotsky from November 1924 to the present day, and every line of your sophistical and empty argumentation convinced me more of your wrongness, and every word of the phrases, very scanty and torn out of context, that you were forced to cite from the works of Trotsky made my conviction more solid.”

In another place Mannoury demands the demolition of the Lenin mausoleum and the cremation of Lenin’s remains, in which we have to sympathize with him, although, of course, this question is not the most urgent.

We discover from the pamphlet that the executive committee of the [Dutch] party demanded of Comrade Mannoury that he discontinue “political and organizational ties with Trotsky.” The fact that such ties never existed made it all the easier for Mannoury to repudiate them. In this same document Mannoury declared that “in the majority of tactical and party-political disagreements between the adherents of Trotsky and the supporters of Stalin he [Mannoury] leans more toward the latter than toward the followers of Trotsky.” But the leaders demanded of Mannoury that he acknowledge Trotsky an enemy of communism and declare an irreconcilable struggle against him. Mannoury refused to do this. In the end they expelled him. This whole story is in the highest degree characteristic of the customs of the Comintern and of its Dutch section.

Mannoury enters this struggle as an unquestionably sincere and idealistic person, having, however, nothing in common with
the Communist Left Opposition, either in theoretical premises or in political conclusions. As we already know, this in no way prevented his being expelled as a "Trotskyist."

STALIN'S "REPLY TO COLLECTIVE FARM COMRADES"

Published May 1930

This answer of Stalin entirely fills the front page of Pravda. A hopeless sea of lines. It is impossible to fish out a fresh thought, a serious generalization.

Why did the excesses take place? Here is the answer: "It has been forgotten that coercion, which is necessary and useful in the fight against our class enemies, is impermissible and disastrous when applied to the middle peasant, who is our ally."

How did they thus "forget"? After all, the one idea they have dinned into the mind of the party since 1923 is that one must not forget the middle peasant. Indeed, the whole struggle against the Opposition proceeded under this banner. And how did it turn out? "We forgot the middle peasant." It is exactly as though they had mislaid a handkerchief.

What other kinds of mistakes did they make? "In building collective farms, Lenin's voluntary principle has been violated."

No more, no less. Why did they violate it? This is not explained. And why did it take so long for the authorities to notice the violation? And why did the peasants not complain in time about the violation? It is impossible to understand anything.

"Third question. How could these errors have arisen, and how must the party correct them?"

"Reply. They arose because of our rapid successes in the collective-farm movement. Success sometimes turns people's heads."

That is the whole explanation: quick successes, and therefore dizziness. But just where was the party? It could not have happened that one-and-a-half million members of the party felt dizzy. And generally speaking, just what kind of political condi-
tion is this? And what kind of corrective measures exist?

Then follows:
"Fifth question. Which is our chief danger, the Right or the 'Left'?

"Reply. Our chief danger at the present time is the Right danger. The Right danger has been, and still is, the chief danger."

This "sure is true," as Tolstoy's peasant observes. But because, don't you see, the left danger nourishes the right, therefore, in the interests of the struggle against the main danger it is necessary to crush the left. If Stalin executed Blumkin, then it was only in the interests of the struggle against the right danger.

As regards the kulaks, it is reported that the policy of their "elimination as a class" remains in full force. But "that does not mean, of course, that we can eliminate them at one stroke. But it does mean that we shall work to surround them and to eliminate them."

To surround and eliminate—no, to work to surround and eliminate them, and, to boot, not at one stroke—all this shows that Stalin will work furtively to eliminate the program of dispossessing the kulak, not at one stroke, of course, but in a drawn-out fashion, through unscrupulous maneuvers that will confuse the party once and for all.

OFFICIAL DECEIT
AND THE TRUTH

Published May 1930

In January of this year the leader in the Northern Caucasus, the Central Committee member Andreyev, confirmed at a meeting on collectivization that the movement in the direction of collectives "has now proceeded so undeviatingly, has unfolded so powerfully throughout the country, but especially in the Northern Caucasus . . . that now this movement will break through each and every kind of obstacle in its path."

And in the very same speech Andreyev complained that the
rapacious selling of equipment, cattle, and even seed “before entrance into the collective farm takes on directly threatening dimensions. . . . We must,” continues Andreyev, “stop this element no matter what.”

Before us appear two “elements”: the irresistible movement into the collectives and the rapacious annihilation of their future productive bases. Is it possible to disclose more sharply the deadly contradictions of the current collectivization? Not wishing that, Andreyev characterizes the psychology of a broad layer of collectivized peasants with the words of a joyless song: “My wagon, it has disappeared/All four wheels.” This is not the psychology of socialist construction.

As if to highlight the picture still more, Andreyev confirms, and on this occasion he is well founded, that if one took a poll of all the kulaks throughout the Northern Caucasus, “the majority would express themselves in favor of joining the collectives.” And here he anticipates: “But this doesn’t mean that the kulak is a partisan of collectivization. There is nowhere to go—he goes into the collective. He enters the collective in order to wreck it from within” (Pravda, January 15). This is certainly correct. But unfortunately, it is not limited to one kulak. The official statistics give 5-6 percent as the number of kulak farms in the Caucasus. The strong middle peasant follows their lead, and is followed, with less vigor, by the ordinary middle peasant, and so forth. If the situation is such that the kulak is prepared to vote for the collective together with the middle peasant, then it is possible to distinguish the kulak from the middle peasant statistically, but not politically. Just what kinds of methods do Andreyev and his teachers use to determine whether the middle peasant enters the collective farm “with all his heart,” or just because “there’s no place to go”? Indeed, this very same middle peasant, who according to Andreyev is breaking through all obstacles on the road to socialism, embarks on his road by liquidating his inventory and also in fact prepares the wreck of the collective. Is he thus deeply differentiated, in this instance, from the kulak, who “enters the collective in order to wreck it from within”?

In order to halt the destruction of farm equipment, Andreyev proposes: “It is necessary to treat such farms (which sell off their cattle and so forth) in the same way that the kulak farms are treated.” Thus Andreyev in essence equates the desire of the middle peasant for socialism with the kulak’s sabotage. No wonder if after several weeks we will read in the same Pravda that the local “bunglers” have offended the middle peasants,
deprived them of the right to dispose of their property, expropriated them, taken away their right to vote, etc. But what other ways are there to fulfill the directives of Andreyev, who in his turn merely fulfills the directives of Stalin?

The whole picture in its entirety Andreyev summarizes thus: "The victorious development of the socialist revolution in agriculture is so swift that it upsets our most courageous presumptions concerning collectivization." This is said a month and a half before the general diagnostician [Stalin] identified the symptoms of "dizziness from success."

And now, in April, the Northern Caucasus presents a picture of insufficient spring sowing, administrative panic, wailing about excesses, and endless appeals . . . not to forget about the individual peasant farm, the very one that the diligent Andreyev, without recourse to reason, declared as early as January to have been liquidated.

BUREAUCRATIC TENDENCIES

June 20, 1930

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

1. I see that the delay in your reply was not your fault and I withdraw all my reproaches with my apologies. I do not wish to return to the question of the Paris conference. This is already water under the bridge. What I find intolerable, however, is the bureaucratic procedure used in this and other cases. Three people decide without informing the others about the proposals. But they are no less interested in the matter than the "Big Three," and when they find out later about many things that were kept from them, that demoralizes and antagonizes them. This does not apply exclusively to the question of the Paris conference—there are within the Opposition rather strong bureaucratic-literati tendencies which can be explained from its development and to some extent from its function as an opposition. But these tendencies and methods are highly dangerous and can be the death of the Opposition if they are not mercilessly rooted out. I will discuss this in greater detail in a circular letter to all groups.
2. I am very sad that the business with the Yiddish edition of *My Life* fell through. There is nothing I can do about it from here at present since Rieder [French publisher] has made claims on it and I am involved in a suit with him and am totally paralyzed for the time being. I see from the most recent copies of *The Militant* that its appearance as a weekly is threatened. It would be very sad if retrenchment were necessary. If the English edition of the autobiography works out well financially I would be very glad to lend *The Militant* a hand. For the moment I have no indications aside from the reviews which are more or less promising.

3. You ask about my interpretation of the paragraph in the Chinese platform concerning the possibility of organizational mergers by the CP. In the thesis you cite, it says that the proletarian party must under no circumstances merge organizationally with the party of another class. We inserted the words “of another class” intentionally so that the thesis would not be too doctrinaire, formalistic, irreconcilable. It goes without saying that a labor party, if it has a definite, independent program—indeed with respect to communism—is the tool of another class, although it is based on the working masses. Organizational mergers between the CP and such a party are as much out of the question as, let us say, merger with the German Social Democracy. But it is possible that there are or will arise transitional formations which encompass the working masses but have no definite program and no corresponding discipline and hence leave open the possibility of organizational but, in any case, temporary ties. Of course, the objective conditions and the characteristics of the labor party in question as well as the nature of the organizational ties must be concretely investigated and determined. In your example it is a question of establishing ties on a regional level. This, of course, reduces the political danger since the Communist Party as a whole retains its complete organizational freedom and hence also its control over its regional group. It seems to me that this is more like “noyautage” [fraction work], that is, putting out feelers to other organizations, than an organizational merger involving the party. I'll try to answer the other questions in the next few days since I want to send this letter off today.

4. I've sent you two notes dealing with the articles in the *New Masses*. These bohemians must be pitilessly rapped on the knuckles!

5. Now for the fish line: I need a fishing line, let's say 100 meters long, good quality and as strong as possible for fishing
the sea floor. I am sending you a French sample which of course is not up to American technological standards, but which can serve as an example. If you have any difficulties, you can call on President Hoover, who is also an expert in these things. Just be sure that it is not a "surface" line but one which is made to lie on the ocean floor. You can send me the line as "printed matter" in a simple package with newspapers, etc., so that I don't have to go through endless formalities with the customs office. When you visit me next time I'll present you with fish caught with this line.

My best greetings to you and the others.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

THE FRENCH LEADERSHIP

June 30, 1930

As for the situation of the French Opposition, I greatly rejoice at its progress. But I must admit to you that I would be happier to have some exact figures on the number of members of the League, on the sales of La Verite, etc. One could easily be deceived about its influence by basing oneself on superficial echoes in the upper stratum of the workers' organizations. So far as I know, the number of adherents in Paris is quite limited. I understand the objective difficulties, but there are also subjective mistakes which I will never tire of pointing out. The leadership is too heavily composed of literary types. The leadership sees publications too much as literary enterprises, and the organization as a mere appendage. A certain routine has developed. We don't make concerted attempts to penetrate into a specific milieu, adapt the paper to it, etc. I have devoted not a few letters to this question without result, that is to say without either agreement or contradiction. I believe it is necessary to create a new relationship between the press and the Executive Committee, enlarging the latter with comrades directly linked to the ranks; that is the decision point on which the fate of the Opposition depends.

My best greetings,
WE SHOULD PROCEED AS DEMOCRATICALLY AS POSSIBLE

August 18, 1930

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

1. Of course it is very regrettable that The Militant has been forced to cut back to a biweekly. But, in any case, this is no catastrophe. I am only a bit concerned about a purely technical symptom that sometimes also has political significance. The proofreading in the last issue is miserable. This may simply be coincidental, but sometimes it is a sign of demoralization among the editorial board and sometimes a crisis in the organization begins with neglect of detail work. I am sure that this is not the case with the [American] League.

2. I regret that all of our financial plans have come to naught. Rieder has completely botched up the Yiddish edition. And, as I see, you haven't been able to place chapters from the new book in the foreign-language press. Scribner's [U.S. publisher] writes me that the crisis has been very detrimental to the sale of the autobiography. He has sold only four thousand copies so far.

3. On the French Opposition: The reports on the crisis which have reached you seem to be very exaggerated. Rosmer has not resigned. He is on leave now and will resume his post in a few weeks. As always the conflict left the comrades with a bitter taste in their mouths, but I trust that in time the positive results will outweigh the negative. Many questions have been clarified by the crisis, many positions made more precise. The work of the [French] League has not been impeded, it is going forward and with success. We are expecting Comrade Molinier's arrival here shortly, Naville will come later. I will be able to give you more concrete information about the personal aspects then. I believe, however, that the crisis has been basically overcome both in its political and personal aspects.

4. The situation with international work is much worse. All of my attempts to determine what actually was decided at the April
conference have yielded unsatisfactory results since, as I understand, no formal decisions were made at this congress and no minutes were kept. (Comrade Frankel corrects me in this respect saying that detailed minutes and written decisions must be available.) In any case I have not received them yet. The April conference was more or less a misunderstanding. The work was summarily shoved off on the French League without determining the precise division of labor. Leaving aside the question of a political manifesto, the technical-organizational aspects should have been taken care of thoroughly. I am making a point of this because I am very afraid that a lot of the same kind of sloppiness is practiced on the national level, doing incredible harm to our work. Bureaucracy has its good side too: exactness, punctuality, precise resolutions, etc. This aspect of “bureaucracy” is something the Opposition should begin to acquire.

5. You write that the International Secretariat should really decide the question of my circular letter. You maintain, and not unjustly, that that is what it was formed to do. Yes, that is the way it should be. But, as I have said, despite a dozen letters, I have been unable to find out what the actual decisions were. There were certain nuances of difference on a number of international questions. These nuances are absolutely unavoidable and to a certain extent provide a stimulus for the movement. But there must be an organization that can go from discussion of nuances to decision and action. I had hoped with your collaboration, dear Shachtman, to find the road to this in Paris. But since this was not the case, there was no way other than to turn directly to the Opposition and clarify the situation through membership opinion. In any case I did achieve with this circular letter what I had been unable to achieve through countless private letters. A separate editorial board for the International Bulletin has been formed and I am writing here from day to day for the first issue.

6. You write that my circular letter will be communicated to the members of the leadership. Of course you know best how to proceed in America. In principle, however, I think we should proceed as democratically as possible. What we have in the ranks of the Opposition are cadres; they must be trained, trained to the point of complete self-reliance. That will not come about by their believing in a mighty International Secretariat, but rather through their taking part on all questions in all actions which will gradually lead to the creation of a capable center.

7. On the Bordigists: In the most recent issue of Lutte des classes you will find the most important documents which
explain the state of the two groups of the Italian Opposition. Relations with the Paris Bordigists are a bit strained. Here too the situation would be better if it had not been handled with too little democracy, i.e., if the negotiations at the leadership level had long ago been supplemented by enlightening all French and Italian Oppositionists. Nothing forces the leaders to define their ideas and actions so much as the fact that they are under observation by and hence under the control of the public opinion of their members. This rule is not to be applied just to the Stalinists but to ourselves as well. That should never be forgotten.

The new Italian group is very active and seems to have well-trained and capable forces at its disposal. It is our intention to have both groups represented by one or, if worst comes to worst, two comrades in the International Secretariat. If the Paris Bordigists weren’t so sectarian, they would have to hail the new Opposition as a sign of their political success. Unfortunately they place great importance on maintaining their position as oppositional aristocracy at any price.

In any case, I don’t think you have to alter your attitude toward the New York Bordigists. In my opinion you must, however, discuss the contested questions based on the material in the latest issue of *Lutte des classes* quite openly in the organization and in the presence of the Bordigists.

8. On a united front of the three Communist organizations in the U.S. Of course it is out of the question for us to enter into any kind of bloc with the right [Lovestoneites] that the party does not participate in. The most important element in Gitlow’s document is the admission that his organization has tactical differences with the party, but both tactical and political differences with us. That is, despite all of the Stalinists’ claims to the contrary, the rightists recognize that they are far closer to the centrists [Stalinists] than to us. This must be turned to good account politically. Winitsky sent me the big resolution on “Trotskyism” from the rightists’ national conference. It is nine pages long and I’ve only glanced through it. I will comment on it in an article in the near future. The fact that you have forced these people to make their standpoint more precise is in itself a large gain for us.

9. The matters concerning the Russian *Bulletin* I am turning over to Lyova [Leon Sedov] since that’s his department. He’ll write to you about it soon.

10. I received the fishing line without problems. Maestro Charalambos tested it and found it to be excellent. I hope that
TO THE BOLSHEVIK-LENINIST ORGANIZATION OF GREECE (ARCHIO-MARXISTS)

October 1930

Dear Comrades:

The recent visit of two representatives of the International Secretariat of the Left Opposition, the thorough inquiry they have made into the situation of the Left Opposition in Greece and the direct contacts they have established between your organization and the international center of the Left Opposition, give us an opportunity to address to you the following observations, which we believe will bring the necessary clarity into our relations and precision into the political activity which you are about to undertake.

(1) In the resolution adopted by your conference you mention the Communist International. Although your relations with the Communist International follow from your general position, they require nevertheless a more exact formulation. In no case are we ready to abandon to the Stalinists the banner of the Communist International, its traditions, and its proletarian core. We are fighting for the regeneration of the Third International and not for the creation of a fourth. It is in this way that we define our role as an international faction. This does not, however, exclude the possibility in one country or another where the official party is extremely weak that the Opposition will have to assume, partially or totally, the functions of an independent political party (leadership of the trade unions and strikes, organization of demonstrations, nomination of candidates). It is impossible for us to decide to what degree such a situation is characteristic of
Greece; but no matter how you decide this question in the near future, that will not change the general line of the Left Opposition. Even while acting as a party you must consider yourself as a section of the Third International, regarding the official party as a faction, and proposing to it unity of action in relation to the masses. A principled declaration on your part on this question would be extremely desirable.

(2) We learn from your resolution that you are preparing to execute a turn from the purely propagandist, preparatory stage of your activity to an open political struggle under the banner of the International Left Opposition. The necessity of this turn is perfectly clear to you as well as to us. However, we foresee that this turn will not be able to be realized without certain contradictions, conflicts, and internal struggle. We must foresee in advance the crisis of growth and prepare for it.

The illegal conditions in which the revolutionary organizations of your country are forced to exist, and the reactionary bourgeois character of the official trade union leadership, have caused all the revolutionary workers, devoted to their class and not to the bourgeois regime, to group themselves around your organization in the trade unions. This fact is of great positive importance and guarantees you contact with large layers of the working class, but certain negative factors may flow from it and pop up temporarily. Not only the workers who support you, but also the members of your own organization, although not all, have not as yet a clear idea of the aims and tasks of Bolshevik-Leninists. Certain elements may withdraw from the organization when it passes over to open political action. It is wrong to become frightened before such setbacks. By infusing its ranks with more homogeneity and its activity with a broader political character, your organization will be able to replace one-hundredfold all possible individual desertions.

(3) It is very important to adopt a consistent line of conduct toward the Opposition organization, Spartakos. The existence of two Opposition organizations, both declaring their solidarity with the International Left, will undoubtedly derail workers and impede your development. It is difficult for us to judge whether unification is possible at the present moment. At any rate the possibility or the impossibility of unification can only become manifest in practice, that is, if you seek united action in the form of an agreement on each political question, since a fusion of the organizations is impossible. In this way the members of both organizations and their worker followers will be able to distin-
guish the existing differences by means of the experience of political struggle, and make their choice. In other words, we suggest a policy of the united front under these circumstances and at the present moment.

(4) The terrorist methods introduced by the Stalinist bureaucracy into the heart of the labor movement in Greece represent a very serious danger. Naturally every organization and every revolutionary is obliged to defend himself when he is attacked. The most serious method of defense is, however, in this case a correct position on the question of the application of methods of violence instead of methods of persuasion, and a persistent propagation of this position in the ranks of the working class. Of course, we are not pacifists, but a Marxist must understand clearly where the limits of the application of violence begin and where they end, where it is transformed into a revolutionary factor and where into a reactionary one. It is pure insanity on the part of a minority of the working class to believe that it can conquer the majority by applying methods of violence against other minority groups. The working class can make its choice only on the basis of experience. The attempt to replace experience by terrorist methods inevitably produces in the working class a hatred against all those who employ these methods, and may for a long time sustain a reformist reaction.

We believe that a clear and precise declaration on this question is especially necessary on your part. This declaration may take the character of an open appeal to the official party and to the Spartakos group, demanding that they definitely and categorically condemn, in the name of the three organizations, the use of violence in the internal relations between them and propose that each case of apparent violence be examined by an impartial interfractional commission. Of course, we do not insist on the form of your proposal, which is important only as an example. You will yourselves no doubt find the form appropriate under the circumstances.

(5) The incorrect conduct of individual members of your organization in the courts of bourgeois justice necessitates, we believe, a principled solution of this question. The illegal existence of your organization demands no doubt a rigorous conspirative form and great foresight on the part of your leaders in order to avoid superfluous arrests and victims. But the members of your organization, and especially all its responsible militants, must remember when they are arrested that they are in front of the tribunal as the fighters of their party and their class. It is
perfectly permissible to refuse in the course of the cross-examination to make certain statements, especially in case these statements can serve to incriminate the accused or other persons. But it is altogether impermissible before the tribunal to disavow the banner of the party or to misrepresent its aims and its methods through the veiled ideology of the bourgeois state. Such methods can only in rare cases lead the prosecutors and the judges off the track, but on the other hand they usually mislead the workers and undermine the revolutionary authority of the party. For revolutionists the tribunal remains one of many tribunes. We have noted with satisfaction that the comrades responsible for such incorrect conduct before the tribunal have been expelled from your organization. We believe it altogether essential for you to lead a public action on this case, explaining the causes of the expulsions and clarifying your principled position in the question of the inquest and the tribunal.

We have permitted ourselves to make these suggestions with the firm conviction that the experience of the International Secretariat of the Left Opposition will be of undoubted service to your young organization and will enrich your political action.

With communist greetings,

PERSONAL ELEMENTS IN THE FRENCH STRUGGLE

November 25, 1930

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

The latent crisis in the French League has suddenly become acute again and now everyone must take a position. You know that Naville and Molinier visited us for some time and that we discussed all disputed questions more than thoroughly and then unanimously agreed on the necessary measures. Naville was sure that he would have problems with a number of comrades—particularly with Comrade Rosmer—but he was quite ready to surmount these obstacles together with the others. His parting words consisted of a completely spontaneous promise to conduct an open, nondiplomatic correspondence. Since his departure he
hasn’t written me a single line. The second issue of the *International Bulletin* that the three of us put together here, and which should have appeared in Paris a few days later, has still not been published. The Provisional Secretariat which we assembled together is not functioning because Naville is boycotting it. Despite all of Comrade Molinier’s attempts to put collaborative work on a firm footing, this has not come about because of Naville’s continual resistance.

Now this situation is not purely, or if you will, it is not in the final analysis a result of Naville’s ill will; rather it has come about because of new complications that outweigh everything else. You know from experience the way organizational matters are handled in Paris. You, my dear friend, have also contributed somewhat to this sloppy organization—while reproaching me for not publishing my circular letter through the *International Bulletin* and the Secretariat after the April conference at a time when, despite all efforts, no international life could be summoned up in Paris. But that is just an aside. In French matters the work was just as sloppily organized, particularly in the most important area—trade union work. The entire task of propagating communist ideas in the trade unions has been left up to Comrade Gourget, on his own responsibility—no directives, no controls, no regular reports. In letters to Rosmer, Naville, and Gourget himself I have repeatedly expressed my amazement at this way of carrying out work and propagandized urgently but unsuccessfully for collective work in this most important of areas. The basis for my concern was Comrade Gourget’s approach to things and people. He prefers a personal-diplomatic approach to a principled-propagandistic one, and if necessary polemical education. I am not against the art of individual diplomacy, but it cannot replace programmatic work. For this reason I considered Comrade Gourget invaluable as a member of a trade union commission, which naturally would be completely under the control of the leadership of the League. But since Naville, Rosmer and the others were protecting Gourget because of the (seemingly vacuous) internal struggle, they did not find an opportunity to put things back on the track. When Naville visited me I underscored this critical point and predicted that Gourget’s personal character in a situation of complete independence from the League in this most important area of work could engender harmful consequences—which has proved to be the case much sooner than I had imagined.

On November 20 there was supposed to be a conference of the
Unitary Opposition. Gourget undertook to work out theses on his own in collaboration with a semicommunist who was outside the League. What he produced was a political trade union platform composed of bits and pieces culled from syndicalism, communism and reformism. One can clearly see where the good Gourget in diplomatic deference to his partner threw one communist principle after the other overboard, on the one hand, and on the other incorporated one prejudice after another into the document. I will ask Comrade Frankel to write out at least the most important parts (the document is huge) and enclose them with this letter. I have written a short critique, unfortunately in Russian. I am enclosing it anyway. Perhaps you have someone now who can translate it into English. Had the document been written by noncommunist trade unionists half-way friendly to the League a friendly principled critique of this jumble would be in order. But that a communist, a member of the League, sets his name to the document, that communist trade unionists vote for it, let alone that we as the International Opposition take responsibility for it—this is absolutely out of the question.

As mentioned, these theses were drafted completely behind the back of the leadership. It was only at Comrade Molinier's demand that Gourget presented his document for examination and then reluctantly. Naville, Gerard [Rosenthal] not to mention Molinier, [Pierre] Frank and others, had to immediately concede that the platform was unacceptable. This promptly caused Comrade Gourget to hand in his resignation with a written explanation to the effect that the League was attempting to subordinate the trade union opposition [Unitary Opposition] to itself, i.e., he raised the same charge the syndicalists habitually raise against the communists with, in any case, one difference—that here it was not a case of “subordinating” the trade union opposition, at least for the present, but rather it was a case of the League controlling one of its members to whom the trade union work was entrusted.

Since then Naville’s position has been so wavering and equivocal that he has not, as I mentioned, trusted himself to write me a few lines although throughout I maintained a cordial correspondence with his wife—in constant expectation of his letter. Instead of condemning Comrade Gourget’s absolutely impermissible, unrevolutionary methods, he initiated guerrilla warfare against Molinier and Mill, and sabotaged the work of the International Secretariat. No one knows what conclusions Naville will draw from the situation, since unfortunately he is used to allowing
himself to be motivated by personal and sentimental considerations rather than political and organizational ones.

It goes without saying that Comrade Rosmer's attitude plays the most important role in all this. It is difficult for me to touch upon this sensitive point, but the matter is above personal considerations, even if an old friend is involved. Except for a short period, Comrade Rosmer never belonged to a large political organization. Like Monatte, he was active within the confines of a small, intimate anarchosyndicalist group which never adopted strict organizational norms but always remained a federation of individualities. More than once I was amazed at the meeting of this organization at Quai Jemmapes 96 (where Vie Ouvrière used to be located): no agenda, no minutes, unstructured give-and-take of discussion, no decisions, the meeting breaks up and everyone does just what he feels like doing or even nothing at all. And so it went week after week for years on end. The way the April conference was organized (to be sure, with your help, my dear friend) represents a carryover of the same methods and norms into the Left Opposition. This explains too why Rosmer found it quite natural for Gourget to carry the entire burden of the trade union work—no more, no less—and on his own responsibility, without being accountable to anyone. As you also know, for years after his expulsion from the party, Rosmer was completely outside the movement. One must also take into consideration that he is a sick man, who can only maintain his physical equilibrium by leading a very quiet life. He is happy working in a group of good friends, but is completely incapable of bearing internal conflicts and reacts by leaving the field to the combatants in such cases.

The International Secretariat under Rosmer's leadership was unable to begin its work because Overstraeten had objections and Naville some doubts, and Rosmer absolutely no desire to take on these false objections and equally false doubts. The same thing was repeated later with the Bordigists to whom I had written an open letter that Rosmer refused to publish in La Verite because he knew it would not cause friction with me and would avoid new conflicts with the Bordigists. I hope you will understand that I am not complaining to you about Rosmer. I am just trying to acquaint you with those particular traits of his character which explain his attitude in the present crisis.

If I were free to travel I would come to Paris immediately to have a word with an old friend. Unfortunately this is denied to
me. For this reason I urgently implored Rosmer to come to Prinkipo again so that we could try to clarify the situation together. Whatever develops from this personal factor, the general situation in the League, that is, the character of the crisis, is completely clear. The League is on the way to transforming itself from a small propaganda group, which was like a family, to a public organization where relations are less warm, ties and duties more formal, and conflicts at times brutal. Politically speaking, this is a great step forward, which can also clearly be seen in the development of *La Verite*. But the ineluctable negative aspects of this step forward Rosmer finds unbearable—and this is the personal explanation for the Rosmer case.

As for Naville, it should not be forgotten that he, with all his positive and promising qualities, belonged to *Revolution Surrealiste* as early as 1927, then later worked on *Clarte* and until the fall of 1929 still stood between the right and left wings in close alliance with Souvarine. These are not reproaches. Naville is quite young, comes from a bourgeois milieu and is making his way without distractions or inhibitions. But a theoretical Marxist education is no substitute for revolutionary training in a proletarian milieu. And this is precisely what Naville lacks, as does the *Lutte des classes* group. He accepts the correct standpoint in principle, but then in dealing with a practical problem other factors, individualistic and even national ones, come to the fore, making it difficult for him to decide and sometimes even forcing him onto the wrong track. These unsurmounted non-proletarian characteristics of his are so well defined that it is almost always possible to predict what kind of error he will make in one question or another. I repeat once again that with him errors are increasingly unavoidable the less they are theoretical (and that means purely theoretical) and the more they encompass practical and personal questions. This is the case now too, where Gourget’s improper conduct has caused him to vacillate and where he is trying to put pressure not on Gourget but on the others who are completely in the right. Naturally this only enlarges the scope of the crisis since one can overcome other people’s waverings only if one does not waver oneself.

I wrote a letter to Naville today, a copy of which is enclosed. At the same time I wrote to Comrade Mill, who is also the representative of the Russian Opposition in Paris, saying that in my opinion the work of the Secretariat should not be interrupted for a day. I asked him to look up Comrade Souzo and go together with
him to Comrade Naville and implore him not to neglect his responsibilities to the International Opposition despite the crisis in the French League.

But all these things are simply unpleasant side effects. It would be better if they did not exist. But it would be highly frivolous to fall into despair or even to become pessimistic because of them. For in the course of the last year we've come a long way and these crises no longer arise from the old, unhealthy stagnation of the foreign Opposition groups, but rather out of their development, metamorphosis, and growth.

This letter is intended for you personally, not that I have anything to conceal, but rather because those comrades who are not acquainted with the personal aspects of the situation might not interpret this letter in the spirit in which it was written.

If you want my opinion on your position, I'll give you the following advice: do not support or even indulge Comrade Naville's waverings, but demonstrate to him most forcefully that starting with the key question of the trade unions he must guide himself in accordance with principled and not personal motives. Once this side has been shored up, together we will do everything possible to avoid losing our dear Gourget. He is a good comrade, very sharp, and many of the qualities which show up as weaknesses because of insufficient organization could do excellent service for the International Opposition if correctly applied.

With best greetings,

Yours,
L. Trotsky

P.S. In my letter to Naville you will find a reference to Comrade Landau's preparations for the German conference. I am not sure whether you are informed about this. The conference was supposed to take place five days after the [September 14, 1930] elections, that is, at a time when nothing had yet been resolved. The conference was announced suddenly so that I had to content myself personally with a short letter which was published in Kommunist. At the last moment the conference was postponed a few weeks, supposedly to give the delegates time to take a position on the elections. That gave me time to write the small pamphlet that you did such an excellent job in publishing. I also wrote letters to Landau and Well with the request to send the draft resolutions to the international comrades, myself included. I insisted that my pamphlet be sent to the local organizations in manuscript form to serve as a basis for discussion. None of this
Every Group Should Take a Clear Stand

was done. No resolutions were prepared for the conference. My pamphlet appeared almost simultaneously with the American edition. The conference concerned itself exclusively with personal dirt, that is, it was a replay on a broader scale of the conference you yourself attended. The selection of delegates and the entire management of the conference had a single goal: to establish and affirm that not Neuman and Grylewicz but Landau was right without regard for which large and important questions this right and wrong applied to. Before the conference I asked Comrade Landau about the preparations and received the firmest assurances from him that he would collaborate with Roman Well and try to make the conference count as a real political-revolutionary assembly. The delegates, lacking any political ideas, could do nothing but declare the leadership was right and, as Comrade Seipold admits, go home extremely depressed, without having adopted the most meager political resolutions. Comrade Landau regards this as his victory and I am afraid he has led Naville into the temptation of trying for a similar victory in France. Landau's weaknesses (and of course he has his strong points too) are analogous to Comrade Naville's weaknesses and hence their comradeship in arms is not founded on an entirely healthy basis. So, now you know all that I have to tell you, since for the moment there is nothing more to add.

L.T.

EVERY GROUP SHOULD TAKE A CLEAR STAND

December 19, 1930

To the Administrative Committee of the German Section

I consider it my duty to call your attention to the situation in France. The mistaken policies of the Naville group, against which I wrote in my letter of June 21, 1930, to all sections, have evolved further, bringing this group into contradiction with the basic principles of the Left Opposition on all major questions.
The attempt to moderate the organizational forms of the struggle within the League in order to develop the ideological struggle without big upheavals did not bring positive results. The organizational question must be resolved together with the political and programmatic one. In the area of trade union matters, in regard to the party, and in regard to international tasks, the wrong position of the Naville group hinders the development of the Left Opposition and could compromise it for a long time to come. The representatives abroad of the Russian section will accordingly, in the near future, present a detailed appeal to all sections. Every group and every individual Oppositionist should take a clear stand on the questions of principle that have divided the League into two camps and can lead to an organizational split. The Russian Opposition abroad has done everything possible to preserve unity. Today that issue recedes into the background. Preservation of the principled bases of Bolshevism takes precedence over questions of formal unity. At one time I advised you to invite Comrade Naville during his stay in Berlin to put in written form the views that had led him into sharp factional struggle. I do not know if you did this. The aim of this message is to urge you to acquaint yourselves, by way of the documents, with the essential issues that threaten to split the League and which have brought Naville's group into counterposition with the Russian Opposition.
Above: Alfonso Leonetti, Pia Carena Leonetti.
Below: Pietro Tresso (Blasco), Paolo Ravazzoli (Santini).
Dear Comrade:

You did not reply for a long time to my last letter, which, I confess, surprised me somewhat.

I hasten to reply to your letter of January 28. You are completely correct when you say, "The [International] Bulletin, printed on a mimeograph machine, could come out regularly every fifteen days, without requiring a regular staff. With a bit of good will and initiative, it could come out in several editions (French, German, English, Italian)." For my part, I am astounded that to this day, the Italian edition, for example, has not appeared. Nor do I find any articles by you (perhaps I am wrong) in Bulletin number 3. In my letter to you I insisted above all on the necessity for the New Italian Opposition to give our international organization a helping hand. Once again I admit I do not understand whom you are asking for "a bit of good will and initiative" in this matter. I wish nothing more than the closest collaboration with you personally and with your whole group in our international organization. The comrades in Prinkipo are quite prepared to collaborate effectively in producing a twice-monthly Bulletin (by contributing articles, translations, news, etc.). It would also be very good to enlarge the International Secretariat with comrades who are capable of representing, at least morally, one or another national section and who can make a useful contribution to the collective work. What do you think of the Archio-Marxist comrade, whom I do not know personally? But they could bring on some comrade provisionally, with a consultative vote, to give him a chance to learn and to be seen by the others. Make your proposals and, above all, involve yourself personally in the work of the Secretariat, of which you are a member.

The social composition of the [French] League is not satisfactory—you are quite correct about that. In my correspondence with the French comrades I have often insisted on the
necessity of applying policies and methods that could really group workers around the League. But I believe it also requires a correct and most energetic orientation toward the young workers. The fact that they have not passed through the party is no objection—we must educate them. That must go side by side with our efforts directed toward the party.

Nor do I see the salvation of the League in a “purge.” We must do everything to reestablish the possibility of collective work, but on a more correct basis than before. Despite my bad experiences with the Naville group, I am in no way forced to consider them as “incorrigible.” But, to be sure, it is not enough to “recognize” at such and such a date the errors on the trade union question in order for everything to be set aright. That is not the only mistake, although it is, perhaps, the most serious in its consequences. On the formal basis of the Left Opposition, Naville’s politics were just a series of mistakes. I explained the essential feature of these mistakes, in very mild terms, in my letters to Naville. Since Naville officially complained of the harshness of my letters, and their injustice, I sent some copies of them that I had for the comrades of the League who might be interested. If you wish, you may ask Comrade Molinier on my behalf to get these letters for you. The very fact that I spent time on this abundant correspondence shows that I tried hard for a year and a half to persuade Naville and his friends, without having recourse to an open discussion. I was always met by a deaf ear and a mentality far removed from what I consider to be a revolutionary one. The “Prinkipo peace pact” was my last attempt to restore some civility to at least part of the discussion. This attempt did not succeed because of Naville. Now the League must understand the whole network of errors committed and understand what kind of political mentality can “recognize” something, and then turn around and do practically the opposite. Naville “recognizes” the syndicalist errors (he even “recognized” them in my room at Prinkipo—only to do the opposite the next day), but he supports in the League and in other countries the comrades who oppose the correct policy, and he fights against the comrades who had fought against these errors. The latest statement written by the Naville group on “The Situation in the League” is a truly lamentable document: it has no political appreciation of the quibbling of the “semi-parliamentary,” semi-Souvarinist “opposition.” Gourget defends his ideas, which are false. And what does Naville defend? He dodges, he maneuvers, he plays a “parliamentary” game in an organization that is
supposed to be revolutionary. While formally recognizing his error, he hastens to show that he has learned nothing. It is a great danger—for him. He ought at least to learn that his assessment of other comrades was not only condescending, but altogether wrong.

As for your criticism of two articles in La Verite, I believe you have really hit on a weak spot. I have already written to the editors on that point. I believe one could perhaps formulate our policy for this transitional period as follows: (a) defense of the living standard that existed before the [economic] crisis (at least) by the policy of the united front; (b) using the policy of the united front for an offensive against the reformists, whose situation is becoming precarious because of the crisis, and who remain the most important pillar of the capitalist regime; (c) systematic, combative, and offensive agitation and propaganda against the capitalist regime, to prepare for the action offensive when the circumstances permit. That is a bit too general and too abstract, but as a point of departure it will do.

At the same time I am not sure if you have chosen a good course by raising your objections right from the outset in the form of a polemical article. I believe that at least the most responsible comrades should polemicize against each other only when other possibilities of settling matters are exhausted. Why not explain your position to the editors in person, or by letter? This is all the more reasonable since you now have on the Secretariat a member of the editorial board. I have decided on open criticism of certain comrades only after repeated attempts, over a long period, to reach an understanding with them. You are a member of the Administrative Secretariat, which now, de facto, replaces the International Bureau (which scarcely exists). It is a position of great importance, which enables you to settle many matters by well-timed interventions.

My best wishes, and my strongest hope of reaching an understanding with you on the policies to be pursued.

L. Trotsky

P.S. As for [Carlo] Sforza, you can safely leave him to his fate; since he is not descended from the famous family, I can well dispense with genealogical research. Have you received a copy of the book, The Third International After Lenin?

L.T.
February 11, 1931

Dear Comrade:

I have received your letter of February 5, which explains the long gap in our correspondence. "The incident is closed."

I see no point in reopening the discussion on the personal character of the various comrades in question. I believe I know them well enough through my conversations with them, by their letters, their actions, and also a bit by their confrontation at Prinkipo. Now I do not in any way share Comrade Rosmer's opinion of Comrade M[olinier]. In addition, I refer you again to my correspondence with Naville, which also touches a bit on this question.

Personal questions are not at issue now. There is a Gourget group which is de jure communist, but de facto syndicalist. Its position is irreconcilable with ours. If I do not propose a split, it is because I hope that the discussion and the experience will influence these comrades, whom I consider honest. This "waiting-and-seeing," patient, and "liberal" policy is possible only because these comrades are in a minority. Imagine that they were in the majority; then an immediate split would become necessary. You will understand that I would not collaborate for a single day with a Verite run by semi-syndicalists.

With the Naville group the situation is different. But my impression is that instead of supporting the new leadership against the Gourget group, the Naville group instead supports Gourget against the new leadership. This de facto, unprincipled bloc leads directly to a split. No one could learn anything from a crisis in which Naville, while "recognizing" my theses, supports Gourget, against whom these theses are irreconcilably directed. The Naville group is now an element of intolerable confusion, and is on the way to compromising itself definitively.

Where is the outcome? There are only two possibilities. Either a coalition of the Molinier group with the Naville group or, if Naville cannot accept remaining in a minority, the present
leadership. Which of these two possibilities is preferable? From my viewpoint, the former. But that presumes loyal collaboration on the part of Naville. And from this point of view I am, out of experience, very uneasy.

If you set about promoting the loyal collaboration of the Molinier group with the Naville group (also in the leading bodies of the League), I will be very pleased to help you. Unfortunately, it appears to me that you do not yet have a set purpose. You are trying to pin down all their faults, their omissions, even the unfortunate formulations of the new editors, instead of giving them your help and your experience. As was to be expected, your article joining in the attacks of Gourget and Naville, defending them, has provoked a violent response. I don't think that is the correct way. I am quite convinced that we can get good results from the present editors with only a tenth of the effort that I have spent on correcting the line of the Naville group.

But I repeat: as soon as you set about working for the collaboration of the majority with the Naville minority, I am completely on your side, without sharing your personal assessments, which are by no means necessary to achieve the common goal.

One small note: You speak of some letters on the turn which should have been communicated to the League, and likewise my "observations on trade union policy." I do not know what letters you mean. The collective letter signed by Le Pape and others, a very unfortunate letter, appeared in *L' Avant-Garde.* As for my "observations on trade union policy," I sent them to Comrades Rosmer, Naville, and Gourget. I found it necessary to delay communicating them to the members of the League so as not to provoke a superfluous discussion without having tried to settle the matter privately.

Now I repeat: There are only two leaderships to which I could lend my support. That which exists now or, even better, the same plus the representatives of the Naville group. Naturally, that is not for all eternity, but for the present time and the immediate future.

My best regards,
L. Trotsky

I am sending a copy of the passages concerning political questions to the [French] Executive Committee.

L.T.
The February revolution is regarded as a democratic revolution in the true sense of the word. Politically, it unfolded under the leadership of two democratic parties: the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. A return to the “sacred principles,” or “legacy,” of the February revolution is even now the official dogma of so-called democracy. All this gives us reason to expect that the democratic ideologists would rush to draw up a balance sheet on the historical and theoretical lessons of the February experience, to reveal the reasons for its downfall, to define exactly what its “legacy” consists of, and how that legacy is to be realized. Moreover, both democratic parties have enjoyed considerable leisure for more than thirteen years now, and each of them is staffed with men of letters, whose proficiency, in any case, cannot be denied. Nevertheless, we do not have one work by the democrats about the democratic revolution that is worthy of attention. The leaders of the compromiser parties evidently cannot bring themselves to restate the course of development taken by the February revolution, events in which they had occasion to play such a prominent role. Is this not astonishing? No, it is quite in the order of things. The more cautiously the leaders of vulgar democracy regard the actual February revolution, the more boldly they swear by its incorporeal “legacy.” The fact that they themselves held the leading posts for a number of months in 1917, more than anything else, forces them to avert their gaze from the events of that time. For the sorry role of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries (with how much irony this name now rings!) reflected not only the personal weakness of these leaders, but the historical degeneracy of vulgar democracy and the foredoomed character of the February revolution as a democratic revolution.

The whole point—and this is the main conclusion of the present book—is that the February revolution was only the shell in which the kernel of the October Revolution was hidden. The history of
the February revolution is the history of how the October kernel was freed from its compromiser coverings. If the vulgar democrats only dared to give an objective account of the course of events, they could no more call for a return to February than for the ripened grain to return to the seed from which it sprang. That is why the inspirers of the half-hearted February regime are forced now to close their eyes to their own historical culmination, which was the culmination of their bankruptcy.

One can argue, it is true, that liberalism, in the person of the history professor Miliukov, has indeed attempted to come to grips with the "second Russian revolution." But Miliukov does not hide at all the fact that he only tolerated the February revolution. If there is any justification for listing a national-liberal monarchist among the democrats—even the vulgar democrats—is it not in fact on the same basis that he reconciled himself to the republic only because nothing else remained? But even leaving political considerations aside, Miliukov's work on the February revolution cannot in any sense be considered a scientific labor. In his *History* the leader of liberalism speaks as a victim and as a plaintiff, but not as a historian. His three books read like one long editorial from *Rech* at the time of the crushing of the Kornilov revolt. Miliukov blames all classes and all parties for not helping his class and his party to concentrate power in their hands. Miliukov attacks the democrats for not wanting or for not being able, to be consistent national-liberals. At the same time, he himself is compelled to testify to the fact that the closer the democrats drew to national-liberalism, the more they lost support among the masses. Finally, nothing else remains for him but to accuse the Russian people of committing a crime—which bears the name "revolution." Miliukov, when he was writing his three-volume editorial, was still looking for the instigators of the Russian troubles in Ludendorff's chancellory. It is well known that Cadet patriotism consists, on the one hand, in explaining the greatest events in the history of the Russian people as a production staged by the German secret service, while, on the other hand, seeking to take Constantinople from the Turks for the benefit of the "Russian people." This historical work of Miliukov appropriately completes the political orbit of Russian national-liberalism.

One can understand the revolution, and history as a whole, only as an objectively determined process. Peoples and nations develop in a way that brings to the fore tasks which cannot be solved by any other means that revolution. In certain epochs,
these methods impose themselves with such force that the entire nation is drawn into this tragic whirlpool. There is nothing more pitiful than to moralize over great social catastrophes! Here the maxim of Spinoza is especially appropriate: "Neither to weep nor to laugh, but to understand."

The problems of economy, the state, politics, law, and along with them the problems of the family, the personality, and artistic creation are raised anew by the revolution, and are re-examined from top to bottom. There is not one sphere of human creation in which genuinely national revolutions do not make major milestones. This alone, we mention in passing, gives a most convincing expression to the monism of historical progress. Laying bare all the tissues of society, revolution throws a bright light on the fundamental problems of sociology, that most unfortunate of the sciences, which academic thought feeds with vinegar and kicks. The problems of economics and the state, of the class and the nation, of the party and the class, of the individual and society are all raised during periods of great social overturn with the maximum amount of tension. If the revolution does not immediately solve any of the questions that gave rise to it, only establishing new preconditions for their solution, in return it uncovers all the problems of social life completely. For in sociology, more than anywhere else, the art of cognition is the art of removing the coverings.

There is no need to say that our work does not pretend to be exhaustive. The reader is here presented with primarily a political history of the revolution. Questions of economics are brought in only so far as is necessary for the understanding of the political process. Problems of culture remain entirely outside the scope of this study. It cannot be forgotten, however, that the process of revolution, that is, of the spontaneous struggle of classes for power, is in its very essence a political process.

The author hopes to publish the second volume of the History, devoted to the October Revolution, in the autumn of this year.
Andres Nin
The name of Comrade A. Nin is fairly well known to the advanced workers of the world. Nin was one of the first to stand under the banner of Communism. In accordance with the line of the Comintern and, especially, with the line of the Profintern, Nin carried out the most responsible work for several years. It is enough to say that when Lozovsky was absent, Nin substituted for the president of the Profintern; but even when Lozovsky was present in Moscow, Nin carried out a considerable share of the [Profintern's] central work.

At the same time Nin did not bear responsibility for the policies of the Comintern and the Profintern, for he has stood in the ranks of the Left Opposition since 1923.

Stalin could not bring himself to arrest and deport Andres Nin as a foreigner—and a very well-known foreigner at that. After experiencing repeated harassment, abuse, insult, and persecution, Nin, with his wife and two children, was forced into exile under the most disgraceful conditions: suffice it to say that he was not permitted to take his manuscripts with him; several completed and unfinished works passed into the archives of the GPU. Only the book *On Dictatorships*, which had been secretly dispatched from Moscow before his departure, was published not long ago in the Catalan language in Barcelona and, more recently, in Spanish in Madrid.

The advanced workers of Spain, especially of Catalonia, greeted Comrade Nin with open arms. After settling down with his family, Nin set to work to complete a number of literary projects. But Berenguer ruled otherwise: several weeks after his arrival in Spain, Nin was arrested and is in a Barcelona prison at the present time. The governor-general of Catalonia told a correspondent of the French paper *Matin* in an interview: “We have arrested Andres Nin, who is a cothinker of Trotsky and came here to spread revolutionary propaganda.” Thus the governor-general stated with absolute exactness why Nin was
arrested: for the same reason that he was exiled by Stalin from the USSR. Stalin and Berenguer utter in unison: “Trotskyism—that is the enemy!”

Comrade Nin informs us of the extremely serious situation in which the Stalinist bureaucracy has placed Comrade Victor Serge, a prominent revolutionary with an international record of service and importance. His original name is Kibalchich: he is a nephew of the famous Narodnaya Volya chemist. Under the name of Victor Serge, Kibalchich, a Belgian citizen, is well known in French literature. Not long ago he published in Paris a large volume (470 pages), *L'An I de la Revolution russe* (Librairie du Travail), dealing with the October Revolution and its immediate aftermath. The book is in every respect an outstanding work, which will be studied by the advanced workers in Latin countries.

Since 1923 Victor Serge has been a member of the Left Opposition. Like Nin, he never faltered and did not conceal his views; on the contrary, he carried out a firm struggle for them. It is difficult to recount all the repulsive persecutions Victor Serge and his family have been subjected to: Stalin’s resourcefulness in this area is inexhaustible. At the present time Victor Serge has been deprived of work, light, and water. Under the blows of unceasing persecution his wife has become gravely ill. At this time Victor Serge has been denied the opportunity to go abroad.

It is time these facts be told to the advanced workers of the world! It is time to sound the alarm! The International Left Opposition must fulfill its duty to one of its finest members.
THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT
AND THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

March 7, 1931

To the International Secretariat
To the National Sections of the Left Opposition

Dear Comrades:

Certain influential members of the Left Opposition—especially in Germany—are attempting to create a legend or a series of legends around the International Secretariat, in order to hide their own mistakes. Among these numerous inadmissible proceedings, we must include the rumor that the IS was created to “combat” the International Bureau. It suffices to reconstruct the facts for this legend to disappear like smoke.

The Bureau was elected at the April conference last year and was composed of Comrades Rosmer, Markin, and a representative of the German Opposition, in which capacity Comrade Landau later was appointed.

Following the crisis in the French Opposition one member of the Bureau, Comrade Rosmer, forsook the work in the League, which hampered the normal functioning of the Bureau. I more than anyone else have been able to judge how injurious the voluntary withdrawal of Comrade Rosmer from the work of the French and the International Oppositions has been. All the steps and measures I have undertaken to make it easier for Comrade Rosmer to return to his work—the last attempt of this sort is known under the name of the so-called “Prinkipo peace pact”—did not achieve the desired results. For reasons which I do not accept, Comrade Rosmer considers it possible for him to remain away from the work of the International Left.

In order to consolidate the IB, I proposed, in agreement with some of the other comrades, to coopt Comrades Nin and Shachtman into the Bureau. But Comrade Nin was shortly afterwards arrested, not to speak of the fact that he is entirely absorbed by the Spanish affairs. Comrade Shachtman is on the other side of the ocean. The other three members of the Bureau are always to
be found in three different parts of Europe, and one of them was actually, as has been said, cut off from all work for several months.

In such a situation nothing else remained to be done except to attempt to create, in a fixed place, a Secretariat functioning regularly. This proposal was unanimously adopted by both groups in the [French] League and by all the other national sections. Objections came only from the German leadership, at the head of which Comrade Landau stands.

What was the original composition of the Secretariat? It is well known: Mill, Souzo, and Naville. This composition was likewise adopted unanimously. At the time the proposed Secretariat was accepted, Comrade Souzo's positions on the French crisis and the German differences were completely unknown to me. What was most decisive for me was the fact that Comrade Souzo possesses a certain experience in conducting the work of the party and that he was the head of an important though small national group. Soon after, it appeared that in the internal crisis of the League, Comrade Souzo supported Naville and was conducting a sharp struggle against the majority of the French League. Thus the Naville faction became a majority in the Secretariat, which certainly did not correspond to its ideological and political weight in the International Opposition. Personally, I regretted it, but I accepted it as a fact. We must add that the third member of the Secretariat, Comrade Mill, occupied an extremely conciliatory position on the organizational questions. Thus, the composition of the Secretariat totally refutes the legend that the Secretariat was artificially selected for the purpose of combatting the Bureau.

The chief author of this legend is Comrade Landau. He is also the one who poses as the defender of the rights of the Bureau against the assaults of the Secretariat. But how do things work out in practice? When the very important question of the fate of the Austrian groups arose, I considered that in this case the intervention of the International Bureau was necessary and I proposed to the latter the drafting of a platform for the unification of the Austrian groups. Comrades Rosmer and Markin declared themselves in favor of my proposal. Comrade Landau was against it. That was of course his right. However, he did not confine himself to this alone, but behind the back of the Bureau he advised his partisans in Austria to ignore the decision of the majority of the Bureau and to act along the lines of his platform, which the Bureau had rejected. Copies of Landau's letters have been sent to us from Austria, and in my opinion they should be
communicated to all the sections. The attitude of Landau in this capital question signifies virtually the liquidation of the Bureau. No serious revolutionary can respect a leading body when one of its members, left in the minority, allows himself not only to ignore the decisions of the majority of this body and remain unpunished, but even to advise the national sections involved to follow suit. The present “defense” of the Bureau by Comrade Landau I can only consider as an ignoble comedy.

I return to the history of the Secretariat. When the political mistakes of the old Executive Committee of the League, especially on the trade union question, became completely evident, Comrade Naville resigned from the Secretariat. The method of resignations is an abnormal method in a revolutionary organization. But on the other hand, Comrade Naville did not, perhaps, have any other way out: the representative of the French Opposition cannot participate in the Secretariat if he does not have any support in the Executive Committee of the League and La Verite.

The Executive Committee of the League named Comrade Frank as candidate to the International Secretariat. Comrade Frank reflects the opinions of the majority of the League, the Executive Committee, and the editorial board of La Verite. I believe that the national sections have no reason to object to the replacement of Comrade Naville by Comrade Frank. Aside from all other considerations, this assures a more harmonious agreement between the Secretariat and the majority of the International Opposition.

I want to call attention to the fact that even in its new composition the Secretariat is completely free from all factional partiality. Comrade Souzo, as has been said, remains entirely for the positions of Comrade Naville, but unlike the latter, Comrade Souzo has a small national section behind him.

What is necessary in order to reestablish the normal functioning of the present IB as the highest political body, which, due to its composition alone, can intervene only in exceptional and important matters? For that it is necessary:

(a) That Comrade Rosmer return to active work in the League.
(b) That the German Opposition overcome its present crisis, because today Comrade Landau represents the minority of the organization, which is waging an implacable struggle against the majority and prevents the honest convocation of a conference to be prepared loyally.
(c) Aside from this, it is necessary that the repetition of an organizational disloyalty such as Landau committed in the
Austrian question be made impossible in the International Bureau.

It is obvious that in all cases where the Secretariat finds it indispensable to inquire the opinion of the members of the present Bureau, it has the full privilege to do so, and such an inquiry will no doubt have great political significance. But it is quite evident that aside from the conditions cited above, the International Bureau in its present composition cannot play the active role of a directing center.

The task which falls to the International Secretariat becomes all the more important and responsible. To undermine its authority, to impede its work, is a veritable crime. I believe that all the sections have an interest in supporting the Secretariat against the sabotage of certain personages and circles.

The Secretariat is as yet indisputably weak. Much time has been lost. The daily work merits the criticism of all the national sections. But at the same time we must not forget that the Secretariat is today the only tie that links together the International Opposition. Only the Secretariat is able to prepare a serious international conference. We have the right and the duty to demand of the Secretariat a rigid organizational loyalty toward all the sections. We can demand of the Secretariat that it send the minutes of its meetings to all the sections, so that its work will be carried on under the control of the entire International Opposition. But, on the other hand, we must protect the Secretariat against all attacks, insinuations, and intrigues. The elementary needs of the Left Opposition demand it.

With communist greetings,
L. Trotsky
Dear Comrade Torino:

Thank you very much for your friendly letter concerning our philistine "catastrophe." The situation is very worrisome, but over a period of a few months it could be corrected, I hope—apart from a few irreparable losses.

Even the position of the League, though thoroughly compromised by the politics of the Naville-Gourget bloc, could be restored, given the will to do so. Unfortunately, Naville only adds bad feelings. His last letter shows me that he has learned nothing. On the contrary, he is more Souvarinist, more anti-Marxist than ever. I am not replying to him for the moment, so as not to have to tell him some too bitter truths, because in spite of everything I do not want to give up hope.

In your last letters you drew my attention to the errors of *La Verite*. Some of them are real, some are exaggerated, some are imaginary. I would be quite prepared to analyze each of *La Verite*'s mistakes with you. But what makes this analysis very difficult for me is that it could be constructive only on the common ground of Marxism. Take for example the trade union question. Now, Gourget is an avowed syndicalist and non-Marxist, and Naville is only his journalistic lieutenant. I read the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting with Gourget and Company. That would have been enough for me even if I didn’t know everything that had gone on before, and even if I had not tried to win Gourget and Naville to the Marxist conception over more than a year. To tolerate Gourgetism would mean to allow gangrene to set into the League. Do you think that we broke with Tomsky in order to fraternize with the French syndicalists? Oh no!

The *elementary* duty of Marxists in the League and in the International Opposition is to tell Gourget that his theory, like his practice, is equivalent to a betrayal of Marxism, and that a great chasm separates him from us. That is perhaps the last hope
of still saving Gourget himself and his group. But that is our secondary concern. The first consideration is to preserve our politics from degeneration, the most dangerous form of which in France is "good-natured" syndicalism. The IS should make a unanimous statement on that. Everything you have told me about the errors of La Verite is incomparably less important than the crimes of Gourget and the errors of Naville.

By the way, I am going to have a talk with Molinier—he should be coming in one or two days—on all the questions you raised in your last letters.

I leave aside the German question, which is no less important. There, also, Naville's position is equivocal. It is well known that behind the scenes he marches with Landau. But he does not dare speak openly in favor of his ally. Is that a revolutionary attitude?

No doubt at the last moment, when the confused void of Landau's politics has been shown to the world, Naville will vote for the final resolution. Alas, such proceedings do not attest to a revolutionary character.

My thanks and my most sincere greetings.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

NATIONAL CONFERENCES FIRST

April 2, 1931

To the International Secretariat of the Left Opposition
Paris

Dear Comrades:

From your minutes I see that you are considering the eventual possibility of an international conference for June 15 next. I must say that the preparation of the international conference for that date seems impossible to me. When we accepted at the end of 1930 the idea of holding a European conference for May, we assumed that the conferences of the most important sections (the German and the French) would be held before this international conference. Now, this prerequisite is far from being realized. To call
together an international conference in the midst of a period of national discussion is to put the cart before the horse. I therefore propose that the International Secretariat, in conformity with its first circular letter, in which the central point was not the date of the meeting but the mode of preparation, decide that it be obligatory for the national conferences (at least the German and French conferences) to be held before the international conference and that the interval of time between the national conferences and the international conference must be large enough to allow all the national sections a serious discussion, including analyses and discussions of the differences.

Insofar as I personally am concerned, for the moment I can contribute only to the preparation of the conference with theses on the Russian question, the first part of which I have already sent you and the second part of which I will send you soon.

As to the question of the world crisis, I can only propose an international commission with the leading nucleus at Paris. For my own part, I will be quite ready to participate in the work of this commission by means of correspondence, but I will have to limit my collaboration to this alone.

I hope to be able to send you soon a draft of theses on democratic slogans in the revolutionary struggle of the international proletariat.86

With my best communist greetings,

L. Trotsky
April 4, 1931

To the Leadership of the Communist League of America

Dear Comrades:

I read your letter of March 18 to the International Secretariat with the greatest interest. It valuably supplemented Comrade Shachtman’s letter of March 4 in many ways. The educational work you are carrying out and which you are attempting to expand seems excellent. We cannot seriously approach the masses without theoretically steeling our own cadre at the same time. The old Austrian grouplets, who for years contented themselves with issuing agitational flyers, are revealing their total inadequacy the first time they are put to the test. Unfortunately the German Opposition paper, Kommunist, follows the same style: imitation of a political paper directed toward the “broad” masses, etc.

For my part I will do everything in my power to render assistance to the publishing house you are in the process of developing. As Comrade Shachtman informs me, your National Committee requests me to name someone in the United States who should undertake the publication of my works. I trust Comrade Shachtman is well enough informed on these matters and if his time permits, I would welcome his taking this task upon himself. In any case, the choice is completely up to you. The pamphlets you have published are well translated and excellently produced. I am awaiting Comrade Cannon’s introduction to the pamphlet on syndicalism with great interest.

Enclosed is the manuscript of the International Opposition’s draft platform on the Russian question. I would be very pleased if it were possible for you to publish the document, perhaps in pamphlet form. This might form the basis for the development of a useful discussion within the ranks of the League and perhaps between the League and the official party and the Lovestone...
group. We have a rather advantageous position on the Russian question and all new events will certainly show that we were right. Hence we can go on the offensive with this question.

I find your plan to send Comrade Shachtman or another comrade to England for a considerable period very auspicious. Unfortunately the financial situation is tight everywhere at the moment. If there is a possibility of realizing this plan, I hope the comrade in question will visit me on the way home.

I am very sorry that I am not well enough informed about American matters. I am at present collecting a rather large amount of material and hope to evaluate it in the interests of the American Opposition, even if not in the next few months.

If someone is really coming to Europe, he can take part in the European conference which in any case will not be able to take place until after the German and French national conferences. But will you be able to do without one of the leading comrades in the period of preparation for your own conference? Hardly.

With best communist greetings.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

WHAT A CONTROL COMMISSION SHOULD DO

May 1, 1931

Comrades:

I regret as earnestly as you do that Comrade Rosmer has left the League, and I would be happy to see him return. I do not think that differences of opinion over our judgments of one comrade or another can justify anyone in leaving the movement. You bring up again the question of Comrade Molinier. The League has unanimously adopted the following formula, which was worked out at Prinkipo by representatives of the two French groups and of the foreign comrades, with my participation: personal questions . . . must be definitively liquidated. For that purpose, we need a commission whose composition will provide a
guarantee of prompt and definitive settlements. Are there or are there not formal charges? Are they of recent origin? Let them be presented. If they are merely matters of common knowledge, all that remains to be done is to determine that they have not hindered collaboration up to the time differences of opinion arose. But since differences of opinion do not and cannot have anything to do with personal questions, the commission, unless specific new facts and new charges are introduced, will only have to take note of the fact that neither in Comrade Molinier's past nor in his present situation are there any circumstances which could prevent him from working in the League and for the League or from occupying positions entrusted to him by the organization.

I think this formula is mandatory for all of us. If you have specific facts or serious charges, you are obliged to present them to the Control Commission of the League. You will surely agree with me that any other attitude in this matter would be contrary to revolutionary loyalty.

As for La Verite, I do not share your views. The errors committed in the miners' strike are unquestionable. But those errors, although serious, are of a purely tactical character, whereas the errors of the Naville-Gourget leadership touch upon fundamental principles. In fact, Gourget and some others have borne this out by their desertion.

My sincere communist greetings,
Leon Sedov [Leon Trotsky]

THE FIRST LESSON FROM SPAIN

May 1, 1931

Dear Comrade:

Thank you for your letter and for the Spanish documents. I am very worried about the situation there. All I can do now is wait for the report of M[ill].

The first lesson to draw from the Spanish events is the extraordinary importance that democratic slogans can take on. By demanding now the right to vote for women and young
people at age eighteen, we can turn them against the Socialists in the government. It is but one example out of a hundred. To accept the theory of Prometeo would mean killing the Spanish revolution.

If the Landau group accepts the proposals of the Secretariat—and that is the only chance for avoiding a split—the Secretariat should send one or more representatives to Berlin to introduce the preparations for the national conference. The choice of a representative is not easy. What do you think? Perhaps two members of the Administrative Secretariat ought to go: you and Frank. The fact that the decision of the Secretariat was unanimous precludes any differences between the two of you. On the other hand, the fact that you belong to different tendencies would give the contending German groups the necessary guarantee of impartiality. Would this double trip be practicable?

Received your bulletin. Unfortunately I am now too overwhelmed with work to analyze it. I must finish the second volume of The History of the Russian Revolution at all costs.

My best wishes to you and the other comrades.

L. Trotsky

PART OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GERMAN SPLIT

May 23, 1931

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

1. As you have assumed, I am really overburdened with work and can hardly conceive of writing the foreword for the China book that you ask of me. It would have to be elaborated very carefully. I cannot think of what manuscripts on China to send you. The larger work, “The Chinese Question After the Sixth World Congress,” was sent to you in January. Did you purposely disregard the long article in the Russian Biulleten number 15-16, pp. 7-19, “Stalin and the Chinese Revolution”? The article is perhaps somewhat dry, it consists mainly of quotations, but it represents quite an ample piece of work and can to a certain
extent substitute for the foreword that you desire, since it coordinates the different stages and besides brings to light new, important documents. I would recommend that you insert this article either as the first or the last. At any rate this would greatly facilitate the task of the foreword for me. Likewise, I do not find on your list my latest article, published in La Verite, "The Strangled Revolution," a review of Malraux's novel. I believe this article will fit in very well within the framework of the book.

2. Together with Comrade Frankel, we are very glad that you have halfway overcome your reservations regarding Landau. Your explanation, allow me to say, does not appear very convincing to me. You write that you wanted to avoid a premature split. Do you feel that I did want to bring about or hasten this split? And if not, what practical steps did you propose to achieve this aim? I, for my part, have done everything that appeared possible and expedient to me. Aside from this, it seemed to me that if the leading comrades of the national sections had exercised proper pressure on Landau in time, he might—I say might—have been saved. Unfortunately that was not the case and you bear a small part of the responsibility for this. The lion's share, after Landau, is naturally borne by Naville, who encouraged Landau with false hopes, sent equivocal information, etc. Now Landau wants to have nothing to do with the International Secretariat and is energetically working to form a new International, with the Gourget people, with the Prometeo people, with Overstraeten, and, it is reported, with—Weisbord for America. More than that: while he has done everything to prevent unification in Austria, and to destroy it in Germany, he accuses me of having split all the national sections, particularly in America. So, my dear Shachtman, I bear the responsibility for your not being on good terms with Weisbord. I am afraid that Naville will have to take the same road. His closest friends have deserted him, and not by accident. Those whom he influences are hostile to us, and mean it earnestly. Naville, however, is playing with ideas and has never meant it seriously and honestly. He remains in the League in order to sabotage it from within and in order to help Landau build his new International. The principle involved in this I have written about in a letter which my son will send you.

It is obvious that decisions must be arrived at according to the principled lines of the different tendencies, and I understand quite well the caution taken by your organization in this field. But this criterion must not be conceived pedantically and so
formalistically. The Bordigists are a tendency and they must be judged according to their fundamental principles. Gourget is a tendency and van Overstraeten is a tendency—naturally an unfortunate one. But what shall we say of the Mahnruf group, which changes its “tendency” seven times in the interests of the self-preservation of the old clique and in doing this does not halt before the dirtiest methods? Judgment must be based on the fact that it is an altogether unprincipled clique, demoralized by the methods, splits, and intrigues of the Comintern, which does not take ideas seriously, and with whom we must watch not their theses but their fingers. What is important is not the theses that Landau will present tomorrow, but the fact that he approves everything on China, even on America and the other countries, insofar as it does not touch his position of power. What is characteristic of Landau is not to be found in his trade union theses, but in the fact that he kept up a deadly silence on the trade union question in France because Naville is his friend. The programs, the theses, the principles, are highly important when they represent a reality. However, when they are only an adornment and a mask for clique struggle, then they must be booted aside in order to uncover the gentlemen concerned and represent them in natura.

3. Naturally, I am glad that you have received some money for the pre-publication rights [for excerpts from the first volume of The History of the Russian Revolution]. Insofar as the rights for the German Volkszeitung [in New York] are concerned, I have sent Fischer [publisher of the book in Germany] a letter by airmail and not a telegram, in order to make the matter more clear to him. I have asked him to cable his decision to America. Unfortunately, I am not sure that he will comply and in the negative case I would gladly see the Militant coffers reimbursed.

It is, however, at present a question of a perspective dealing with a larger sum. I am afraid that Boni will attempt to deduct 5 percent from the Saturday Evening Post royalties as well. And since, on the one hand, I have been too long cheated and betrayed by the publishers and, on the other, need the money for the creation of a German theoretical journal, I am determined not to pay the 5 percent in any case, even at the risk of breaking the contract. I have written to Eastman more fully. I would very much like to have the 5 percent committed to The Militant, from the book as well as from the pre-publication reprints. It would mean a considerable sum. You must see to it that our dear Eastman deals with Boni more energetically and does not
surrender our common interests as he has done with his own.

4. I have no idea what comments the bourgeois press has made [on the printing of excerpts from the History] and would gladly have anything of interest in it.

5. I do not have to tell you that I rejoice at the perspective of transforming The Militant into a weekly. The next step must be a theoretical monthly. I am very much inclined to attach this destination to my contribution for the Militant fund.

With best regards.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

THE BORDIGIST LINE

June 10, 1931

... Reading the minutes of the IS, I was very pleased by Comrade Souzo's position on a series of burning questions. By the way, has Comrade Souzo received my reply to his letter, which I sent him during your absence?

I have the impression that the New Italian Opposition has too careful, too soft, and too much of a wait-and-see attitude towards the Bordigists. I understand perfectly well that at the beginning it was necessary to be very tactful to see if it was possible to collaborate with this group, if they were open to our arguments, etc. But it seems to me that the nature of this group has been fully revealed: it is a culture of pure sectarianism, hermetically sealed, and soured not a little by stifling air. A haughty and sectarian spirit is the characteristic trait of these people. On one hand, they tolerate no critical objections and no interference in their internal affairs, and on the other hand they speak to others in a superior—sometimes even insolent—tone, without the least justification for doing so. It is quite possible and even probable that there are among them some elements that would like to breathe a bit of fresh air. But our excessively hesitant and cautious policy would hold back this process of freeing the healthy elements. It is time to end this policy. Truly, we have infinitely more important
tasks than carrying on our backs the debris and refuse of various outdated groups and sects.

Our attitude to Prometeo is particularly clear, because, whatever else one can say about them, they have a position. In my work on Spain I attack Prometeo openly. (I note the fact that your criticism has appeared only in the Bulletin.)

To quarrel with Prometeo on the subject of their intrigues and maneuvers is useless. It is much more valuable to fight them openly and clearly on their main line. They differ from us on every question, all the while pushing their position to the absurd. This group is a barrier in the way of the development of communism in Spain. The New Opposition must clear the road. We must help them do it. The position of Bordiga himself is not known to us. But we must reckon with the facts such as they are: the position of Prometeo is a monstrous mixture of anarchism, syndicalism, and opportunism, wrapped in sectarian conservatism. That is why this group almost automatically supports every grouplet that appears in opposition to us in any part of the world. This must end. The problems of the Spanish revolution open up a very favorable basis for discussion with Prometeo, and this discussion must be of an international character. The German Opposition and the French Opposition must declare themselves against the confusion of Prometeo at their next conferences with all the clarity and intransigence necessary. This will be a blow especially against the Landau and Gourget groups, and will counteract their further intrigues. The international conference will have to resolve this question in a definitive manner, and take organizational measures. I would like very much to know the opinion of Comrade Souzo and his group on this question.

I will return to purely Spanish questions. The idea of Comrade Souzo to publish an international manifesto on the Spanish revolution is excellent. This manifesto should give a critique not only of the official CP but also of the Catalan Federation.
Dear Comrade Shachtman:

I am writing to you and through you to the National Committee.

(1) Comrade Miller, whose coming was announced, has not yet arrived. We are somewhat disturbed about this. Naturally we are looking forward to him with the greatest joy and when he comes we will endeavor to keep him as long as possible.

(2) I have already written to you somewhat in jest about the impression that your recent edition of *The Permanent Revolution* created here. But speaking quite seriously, I am unusually overjoyed at the fact that it is our publishing house which is now able to get out larger books too with such exemplary care and that these works find a market in America. In general, I believe that the American League has pretty well found a balance between theoretical-propagandist and agitational work, and that precisely because of that its development, up to a certain point, will proceed slowly but surely, and then, it is to be hoped, quantity will turn into quality.

(3) The Spanish revolution offers the Left Opposition the best platform for a systematic offensive against the official party. Here we have the possibility day in and day out to interpret the events from our point of view, and on the basis of the events to demonstrate the hollowness of the official [CP’s] perspectives. I hope that the American friends will devote the necessary attention to the Spanish revolution.

(4) The article, “The Strangled Revolution,” you will find in the latest number of the *Biulleten*, number 21-22. I am enclosing a second small article in which I polemicize with Malraux. Since you have comrades who understand Russian, I will send you direct from now on all letters, circulars, and so forth, which may have a political importance. Three are enclosed.

(5) I received a very gratifying letter from Nin. The conference
went off very well. The internal misunderstandings are eliminated. Nin spoke of great success in mass meetings in Madrid and elsewhere. I believe that we will make progress in Spain.

L.D. Trotsky

THE SECONDARY PLACE OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

July 5, 1931

Dear Comrade:

You do understand that I cannot orient my politics according to the personal qualities of one or another comrade. I cannot support comrades—even those most worthy of personal confidence—if they embark on the wrong course, and this is the case with Comrade Rosmer.

As far as the personal conflict between Rosmer and Molinier is concerned, I have replied at length to the Belgian comrades who asked for my opinion. I’ll have a copy of my letter sent to you by way of Paris.

My best communist greetings to you and all our friends.

Yours,

L. Trotsky

IRRESPONSIBLE TYPES

August 2, 1931

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

Thanks for the last two pamphlets I have received. I have no objections to changing the title of the Spanish pamphlet. On the contrary, it is far better than the original. I am very pleased that the pamphlets are going so well.
Briefly on Naville. You mention that his critical article on the strike has remained unanswered. I must admit that I haven’t read it. Naville has covered himself for a long time by not taking firm positions on the most important questions since he was always connected with the group that was on the wrong track. He remained constantly on the watch and came forward with his critical articles in order to puff up the real tactical errors committed by the other side and thereby mask himself. But a search for the principled line in every single case should not be carried too far. There are elements and grouplets that have none and no need for any. They like to circle around the revolution and fence with ideas and play a role. There is also a social basis for this: capitalist society produces quite a few nuances of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia with purely formal qualities, without deeper social roots and without a well developed feeling of responsibility. Unfortunately we have to confirm over and over again the fact that many have thrown in with us not because we are a Marxist opposition, but because we are an opposition in general, and they are either not able or not inclined to subordinate their hollow capabilities to the discipline of a serious cause. For example, it is impossible to evaluate the Landau clique, the Mahnrf, by its platform. This clique paints with platforms of the most varied colors. It is not possible to fight it on the basis of particular ideas, but only on the basis of lack of ideas. This also seems to be the case with Naville. With his little circle he wanders from communism to Revolution Surrealiste, from Revolution Surrealiste to Opposition, oscillates between the right and the left, joins us without fundamentally joining with us, stays in the League but in collaboration with Gourget and Landau. He wins no one over, on the contrary he loses some of his closest friends on the way. Now Gourget is incensed at him and wants to pull back.

You ask about Rosmer’s political position. He hardly has one. He is, however, in league with Naville and Landau, and he got entangled in a very bad situation. He wrote a highly unpleasant letter to the Belgian Opposition, in which he complained about “Zinovievist” methods. At the request of the Belgian comrades, I had to answer directly and thus had to come out from my withdrawn position. This makes the situation more difficult, but it was really not my fault.

I read The Militant rather superficially now, because I am totally absorbed in my book. But for the last three weeks I have always been glad to get my hands on a fresh copy of The
The French Discussion

Militant. The weekly Militant looks quite good.

As soon as the second volume of the History is finished, I will start with problems of the international situation. I hope I will then be able to send you a piece about the United States.

With warm regards,
L. Trotsky

THE FRENCH DISCUSSION

August 20, 1931

To the Executive Committee,
Communist League of France

Dear Comrades:

I have received your theses and your internal bulletin. But despite all my sympathies for your efforts to get the League back on the right track, it is completely impossible for me to intervene in the discussion at the moment. I have to finish the second volume of the History, which I consider to be a certain contribution to the clarification of the situation in Spain as well as in Germany. Moreover, I believe that the League has paid so dearly for its mistakes in trade union policy that it will firmly reject any move toward backsliding. But since there have been no countertheses up till now, we must assume that there will not be any at all.

I am delighted that Comrade R.M. is taking that trip. With his energy and devotion he will without doubt be a very great help to the comrades down there.

As for Rosmer's latest letter, I have nothing to say in reply. I can only note with regret that the attempts made during the past two years to seriously reintegrate him into the revolutionary movement have failed. There is nothing that can be done about it. We note the fact and move to the next point on the agenda.

With best communist greetings,
L. Trotsky
ROSNER’S POLITICS

September 1, 1931

As to French matters, I can only deplore the fact that it has been impossible for you to keep track of their development sufficiently. To Rosmer, it does no doubt seem that his opponents are inventing differences. This man has some very fine personal qualities and a very admirable past. But he has three faults: (1) he is not a Marxist; (2) he is not a revolutionary; (3) he does not think politically. Exceptionally favorable conditions are necessary to raise him from the political level to which he is accustomed and in which he has been brought up—the level of the superannuated French sectarian circles, void of all that is alive, applying their old ideas without any enthusiasm, without any faith in the future, without any perspectives. The Russian Revolution temporarily served to uplift Rosmer. Here, his intimacy with me played a certain role. But he seized the first plausible pretext (unconsciously) to draw back from the revolution. The new meeting at Constantinople once again served as an impulsion. But after he left, I said more than once to those with me, I fear this change will not suffice for long. It actually turned out that it did not last very long.

The contradiction between the role he began to play and his entire character—his whole “mentality,” as the French say—has led him to actions which, it seems to me, cannot be reconciled with the dignity of a revolutionary. His two letters dealing with M[olinier] will always remain as stains on the moral physiognomy of Rosmer. He reproaches M. with occupying himself with financial affairs. But it is precisely in this field that M. displays his altogether exceptional revolutionary nature. He is undoubtedly a very capable businessman. He proved it in the commercial transactions in which he participated together with his brother. But did you know, for instance, this fact which accidentally has been made known to me: that when he left to see you, he did not pay his rent? He sold the furnishings of the apartment occupied by his mother, who recently died, and sent his old father, used to a certain measure of comfort, into a furnished room. In whose name was all this done? Personally, he
lives in extremely modest fashion, and maintains himself at present by night work as a chauffeur (and he is a good chauffeur). Where then does the money made by his "brilliant" transactions go? Entirely to the needs of the organization. He personally gave up participation in the business of his brother the moment he occupied an important position in the League. This reduced the income with one blow, but his brother continues to support the organization generously. I ask you: what kind of hopeless philistine must one be to object to all of this? The commercial occupations of the M. brothers do not please Rosmer, you see. He distinguishes between honest, solid, respectable business and dishonest business—carried on by a communist! Engels,116 in his old age, once wrote on a similar occasion, to a German philistine, somewhat along the following lines: Yes, if I knew I could make a little million on the stock exchange in the interest of the revolutionary movement, I would immediately seize the opportunity. When I once mentioned this fact in a letter to Rosmer, he replied: But M. is not Engels. What can you do after that? . . . M's big fault lies in the extreme explosiveness of the man. At a moment's notice, he throws himself into doing everything for everybody, without asking the others and without coming back to them. By doing this, he often incites not only the bad workers against himself, but the good ones as well, who demand of him more normal and democratic methods of work. I have had some clashes with him on this field, and I fear I will have more in the future.

My differences with Rosmer began almost on the first day after his return from Prinkipo to Paris. Falling back into his former milieu, he almost automatically reestablished his former contacts and mode of thought. La Verite all at once took on a stridently syndicalist tendency. With regard to MacDonald and his party,117 Rosmer wrote only in the spirit that they "don't understand" how to defend the interests of the working class. If Cuvier could determine the species of animals by their jawbones, then these two words "don't understand" help to identify the mental type of Rosmer. He saw the party on the one hand, and La Verite on the other. He did not at all feel the need for an international organization. He thought of it more or less as of a burden. He protected Overstraeten, the Bordigists, all that is confused and formless, seeking thereby a support for his own formlessness. If it were a question of a younger comrade, we could of course say: he'll learn. Unfortunately, all the others waited for Rosmer to teach them and were very quickly disillusioned. The result of this:
the conflict of all the live and revolutionary elements with the Rosmer-Naville group. While trying to persuade, to criticize, at the same time I did everything possible not only to preserve the unity of the organization, but also to preserve the responsible position of Rosmer within it. Nevertheless, he did not look for a compromise. He wanted to crush the younger comrades, who actually were correct in their struggle against him. When I refused to support such treatment, Rosmer lowered himself to the point of spreading disgusting insinuations about M. At present, the Rosmer-Naville group is the biggest obstacle to the further development of the League.

Henri Molinier, with Trotsky.
DISCUSSIONS WITH
ALBERT GLOTZER

October-November 1931

We observed particularly, during our stay, Comrade Trotsky's enormous energy. While we were there he was completing the last chapters of the second volume of *The History of the Russian Revolution*. (The first volume will be out in February [1932], published by Simon and Schuster Company.) Comrade Trotsky lives very methodically. He goes to bed early and rises early. He begins to work in the morning and continues until he is ready to go to sleep. All his energy is directed toward the completion of his present work. In addition to the book, Trotsky maintains correspondence with the leading sections of the International Left Opposition. He reads the most important international periodicals of the Comintern, the organs of the various parties, and the capitalist press of the leading countries. The only break in this program of immense work of the leader of the Opposition, Comrade Trotsky finds in fishing occasionally and, at rare moments, in hunting. This is the only form of relaxation from the terrific pace with which he works.

America absorbs a great deal of Comrade Trotsky's interest. To him the United States symbolizes capitalism at the height of its development. "This period sees America assuming the leadership of the capitalist world," he told us. He continued: "While it is not excluded that America can rise out of the present crisis and attain its former strength, it will have to do this at the expense of the rest of the world. The United States will turn its attention to the quest for a redivision of the world markets. And in this development it will exhibit its ruthlessness. One of the weaknesses in the present situation is the subjective factor. It is not enough to say that statistics point to the impossibility for America to rise out of the present difficulties. We must not forget that from the subjective point of view there does not exist a revolutionary working class to harass America at home. It apparently feels free to proceed without much protest with wage
cuts on a national scale and repressions against the American working class.

“But in spite of this we have reason to be hopeful for the American working class. The effects of the crisis have a tremendous influence in shattering their bourgeois and petty-bourgeois longings, which came as a result of the stupendous rise of American capitalism during the almost uninterrupted growth of industry there. But America has passed that ‘golden era.’ I think that it is correct to say that from now on its development will be a far more difficult one, made at the expense of the rest of the world and in particular through increased persecution of the working class at home. It is nowhere written that the United States must be last on the calendar of the revolution. The world character of the economy, plus various combinations of circumstances, can push the United States to the upper portion of the list. I have spoken on this same question to the American comrades before. The problem, however, assumes even more importance now.

“A great deal depends upon the preparations made by the Communists for the struggles of the future. The Comintern heretofore refused to recognize the role of American imperialism and only after a criticism by the Opposition made a belated turn about-face. But it is absolutely necessary for the Communists to understand the role of American capitalism, see its development, and prepare for the future.”

Jokingly we asked Comrade Trotsky whether he would like to come to the United States to live. He expressed a real desire to be here, but replied: “I think it is best to wait until the revolution and I trust that you comrades will push a little faster to accomplish this.”

Comrade Trotsky is deeply interested in the youth movement. Repeatedly he asked us questions regarding the youth in the States. “Have you any youth in the Opposition?” “What kind of youth activity have you been carrying on?” “What are the possibilities of organizing a youth movement supporting the Opposition and training, educating, and preparing the cadres of youth for the future?” He expressed himself as follows: “It is absolutely necessary that the Opposition concentrate on winning the youth to its support. Unlike the thoroughly corrupted bureaucrats, it is quite possible to win large sections of the youth to the Opposition. They are less corrupted and are more susceptible to the ideas of the Left Opposition. We must concentrate especially upon winning them to our banner. They will become a tremendous reserve for us. I should really like to see efforts made in this
Discussions With Albert Glotzer

field of work.” The steps already taken by the [CLA] National Executive Committee in promulgating youth work through the issuance of *Young Spartacus* and helping to create the [Spartacus] Youth Clubs will find favorable support from Comrade Trotsky. He is especially interested in our efforts in this field of work.

America is not altogether strange to him. He asked about the role of the Socialist Party in the present crisis. “Does the Socialist Party take an active part in the struggles of the workers in the present crisis? Are they really making efforts to build their organization? Do the workers support the anti-working class activity of the Hillquits and the liberal mutterings of the Thomases? American Socialism has not changed its reformist approach to the problems confronting the proletariat. It remains a constant danger to the working class.”

In connection with the Socialist Party, Comrade Trotsky asked about the role of the Jewish workers in this country. He told us that it was quite possible to win their support. But for this it would be necessary to publish our literature in the Jewish language in order to make it accessible to them. “Yes, you should not neglect the Jewish workers. They will be a great help to you and the American comrades should try to attract them to the Opposition and win them to the support of our ideas.”

Comrade Trotsky takes a deep interest in the minutest tasks of the Opposition. He asked many questions about *The Militant*, which he regards very highly. “*The Militant* must be maintained as a weekly at all costs. It is a powerful weapon and no doubt is your strongest phase of work.” He questioned us regarding sales, whether it was read by the members of the party, what our financial condition is, and numerous other questions regarding the existence of the Lovestone group and the activity of the party. He often repeated the absolute necessity to win the party members. “They are most important,” he told us, “and for this you must organize your party fractions. They must be active bodies, participating in the life of the party. We must not lose sight of the fact that we are a party faction, and our future depends directly upon the whole future of communism and the party.”

We found Comrade Trotsky in good spirits despite the extreme hardships of his exile. He must write in order to live, and this in a sense is a handicap in that it does not allow him to concentrate all his thoughts and energies on the International Opposition. We talked about life in Turkey, and often its humorous though tragic
sides would come in for discussion. The fire that broke out almost a year ago destroyed his library and a box of valuable clippings that were collected over a period of years. Comrade Trotsky is planning a book on the international situation following the completion of his present work. It was for this that he had been collecting material. "When we first arrived, I made inquiries regarding a library in Turkey which I might be able to use in my work. But, unfortunately, I learned that such an institution was not to be found in Turkey. After the fire, I sent Comrade Frankel to the National University of Istanbul, requesting the use of the school library. They were anxious to help, but found that impossible because the university did not have a library which I could use. So you see that I am really handicapped in this sense."

We learned from the comrades there that the fire destroyed almost everything. It broke out late at night, and before much could be done, it spread through the entire house. All that was saved from the ruins were the archives, Lenin's letters, and documents. His library, consisting of two thousand read and annotated volumes and clippings, was burned. The clothes belonging to the entire family were destroyed, and $150 in cash was burned. "But even so," Comrade Trotsky said smilingly, "it could have been very much worse."

Comrade Frankel related the following incident to us: "Shortly after the fire we engaged a room in a nearby hotel. All of us felt dejected and were very much disturbed by the irreparable losses of the fire—all except Comrade Trotsky. No sooner were we settled, than he laid his manuscripts out on the table, called the stenographer over, and began to dictate chapters of his book as though nothing at all had happened during the night."

Upon news of this loss, books were sent to Trotsky from different parts of the world. These help to rebuild the library that he lost. Books on economics, history, politics, and the labor movement are especially needed and welcomed by him. In this article we appeal to our comrades, sympathizers, and anybody who is interested to communicate with us in regard to rebuilding the library of Comrade Trotsky.

Comrade Trotsky is much troubled by the situation in Germany. He regards the situation there to be decisive in its influence on the whole trend of events internationally. "A victory of fascism in Germany would have disastrous effects everywhere," he told us. "The party does not realize that should Hitler come to power he would destroy the party and labor movement. But instead of that it plays with the situation in a
most criminal manner. It recalls to my mind the period of 1923 when Brandler and Company capitulated. Then the party followed behind events instead of leading the proletariat in the struggle for power. From all appearances the party is continuing the very same course today. The Opposition must do all in its power to prevent this attitude of the party from continuing. This is one of our chief tasks. We must make the party realize that its task at present is to organize working class resistance to fascism and prepare for the revolutionary struggle.”

From Germany we went on to a discussion of the situation in the Soviet Union. We asked Comrade Trotsky just what effects the world crisis would have on the Soviet Union. Comrade Trotsky was of the opinion that “the world crisis will have severe repercussions there. It appears now that the five-year plan is experiencing a number of difficulties about which we warned long ago, but the relation of the economy on a world scale to the national economy will cause a crisis of the five-year plan and only increase the economic difficulties of the proletarian dictatorship.” Even now, while Stalin and Litvinov speak of the possibilities of the peaceful development side by side of socialism and capitalism, the capitalist powers only work to make matters more difficult for the Soviet economy. For the Opposition it means more determined efforts than ever.

“The capitulators find things more difficult than ever. Those who were influenced by the step of Radek and the other older comrades and who sincerely felt that a change was taking place in the policy of the party found themselves returned to exile shortly after they were taken back into the party. Radek tries to establish himself in the party by continuously denouncing the Opposition and renouncing every principled idea that he ever held. He has become the most vicious of them all. Most of the capitulators do not exist politically. They have sold their ideas for the right to return to the centers to enjoy the existence of ‘marked men.’ The genuine Oppositionists remain steadfast. There are many thousands in exile. It is hard to estimate how many. Official figures will tell nothing. Those in exile are forced to go through terrific persecution and in spite of the extremely unfavorable conditions of work—lack of writing materials, books, periodicals, relations with other Opposition colonies, or with the party itself—exhibit a fearlessness that should encourage every Oppositionist. There are in exile today between three and five thousand young Oppositionists as well as a few thousand Old Bolsheviks. In the party ranks there are currents of Oppositionists every-
where. Stalin thinks that by his severe repressions he can stamp out the Opposition. But he can never do this in spite of everything he does. The Opposition lives because its ideas are the ideas of Marx and Lenin, because their ideas are the ideas of the October Revolution."

TO HELP IN BRITAIN

November 9, 1931

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

I give you the suggestion to turn to Ivor Montague, even though he is not a member of the Left Opposition, during your stay in England. He has some job relations with the organs of the Soviet government and that will perhaps make it necessary to observe a certain discretion with him, in order not to compromise him.

Comrade Glotzer, with whom we have formed a good friendship in the few weeks that he has been here, is being retained here for a few more weeks by our great administrator, Frankel. I regret that his visit coincides with a period in which I am very busy with my book [The History of the Russian Revolution]. If I am not finished with it by the first of December, the agreement with the publisher is lost. This is the reason why we have only been able to discuss things a few times. But we discuss indirectly by the elaboration of the theses or countertheses on the English question, which are translated by Glotzer and Frankel into English. It is far from being an even short summary of the British situation and the tasks of the Communists. It is far more negative. They represent a refutation of totally false ideas which will have to be uncovered as views not representing the Left Opposition.

During your stay in London you will naturally study more closely the activity and literature of the party. It would be very good if you could send me a little collection of the more characteristic leaflets and programmatic articles of the party. There seems to be a view entertained by various types of our comrades regarding the imminence of fascism in Great Britain. Because this opinion exists in many minds, I have a conviction that it emanates from the party. I would like to have you make a survey
WHAT IS FASCISM?  

November 15, 1931

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

I am writing you today regarding the question of fascism. It would be well if you discuss these questions with the English comrades, since in this manner we can arrive at conclusions and definite views.

What is fascism? The name originated in Italy. Were all the forms of counterrevolutionary dictatorship fascist or not (that is, prior to the advent of fascism in Italy)?

The former dictatorship in Spain of Primo de Rivera is called a fascist dictatorship by the Comintern. Is this correct or not? We believe that it is incorrect.

The fascist movement in Italy was a spontaneous movement of large masses, with new leaders from the rank and file. It is a plebeian movement in origin, directed and financed by big capitalist powers. It issued forth from the petty bourgeoisie, the lumpenproletariat, and even to a certain extent from the
proletarian masses; Mussolini, a former socialist, is a “self-made” man arising from this movement.

Primo de Rivera was an aristocrat. He occupied a high military and bureaucratic post and was chief governor of Catalonia. He accomplished his overthrow with the aid of state and military forces. The dictatorships of Spain and Italy are two totally different forms of dictatorship. It is necessary to distinguish between them. Mussolini had difficulty in reconciling many old military institutions with the fascist militia. This problem did not exist for Primo de Rivera.

The movement in Germany is most analogous to the Italian. It is a mass movement, with its leaders employing a great deal of socialist demogogy. This is necessary for the creation of the mass movement.

The genuine basis [for fascism] is the petty bourgeoisie. In Italy it has a very large base—the petty bourgeoisie of the towns and cities, and the peasantry. In Germany, likewise, there is a large base for fascism. In England there is less of that base because the proletariat is the overwhelming majority of the population; the peasant or farming stratum only an insignificant section.

They may say, and this is true to a certain extent, that the new middle class, the functionaries of the state, the private administrators, etc., etc., can form such a base. But this is a new question that must be analyzed. This is a supposition. It is necessary to analyze just what it will be. It is necessary to foresee the fascist movement growing from this or that element. But this is only a perspective, which is controlled by events. I am not affirming that it is impossible for a fascist movement to develop in England, or for a Mosley or someone else to become a dictator. This is a question for the future. It is a far-fetched possibility.

To speak of it now as an imminent danger is not a prognosis but a mere prophecy. In order to be capable of foreseeing anything with regard to fascism it is necessary to have a definition of that idea. What is fascism? What are its base, its form, and its characteristics? How will its development take place?

The aim of this is to show the English comrades that the question is not a simple one. It is necessary to proceed in a scientific and Marxist manner.

Now another question. Naturally it is important that you occupy yourself with the isolated elements of the Left Opposition, but is no less important to pay close attention to what is taking place in the Communist Party, the ILP, and the Labour Party.
The first tremors of the earthquake must have produced very great cracks in the wall of the house, and the Bolshevik-Leninists can gain an influence among a large section of the labor movement. It is necessary to direct your attention not only to our little section but to everything that is happening in this great organism.

This letter is in very rough form. I have not even checked its contents but trust that you will get the general sense of the ideas expressed.

I am enclosing a letter to Miss Ellen Wilkinson, who you will recall was a former communist and still later an MP representing the Labour Party. She also made some efforts to obtain an entry for me into England. If you think that she can be of any use to you then this letter I am enclosing ought to help. If not, then you can destroy it.

My best greetings.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

BETTER TO SEEK THE SOLID

November 30, 1931

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

I have received your letter of November 19, 1931, from Madrid. I hope you have meanwhile taken cognizance of my written responses to the letters from Nin and Lacroix against Molinier. I find the whole business really most unpleasant. The fact that Mill, who for months at a time does not pass along the most important news, rushed to disseminate the letter that Nin wrote in an excited and overwrought state—this fact proves one more time just how little Mill understands about performing his important duties calmly, impartially, and objectively.

I am in complete agreement with you concerning the English question; it is better to gather elements that are numerically small but theoretically as well as politically solid. In the meantime you will have received copies of my letter to Groves, of my critique of the theses of F. Ridley and Aggarwala, as well as of
Comrade Glotzer's letter. I enclose my theses on the international situation in a German translation by Comrade Frankel. The Russian version has been sent to New York. I hope you will get it translated into English for England.

I enclose a copy of a would-be interview for some American newspaper, concerning the Japan-China conflict. I'm sending a copy simultaneously to Eastman with the request that he immediately translate it, sell it for a respectable price, and pass the money on to The Militant. I am not at the moment in position to help The Militant out of its crisis by any other means. I would be prepared to write a second interview on the inevitability of war between the USSR and Germany in case the fascists come to power. However I will do this only if I'm certain that there exists the possibility of selling it to a big, respectable newspaper. I think that Eastman will be able to handle this in New York better than you will in London. I share all this with you only for purposes of information.

Glotzer left behind very good and friendly memories. We all regret that the financial situation makes it impossible for us to see you in Kadikoy.

With best greetings.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

WHY MILL SHOULD BE REMOVED

December 29, 1931

Dear Comrade Souzo:

I do not find your explanations satisfactory, for the following reasons:

1. There are only two possible leaderships for the French League—the present one or the Naville-Rosmer group. Only a fool could believe that the Jewish Group could lead the League. Just look at Mill's behavior. He is sabotaging a leadership that is far from perfect, but is the only one possible. Given that Mill is still, unfortunately, the "full-time functionary," his behavior is criminal.
How can it be tolerated for even a single week? You do not accept responsibility for the Jewish Group (or rather, for Mill and Felix,128 who disorient and take advantage of this group), but have you officially condemned Mill's behavior, through a decision of the Secretariat? Have you explained to him that his attitude is incompatible with his position as a member of the Secretariat? No. And so you bear full responsibility for his criminal behavior.

2. Even on the altogether secondary question of whether or not the Spanish letter had been sent to the other sections, Mill's role remains the same. I have explained the "technical" side of the misunderstanding. But look at the minutes you have sent me: the Spanish letter was not sent to the Jewish Group "as such," says Mill. "As such"! How charming! It's pure Landau! As if it makes any difference whether Mill "as such" circulates the letter or does it through someone else.

3. I learned for the first time from your letter that the question has been posed in the League of "asking the Russian Opposition to remove Mill from the Secretariat." What does that mean? Does anyone really think Mill is in any way linked to the Russian Opposition? Do you really think we can put our slightest confidence in Mill, who had fought with us in the long struggle against the Landau-Naville-Rosmer faction and who suddenly jumped into the arms of Rosmer, after the latter had deserted our ranks? Is there a serious ideological foundation behind all this, or any consistency of behavior? It would be bad enough in the case of a rank-and-file comrade. But we are talking about a "full-time functionary" (!!) of the International Secretariat. No, no, we cannot tolerate such things. It makes a mockery of the struggle we are waging, of our ideas, and of our methods. In my opinion, Mill should long ago have been demoted to the ranks, so that by hard work over a couple of years he could try to regain the confidence of the Left Opposition that he has totally lost.

4. You say that comrades should be judged on the basis of political questions. Here you—like many others—give an abstract, inconsistent, and even false interpretation to a correct principle. Like Paz,129 they blithely accept general ideas, so long as they don't carry any great obligations. But when it comes to personal involvement, they act in the opposite way. In other words, officially recognizing general ideas cannot transform a person's whole mentality.

Let us take the same example of Mill. His letters from Spain were an outrageous scandal for the Left Opposition. That was, I
trust, a political question. I have not minced words on that subject. Perhaps he should have disavowed them openly. We could easily have said to ourselves that our cadres are young and uneducated, and we must be a bit more patient. But that presupposes at least goodwill, a profound devotion to the tendency, and a capacity to learn and to listen carefully to others. And what does Mill do? He has never formulated his aims, but he wages a tireless internal struggle. What does he want? What are his “political ideas”? What characterizes Mill, Landau, and many others is not “correct or false” ideas, but rather the absolute lack of connection between their actual activity and the “political ideas” they pretend to espouse.

That is where the real misfortune lies. This misfortune is organic; it characterizes a large layer of socially uprooted elements, without solid links to the workers’ milieu, lacking in revolutionary education, and having a certain ability to toss around platitudes under the name of “political ideas.”

5. Now consider the composition of the Secretariat: (a) Mill, whose behavior I have characterized above; (b) Myrtos, who in total disagreement with the Greek organization supports Mill, and even wants to make him the Spanish ambassador; (c) Souzo, who is “not responsible” for Mill’s sabotage, but tolerates it; (d) Frank, who, being absorbed in other things, spends little time on Secretariat work. It is a very unfortunate situation. In its present state the Secretariat “as such” has become an instrument of decomposition. For the same reasons that Mill pits the Jewish Group against the League, he is forced to pit the Spanish section against the French, German, and Russian sections. He is doing everything that Naville did without openly declaring his aims and plans. He uses the passage [through Paris] of a Glotzer or a Shachtman to poison the International atmosphere. Half measures are no longer useful. The Pontius Pilate formula “I’m not responsible” is no longer sufficient. The situation has to be dealt with. If the Secretariat is incapable of saving itself, the sections must intervene.

I shall await your reply with interest. I will be very pleased if this time it brings a bit of clarity to the discussion.

Communist greetings,

L. Trotsky
THE KIND OF SECRETARIAT WE NEED

January 27, 1932

Dear Comrade Souzo:

I am very late in replying to you, which is not my habit, because of our moving, which was a very long and complicated task (nine-tenths of the work fell on Comrade Molinier, who came especially to organize the move). The only times I saw him he was on his way between the two houses, since he was busy with details rather than politics—which didn’t stop Mill and his “Millitants” from saying that he had come here to wage a struggle against Mill and his friends.

Your letter is a step forward towards clarity and mutual understanding. I need not repeat that I do and will appreciate very much the possibility of working in common with you and your group. The decision of the [French] Executive Committee concerning the participation of a Bordigist representative in the IS seems to me absolutely wrong and harmful especially to our relations with the Bordigists. What I think is needed is a profound discussion with this group. I will be quite willing to take part in it, for it deals with the most fundamental issues. They are opposed to us on every question, even the most secondary ones. Now, without prior ideological clarification, collective work in the Secretariat will inevitably become a permanent entanglement of conflicts and will end in a split on some petty issue. The Secretariat is necessary to us as an organ of political work, and not as an arena of conflict and permanent friction.

In Germany there is a considerable movement towards us, coming from various sides. For the moment I am completely buried in letters, documents, and newspapers from Germany, sent by friends and semi-friends from various sides. I believe our organization can make an important step forward, which will not be inconsequential for the other sections.

My best communist greetings to you and yours.

L. Trotsky
To the New Italian Opposition

Dear Comrades:

You must excuse me; I am completely absorbed in the new pamphlet on the German situation, which will be about a hundred pages long. For one chapter of this pamphlet I have used the precious documents and information that you provided me with. Although this very rudimentary chapter can be of only relative interest to you, I am sending it herewith (unfortunately, it’s in Russian), as objective evidence that your materials have not gone unused.

As you must already have heard from Comrade Molinier, I intend to devote my next pamphlet, of some 16-20 pages, to the subject of the Bordigists. I will need your help in this task.

With warmest communist greetings.

Yours,

L. Trotsky

To the National Committee, CLA

Dear Comrades:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter with the enclosed. I am sending you herewith a copy of my letter to Comrade Shachtman.

I notice from your decision that you are planning to make a theoretical organ a reality. In order to eliminate possible misunderstandings, I consider it necessary to state that you should not
at all consider yourselves bound in this question, because at the
time when I wrote you about a subsidy for a theoretical organ, we
did not yet have the terrible crisis and the existence of The
Militant was not yet threatened. Please dispose of the sum as you
yourselves see fit. It would be very regrettable to establish a
theoretical organ at the cost of the weekly Militant.

With best comradely greetings,
L. Trotsky

BORDIGA AND SOCIAL FASCISM

February 14, 1932

Dear Comrade Souzo:

I have received your article on the Bordigists, which I find very
good and extremely useful, especially the paragraph that shows
Bordiga to be the father of the theory of social fascism. I have
written to Berlin that I think it is necessary to publish your
article in the next International Bulletin. I think it should also
be published in La Lutte de classes. At all costs we must make
every effort to give life to La Lutte de classes as a theoretical
organ of international importance.

Communist greetings to you and yours,

L. Trotsky

WHEN ULTRALEFTISTS CAN BE MORE CORRECT

March 6, 1932

Dear Comrade Souzo:

Thank you very much for the documentation on the Bordigists.
It's really classic the way sectarians of this kind look for every
possible reason for the criticism against them except the only
valid one. In my new pamphlet I explain again how the ultraleftists can be more correct than the opportunists, and vice versa: it depends on the character of the period. Until 1929, during the opportunist zigzags of the Stalinists, the Bordigists were a more or less progressive factor. Now, in a period of struggle against the ultraleft zigzag [of the Stalinists], the Bordigists represent a reactionary force. Why look for intrigues and personal considerations when it is simply a consideration of principles?

Warmest communist greetings,
L. Trotsky

ON AN ENTRY INTO THE SAP

March 8, 1932

Dear Comrade—

In immediate reply to your letter:

The fact that your group has joined the SAP without its own program and its own paper means that your group is dissolving itself into the SAP. I of course do not doubt for a moment that individually and collectively you have set yourselves the task of winning the SAP for communism. But day-to-day politics and the requirements of the mass organizations will have unavoidable consequences. I really do not see in what way your group can maintain itself as a communist grouping in the SAP.

In your statement to the SAP there are already unambiguous symptoms of this liquidation. How sharp—and rightly so—is your criticism of the SPD and the KPD [German CP], and how mild, blurred, and conditional is your criticism of the SAP! While painting the motley picture of the SAP with watercolors, you leave out the fact that the leadership of this party and the leadership of its central paper are total centrists. And for the physiognomy of the party as it appears before us today, that is of decisive significance.

You have taken the characterization of the KPD as ultraleftist from the KPO. This characterization is one-sided, says little, and these days is even incorrect within specific limits. The nonsense
with Scheringer\textsuperscript{138} has nothing "ultraleft" about it. They close their eyes to the openly opportunist past [of the KPD], which can be resurrected as the living present tomorrow. But I treat this topic at greater length in my pamphlet.

It seems quite wrong to me that you see the trouble in general as the "entanglement of communist politics in the capitalist countries in the factional struggles of the Russian party." Quite the contrary. The trouble with the KPO was that in the internal disputes of the Russian party it constantly supported the wrong line against the correct one.

Your formulations with regard to the united front strike me as being too general and, allow me to use the word, too SAP-ish. I find the insistence upon a united presidential candidacy thoroughly wrong.\textsuperscript{139} The Prussian elections and later the Reichstag elections too? We are for the united front only in practical mass actions. That has absolutely nothing in common with a renunciation of our own banner, our own program, and our own candidacy in the elections.

I do not want to go into minor matters. What is most important has in any case been suggested above. It seems to me quite correct that you come out against a hasty adoption of program by the SAP. The more comprehensive and detailed the programmatic discussion turns out to be, the greater the advantages the revolutionary tendency will derive from it. I am receiving the \textit{SAZ}\textsuperscript{140} and am collecting the programmatic proposals. Perhaps I will intervene in the programmatic discussion later with a pamphlet. . . .

L. Trotsky

\textbf{OUR STRENGTH IS IN CLARITY}\textsuperscript{141}

March 23, 1932

Dear Comrade Souzo:

Thank you for your last letter. I think it is quite necessary to put out a completely special issue of the International Bulletin devoted to the Bordigists, and perhaps to the Italian question in
general. The issue should carry excerpts from the latest resolution of *Prometeo* on the German question. Such a selection of documents should be provided that each national section can form an objective opinion of Bordigist politics. To leave things as they are, in obscurity, would be very harmful to the International Opposition and especially to the Italian Opposition. Our whole strength is in clarity! At the time of an implacable struggle against the Stalinists we are obstructed and compromised by the Bordigists, who in this period are but a caricature of the Stalinists.

A special issue of the International Bulletin will open a discussion. I will intervene with my pamphlet, which will be much better understood in the light of a sufficient documentation. Thereafter we will be able to proceed with the adoption of a collective statement that forcefully condemns the Bordigist excesses.

Such an issue of the International Bulletin could be produced by the IS in collaboration with the New Italian Opposition. Put this idea to your group, and I will get the IS working on it.

My best regards to you and your group.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

THE AMERICAN DISPUTE AND INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS

May 1, 1932

Dear Comrade Glotzer:

Unfortunately I have not yet had the opportunity to carefully study the documents I have received on the American dispute. In any case I will catch up in the coming weeks. There is one thing that I would like to state from the outset: The programmatic and tactical documents are, of course, very important. But the general method of procedure, tested by the facts, seems to me far more important. Comrade Shachtman's procedure puts me off in the extreme, and I simply cannot separate the American dispute from the international questions.
Comrade Shachtman believes that while supporting all those tendencies I consider harmful and wrong, he can at the same time reassure me with general platitudes. For two years, he supported Naville and Landau in a determined and stubborn fashion, although not openly as befits a revolutionary in political questions. In his latest letter, he contends that he did not support Naville and Landau, which makes the most painful impression. At the same time he passes over in complete silence his position toward the German Opposition and the French League as well as his alliance with Mill, Felix, and Lacroix. To the best of my knowledge Shachtman is familiar with Comrade Lacroix’s incredible letters and this is not the first time that Lacroix has invoked Shachtman’s authority. But he says nothing about this. In addition, according to information I have received in letters (this is in any case the only fact that I have second hand, the rest I know from my own experience), Comrade Nin has stated that I initiated a “campaign” against Shachtman. I have written about Shachtman’s position only to Shachtman himself and to the central committee of the American League. Who could have given Comrade Nin this completely false information? If Comrade Shachtman uses the same methods in American matters, then many of his theses may be very good, but his politics are bad. The Brandlerites maintain that Stalin is wrong only on the international questions, but on the Russian questions he is right. I decline to use this kind of double-entry bookkeeping on Shachtman. For more than two years I made do with arguments and private letters. I then turned to the leadership of the American League to force Shachtman to show his colors. He always prefers to remain under cover and to substitute questionable personal combinations for politics. So I must tell myself that, against my will, a public debate with Shachtman and his international allies is becoming unavoidable.

Comrade Shachtman writes me that a phrase in my interview over the inevitability of a labor party has created confusion. I have already seen that in the Lovestone sheet. It is an accidental misunderstanding. I spoke about the inevitability of the “Europeanization” of American politics, i.e., in the first place about the development of a party of the working class. In doing so, I of course did not concretize the concept of this party in any way: whether it would be a labor party, a Social Democratic party or a Communist party. There naturally was no reason for me to enlarge on this point in an interview for a capitalist paper. In the Russian text of my statement it says “workers’ party” and
not "labor party." Any observant reader might have made that out for himself. That the American Brandlerites want to make capital out of this only shows that, like their German teachers, they are at the end of their tether.

With best greetings.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

**WORRIED ABOUT SPAIN**¹⁴⁵

**May 13, 1932**

Dear Comrade Souzo:

I am so indebted to your group that I feel compelled to reply to you. To be sure, it is not for lack of goodwill that I have not written. The German events have for a long time altered my plans. My *History* has taken me immeasurably longer than I had planned. Now I will be involved in the American question: we have Comrade Weisbord visiting us here for some time. But I assure you I will pay my debts.

I insist on the necessity to publish a special issue of the International Bulletin devoted to the Bordigists. Your group cannot play the role it should until our international organization has dealt definitively with this question. It is absolutely unacceptable for a serious organization that has broken away from powerful organizations to tolerate in its own ranks the same errors and excesses, but on a smaller scale. It compromises us, adds to the confusion, and especially it hinders the development of your group.

You understand how worried I am about some aspects of the Spanish Opposition's development. It is clear that some sicknesses, against which I have incessantly fought in my private correspondence, must now come out into the open. Naturally, we must keep to a minimum the incidental costs of a possible new crisis. But it appears that some of our Spanish friends have not at all followed our international experience, and have not drawn the necessary lessons from it.

In the USSR we now see the beginning of a new turn on the
agrarian question, which the Left Opposition had predicted for months and months. Naturally, I shall return to that question soon.

My warmest communist greetings to you and your group.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL QUESTIONS

May 19, 1932

To the National Committee,
Communist League of America

Dear Comrades:

In my letter to Comrade Glotzer I have already briefly explained the comical misunderstanding with regard to the labor party in my New York Times interview. I hope that Comrade Glotzer has informed you of the relevant parts. Enclosed, I am also sending you a more thorough treatment of this question.147 The document arose in the following manner: Comrade Weisbord, who has come here in the name of his group, naturally on his own initiative, and has already been with us for several days, presented before us (aside from Weisbord there are three other foreign comrades here) the views of his group on the labor party question. This naturally led to a discussion, and at the conclusion of the discussion I dictated the article enclosed to Comrade Weisbord. In literary form it is very much imperfect, for Weisbord took down my English version, so to speak, almost verbatim. If you want to print it, you will have to polish it up yourselves.

Further discussions with Weisbord are scheduled. I must admit that Weisbord has made a much more favorable impression upon me personally than by means of his letters and articles. I am of course holding back on all organizational positions, i.e., I refer him to the fact that the American League is our only organization in America and that the disputed questions must be regulated in America. As you can see from the enclosed document, I
defend the leadership of the League quite energetically against Weisbord’s criticism (naturally, not out of diplomacy but out of conviction). But it appears to me that Weisbord’s group is already prepared now to join the League if the conditions are not too “debasing.” Don’t you think that after a sharp condemnation of the theoretical and tactical mistakes of this group by me, you can then open up a bridge for Weisbord and his group? That is only a suggestion. I do not in any way take it upon myself to speak in your name, which is of course impossible, and not even in my own. But I must say that Comrade Glotzer’s report about the complete stagnation in the branches of the League has made a disturbing impression on me. Perhaps something in Weisbord’s criticism in connection with “mass action” is not so false as the other parts of his criticism.

I am very glad you have taken a firm position on the international questions. On the question of the international conference I am enclosing a letter by Gourov.\textsuperscript{148} You will understand why the author signs this letter as he does. This letter too is a condemnation of the fantastic idea of the Weisbord group with regard to an international conference at which not only the national sections but all the splinter groups and muddleheads would be represented. You know, of course, that many Spanish comrades flirt with this idea? In the Czechoslovak group also, which is quite new in our ranks, there is as yet no clarity on the international questions. It is therefore all the more important to take a firm position on the question of the composition of the conference and to lock the doors to all confusion and to all combinations by intriguers.

On the internal dispute of the American League I do not as yet take a position because I have not yet had an opportunity to study the question with sufficient attentiveness. When I take a position I will try not to allow myself to be influenced in advance by the false and damaging position of Comrade Shachtman on all the international questions, almost without exception. On the other hand, however, it is not easy to assume that one can be correct on the most important national questions when one is always wrong on the most important international questions.

With communist greetings.

Yours,

L. Trotsky
May 27, 1932

To the National Committee,
Communist League of America

Dear Comrades:

I have already sent you my statement on the labor party. Enclosed I am sending you the letter which I wrote to Comrade Weisbord as a result of our discussions. I hope that the letter will give you complete satisfaction and that you will be able to make the necessary use of my letter if the Weisbord group continues to fight against us in the way it has done hitherto.

But I must say that my letter, although it does not make any concessions at all, is nevertheless written in a spirit which leaves the door open for a possibility of rapprochement and later of unification. Personally Weisbord displays a sincere willingness to incorporate his group in our ranks. In all the disputed questions of principled significance he has recognized the correctness of the basic views of the Left Opposition. In this sense he has declared himself in solidarity with my letter as a whole. He has the intention of acting accordingly upon his return to the U.S. and of issuing a number of his periodical in this spirit. So far as I know, he has already counseled his friends in America in this sense. The latest number of The Militant brings very sharp echoes of the disputes, which is in itself quite understandable. But I hope that in case the Weisbord group undertakes genuine steps toward adherence to the Left Opposition and thereby to the American League, The Militant will not impede the rapprochement but rather facilitate it.

In the meantime Weisbord is going to Germany and to France, of course on his own initiative, to look up our friends there. I have sent both of my documents on the labor party as well as my letter to W. to all the sections so that the comrades will be familiar with the matter, and I hope therefore that we do not need to fear any misunderstandings.

I hope that you have received in the meantime my circular with regard to the international conference. Some of the Spanish
comrades seem to have the desire to transform the international conference into a sort of a field day for "also" and "nevertheless" Left groups. This sentiment is being nurtured by Naville and by the open and concealed Navillists. I am certain that you will have nothing to do with such a conference and that you will give an unequivocal expression to your opinion regarding it. Due to the importance of the question it would perhaps be appropriate to take a vote with regard to this by roll call in your committee and to inform the International Secretariat of the results. It is high time to teach some of the comrades that there are things with which one must not jest. At any rate, we can figure with certainty that the Russian, German, French, Greek, and Belgian sections will take an unequivocal and decisive position. Aside from the Spanish section there are vacillations on this question perhaps only on the part of the Czechoslovak section, which is quite new in our midst and has not yet liberated itself entirely of its Zinovievist past and is not quite firm precisely on the international questions. The Czechoslovak section proposes that its leader, Comrade [Otto] Friedmann, be admitted into the International Secretariat. Comrade Friedmann is very warmly recommended by them because of his theoretical talents. It is quite possible that they are correct. Unfortunately, Comrade Friedmann is very little known among us, as is the case with their group as a whole. Therefore, it would perhaps be careless to add the as yet too little tested Comrade Friedmann to the International Secretariat at the present time.

It is unfortunate that you have no reliable comrade in Europe to represent your organization in the Secretariat. At any rate, it is absolutely necessary that your committee as a whole follow the international questions precisely at the present time with the most complete attentiveness. On my part, I am always prepared to give you the necessary information upon request.

Please inform me how the matter stands with the sale of the Yiddish edition of the second volume of the History. Comrade Shachtman informed me some time ago that a sum of from five to six hundred dollars was due from this transaction. This money is to go to the International Secretariat and especially for the German and Spanish sections—after you deduct ten percent for The Militant. I beg you to settle this matter as quickly as possible.

With best communist greetings,

L. Trotsky
Dear Comrade Groves:

You must excuse my inexcusable lateness in answering your letter. I was, till now, completely absorbed with urgent work. Then I must confess to have overlooked your advice that I can write to you in French and for English letters I must wait for a special occasion as my own English is too bad. At this time we have here as a guest for a short time the American Comrade Weisbord. You know that his group is not connected with the Left Opposition but he tends to adhere to our organization. We discussed here some important questions which can present a certain interest for the English comrades. I send you enclosed copies of a statement about the labor party question in America, of a letter to Comrade Weisbord and his suggestions concerning that letter, and of his proposed organizational recommendations. The statement regarding the labor party you can use at your discretion, but the other material is only for the private use of the comrades.

I would be glad to receive from you news about the action of your group recently and about the situation in the Communist Party. From the official papers I have learned that Murphy is expelled as a “near Trotskyist.” What does this wonderful story mean? Explain this please in detail. And what is the expelled Murphy doing?

Are you acquainted with the book society of Comrade Beech, and what is your opinion about this? Cannot the members of the Left Opposition adhere to that society and get in this manner a legal basis for their activity?

What does the left wing of the Independent Labour Party represent which you mention in your letter?

Fraternally yours,

L. Trotsky
Dear Comrade Glotzer:

Many thanks for the return of the materials. As for your latest letter, I can only regret that under bad influence you wish to reduce the questions which separate Shachtman from the most important [leaders] of the European Opposition to the question of whether Molinier or Treint are to be regarded as good leaders. That is the way the question is put by Rosmer, Naville, and other philistines who find Marxism and revolution unbearable but haven’t the courage to openly defend their anarchist views. To reduce two years of internal struggle to whether Molinier is fit to be a leader is really pitiful and inexorably compromises those who admit to such a view.

Weisbord spent a few weeks in our house. We had rather extensive discussions. I was sharp and completely frank in giving him my opinion on the views and methods of his group. The dispute concerned principled questions, and I must tell you in this private letter that I prefer Weisbord’s method to Shachtman’s a hundred times over: Shachtman plays with ideas and makes combinations, while Weisbord is completely serious about things. Shachtman has never openly and honestly declared what he stands for, what he is fighting for, and with whom. He gave the Jewish Group in Paris the right to invoke his authority, and Lacroix and Nin as well. In doing so he simply helped them slide further downhill, since they think that the entire American League is behind Shachtman. After two years of maneuvering by Shachtman, after dozens of admonishing letters from me, and continually evasive, petty diplomatic letters from Shachtman that always bordered on intrigue, I officially inquired of your leadership whether they support Shachtman’s international views. I did not know anything about the [CLA’s] internal differences. My question was meant exactly as written. Shachtman assured me of his solidarity in a sugary letter and at the same time sent word to Barcelona that I was initiating an international campaign against him. In the meanwhile, without
knowing anything about this, I wrote to Shachtman and the leadership of the American League that Shachtman should withdraw his resignation, that his work in a leading position was necessary, etc. I said to myself that perhaps my letter prompted Shachtman's resignation, and immediately took steps to counter its effect. Where in this is a "campaign" and especially "an international campaign" against Shachtman? What has all this to do with Molinier's character? It concerns Shachtman's "character," and unfortunately after all that has happened I cannot place any confidence in it. I feel duty bound to tell you this without any adornment, so that there will be no illusions between us.

With best greetings.

Yours,

L. Trotsky

QUERY ABOUT A SHOP PAPER

June 9, 1932

To the National Committee,
Communist League of America

Dear Comrades:

I am sending you herewith, in Russian, a letter dealing with the very important question: the projected international congress against the war danger.\textsuperscript{158}

I notice from \textit{The Militant} that you are again in such financial difficulties that the existence of the weekly is threatened. That disturbs me very much, because it proves that the basis of the paper still remains rather narrow.

Meanwhile, I hope you have received the documents that dealt with my conversations with Weisbord. A couple of days ago I received a shop paper, "The Red Dreadnaught," which gave me considerable pleasure because I was sure that it concerns the
League. Only later did I discover that this paper is published by the Weisbord group. Does our organization also publish such papers?

With best greetings,
L. Trotsky

PROPOSALS FOR THE ANTIWAR CONGRESS

June 9, 1932

Dear Comrades:

The question of an antiwar congress, at the formal initiative of Rolland and Barbusse, is visibly assuming greater significance than I thought it had a week ago on the basis of inadequate information. The articles in La Vie ouvriere (CGTU weekly) do not leave any doubt that behind the backs of Rolland and Barbusse stand Moscow and the Comintern.

At first glance this fact seems to be almost improbable. Rolland is a petty-bourgeois radical of the purest water, a sincere pacifist, a Gandhi worshipper, a Latin variety of Maxim Gorky, of superior culture but with less revolutionary experience. Barbusse is a Rolland of the younger generation and of incomparably lesser stature. In his capacity as publisher of the magazine Monde, Barbusse is conducting a campaign of propaganda for the unity of the Communists with the “social fascists.” It is difficult to imagine a more absurd, reactionary, and harmful slogan than this. And under cover of these two petty-bourgeois pacifists the Comintern deems it necessary to hide on the question of the defense of the Soviet Union. While denying the tactic of a united front with the mass organizations of the workers, the Stalinists hand over the initiative for the united front to Barbusse, who stands for complete merger with the Social Democracy. It is difficult to imagine a more blatant and disgusting union of ultraleftism with opportunism.

Judging by the symptoms, there is in preparation a turn to the right all along the line. Of the most important significance, of
course, is the turn in the economic policy of the USSR. The newspapers are continuing to bluster about the liquidation of the kulaks as a class, but the practical measures of the economic policy are unavoidably preparing the conditions for the restoration of the kulaks as a class. The head is already turned to the right, and the tail is still sticking out leftward: such is the outward likeness of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In Germany the united front with the trade unions is rejected while the effort is made through Barbusse and Rolland to dilute the proletarian vanguard in the most heterogeneous international fraternity.

What a disgrace! Can anyone imagine for a moment that the Bolshevik Party in Lenin's time would "join" Gorky in the matter of calling an international congress against war? Lenin spoke and wrote on numerous occasions; Gorky is, of course, a wonderful writer; but as regards politics he would do well if he kept out of it, because his interference creates nothing but confusion. The Stalinists, however, undoubtedly induced Rolland and Barbusse to take the initiative in this international confusion, in an attempt to camouflage the dull edge of their policy in it.

All this we must explain to the Communists. The new centrist experiment, purely adventurist in spite of its opportunism, must be understood by the advanced workers. The cause of Communism can only gain by it. But the tasks of the Left Opposition cannot be limited to this alone. The Comintern has already joined the call of Rolland-Barbusse. All or the majority of groups which are arrayed in the Two-and-a-half International will probably join. It is highly probable that separate organizations of the Second International will join, along with various kinds of societies of pacifists and intellectuals on this and the other side of the ocean. In such circumstances the Left Opposition cannot stand aside. It must take part in the congress in order to pose the question of struggle against the war danger in a Marxist, Leninist manner. I think that we can, given the proper initiative, secure for ourselves a sufficiently active and independent participation in the coming congress.

We must immediately begin the preparatory ideological and, particularly, the organizational work.

The ideological side does not present any difficulties. If war is a continuation of politics, the struggle against war is a continuation of revolutionary politics. A correct united front policy in Germany is at present the most important and effective means for the struggle against war. We will have to call to mind the fact that the danger of war [to the USSR] from the east is a direct
result of the defeat of the Chinese revolution, for which the false policy of the Comintern is responsible. We will have to recall the Comintern’s attempt to “defend” the USSR with the aid of the Anglo-Russian Committee. We will, especially, call to mind the experience with the Anti-Imperialist League and its conference, to which Muenzenberg brought delegates from the Kuomintang on one hand, and from the British Labourites on the other. We will thus be able to expose the mechanics of this new congress as a broadened reproduction of the masquerade of the Anti-Imperialist League. All our preparatory work must be involved with the issuance of a manifesto signed by all the national sections at the moment of the congress, i.e., at the end of July. From the principled point of view, this political side of the problem, as I have already said, does not present any difficulties. Our main task consists of having each section develop the broadest possible campaign on the basis of a well-elaborated program.

The organizational side of the problem is far more difficult because of the comparative weakness of our forces and also because of the furious resistance which the Stalinist apparatus will offer against our participation in the congress.

This side of the matter we must consider and prepare for with the utmost carefulness. We have a chance to succeed because the congress, by its very nature, cannot be confined within a strictly organizational framework. First of all, we must get access to the “behind the scenes” preparations. We must find out precisely the composition of the organization bureau. We need not doubt that the cuisine is wholly and entirely in the hands of the Stalinist bureaucracy. If as regards principles we cannot offer the pacifists and half-pacifists the least concessions, we must in the purely organizational question, i.e., in the question of penetration into the preparatory organs of the congress, skillfully utilize the elements of the Rolland-Barbusse type in the various countries in order with their aid to overturn the Stalinist flunkies: only in this manner will we be able afterwards to “overturn” politically the pacifists themselves at the congress.

Are there any rules and regulations for the congress? What are they? We must immediately procure them, reproduce them, and circulate them to all sections. As I understand it, admission to the congress will be widely and vaguely extended to representatives not only of political and trade union organizations but also of formal meetings and gatherings. It is necessary to arrange a series of meetings, even if they are small, with the object of clarifying the character of the congress and our tasks as partici-
Proposals for the Antiwar Congress

pants and to wind up such meetings with the election of a delegate who is to carry out appropriate instructions.

In those countries where the Left Opposition enjoys indirect influence in the trade unions, it is necessary to draw the latter into participation: it will be more difficult for the Stalinist lackeys to bar trade union delegates from the congress.

I am of the opinion that each national section should immediately establish a special commission of at least three comrades to work alongside of the administration for the preparation of the congress. There is not much time left. We should not lose a single day. The sections should conduct a careful exchange of all materials and information on the work accomplished. Each section should attentively watch the preparations for the congress by other organizations: various channels and unexpected possibilities may open up to us. We should know how to utilize them. While applying the greatest organizational flexibility, care must be taken not to permit a single false note. At the same time we should not leap out too much in advance: the main charge must be left for the congress itself.

In assigning delegates it is necessary to have in mind that our comrades will hardly have the opportunity to take part in a free discussion: the congress apparatus will be entirely in the hands of the Stalinists. True, the participation of centrists and pacifists may open some opportunities for organizational maneuvering (though, in all probability, the pacifists will act jointly with the Stalinists to stifle our expression). At any rate, we must count not on long, freely delivered speeches, but on short declarations prepared in writing in advance, on our manifesto, etc. This means that we need not so much experienced parliamentary orators as militant revolutionists, who can handle themselves properly, secure the floor from the most rigid chairman, who will not stop, if conditions will demand, at causing a parliamentary scandal. It is understood that our delegates will achieve results only if they constitute a compact, though small, group. For this the knowledge of foreign languages is very important.

Since the initiative comes from France, it is naturally incumbent upon our French section to carry out the tasks of a speedy, and at the same time the widest possible, preparatory exploration and of furnishing information to the other sections.

It is quite possible that the above remarks and suggestions will contain large gaps or errors because of inadequate information. But the plan itself, if accepted by the International Secretariat and the sections, will in the process of its execution go through
the necessary corrections, changes, and supplements. The most important thing now is to commence the work—without losing a single minute.

G. Gourov [Leon Trotsky]

P.S. This letter as a whole is not intended for publication, of course. Separate parts that do not represent “war secrets” may certainly be used, if necessary.

G.G.

A DISCUSSION ON GREECE\textsuperscript{165}

Spring 1932

\textbf{Trotsky:} I would like to raise some questions about the problem of “faction and party” so as to be able to draw some inferences for other countries from the Greek experience. Should we remain a faction or take steps toward a policy of independence vis-a-vis the party?\textsuperscript{166} A situation can be envisioned where the party might be weak and the faction strong, and thus able to make a bid to replace the party.\textsuperscript{167} However, all attempts to move in such a direction up till now have failed to produce any favorable results. We have seen the experience in Germany (Urbahns) and in Belgium (Overstraeten), as well as the attempts of the Right Opposition and the most recent experience of the SAP.\textsuperscript{168} What is the situation in Greece?

Two more questions on this: First, what \textit{current} political questions divide the Archio-Marxists and the Communist Party; that is, how do the fundamental differences express themselves in practical work? Second, what experience has there been in the electoral field?

\textbf{Answer:} Suggests reading the written report that has been largely completed and then basing the oral discussion on it.

\textbf{Trotsky:} What is the Agrarian Party’s program?

\textbf{A.:} They call themselves “anticapitalist.”

\textbf{Trotsky:} Do they also call themselves “socialist”?

\textbf{A.:} They call themselves “Marxists.”
Trotsky: And what is their agrarian program?
A.: “Against Communism and against capitalism.” Actually they are representatives of the rich farmers.

Trotsky: What slogans do they propose? (With regard to taxes, banks, etc.)
A.: A debt moratorium on loans from the state and the agrarian bank, lowering taxes for the peasants—for a “peasants’ government.”

Trotsky: The feudalists after all were Turks, and they were driven out. But what about the church; does it control large landed estates?
A.: It does not have a lot of property. There were also big Greek landowners; however in 1918-19 their holdings were taken away by the land reform, which in return offered them large and lucrative compensation.

Trotsky: Who was the land distributed to? The refugees or the indigenous population?
A.: Both. There were 1,500,000 refugees. Among them, about 200,000 eventually received homesteading credits. However, large layers of farmers have considerable tax debts. They are all now threatened with the confiscation of their property.

A.: Reports further on the political slogans of the Communist Party.

The united front: On this question, a bitter struggle prevails between our organization and the official party. In general, the party rejects the united front, even at the trade union level. Its policy is the united front “from below” with separate leaderships for each strike and struggle (set up by the party, of course). On this question our struggle has intensified, especially during the last period.

Trotsky: In connection with Germany, or as a separate question?
A.: In our propaganda we connect up the events in Germany with the attitude of the party in Greece. We are now in the midst of a big crisis, and decisive battles are in the offing. Our congress raised the perspective that these struggles could culminate in a general strike.

Trotsky: And the party?
A.: After the liquidation of the third period, the party abandoned the slogan of the political strike and now merely views the task as struggling for direct, economic partial demands. In place of the united front, the party created a “People’s Committee,” in which only the party, its youth, and the red
periphery organizations participate. The Opposition has proposed that workers’ congresses be held in every city, in which all tendencies in the working class should take part and where committees based on proportional representation should be established, which, as a higher form of the united front, would provide leadership for struggles.

**Trotsky:** These are soviets.

**A.** As we have defined their tasks, they should move from leading partial strikes, the unemployed movement, and actions around the housing question and price and production control toward taking the leadership of a general strike and becoming organs of dual power.

**Trotsky:** These are soviets. But it is perhaps better for the moment not to call them this. When we established the soviets in Russia, they were not at first organs of power. They had to develop into that. Now, however, the word “soviet” at once suggests the idea of immediate conquest and exercise of power.

**A.:** To our demands for workers' congresses and struggle committees with representation of all tendencies, the party counterposes its “People’s Committee,” embracing only official party organizations. The Spartakos group is opposed to our slogan and has issued a manifesto advancing the slogan for a “workers’ and peasants’ government.” This is defined as an intermediate stage that would not yet represent the dictatorship of the proletariat but would rather prepare the way for it. It is supposed to tax the rich and cancel the peasants’ debts.

**Trotsky:** We could include this slogan, and at the same time raise the question of what bodies the workers’ and peasants’ government should base itself upon. On the “People’s Committee” or on the “Workers’ Congress”? How many members does the Spartakos group have?

**A.:** They say seventy-five. But this includes completely inactive, dispersed, and vacillating elements.

**Trotsky:** And the Factionists?172

**A.:** Thirty. They have allied themselves with the Spartakists, although hardly a single one of them wants to work with them.

**Trotsky:** What kind of organ do they have?

**A.:** A monthly.

**Trotsky:** Are they going through a rapprochement with the party? Don’t they want to rejoin?

**A.:** Several of them have gone back to the party. However, as an organization they do not want to work with the party at all. We just recently proposed a united front to the party. So far, no
answer has been received. It is unlikely that the offer will be accepted, especially since the bitterest enemies of our organization are in the new leadership, people who in the past even engineered the murder of our comrades.

Trotsky: To sum up: The Archio-Marxists are for a workers' congress, to lead partial struggles toward a general strike. The Communist Party calls for a People's Committee. But this is only a leading body. What is it supposed to do?

A.: The People's Committee has attempted to organize demonstrations. All of ten people showed up. Since then the party has said nothing more about the People's Committee.

Trotsky: Does the People's Committee have a legal existence?

A.: Its manifesto had the address of the trade union organization. It contains the slogans for a "soviet Greece" and for a "workers' and peasants' government." The latter slogan has been around since 1923-24. In those days it was advanced along the lines of the Kuomintang and the Bulgarian tactic. At present the party has not defined the character of this "workers' and peasants' government."

Trotsky: And what is the position of our organization regarding this slogan?

A.: We can only view this slogan as purely formal, a substitute for the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Just raising such a slogan is not enough to achieve it. We need transitional slogans that lead toward this.

Trotsky: We can accept raising this slogan as a perspective, that is, in the following sense: We have a bourgeois government, but we want a workers' government. So, we propose a workers' congress. Then, we can say to the party: You are for a workers' and peasants' government. In order to achieve this we need bodies on which such a government can base itself, that is, a workers' congress.

A.: In our most recent proposal for a united front, we suggested a joint platform for unity.

Trotsky: The slogan for a workers' and peasants' government, which would be foolish for Germany, is correct in Greece, where there is a peasant movement, a movement of debt-burdened refugees. It represents masses. And since the proletariat in Greece does not constitute a majority, the slogan for a workers' and peasants' government can become important—as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but one that is comprehensible to the peasants. It is in fact more than a form. The role of the peasantry in Greece requires that the vanguard of the proletariat
take it into consideration and formulate its own policy and measures accordingly. That was also the situation in Russia, yet we spoke about a workers' and peasants' government only after the conquest of power, and Lenin was not entirely certain about this characterization. But for us the decisive fact was that the proletariat had already won power and taken over the government.

A.: We explained in our congress that we are opposed to the workers' and peasants' government as an "intermediate form," but that we consider it a synonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Trotsky: The dictatorship of the proletariat has various stages. In Russia the first stage was marked by the coalition with the Left SRs (November 1917 to July 1918). That was the coalition with representatives of the peasantry. Two days following their resignation, the Left SRs organized a revolt against the Soviet government and were jailed. Subsequently, the Soviet government became more "Bolshevized." There was a difference between the first and second stages. In this sense we can say that the term workers' and peasants' government was "honest," for there had been a workers' and soldiers' congress and, moreover, a peasant congress. This peasant congress joined with the workers' and soldiers' congress, elected its committee, and sent its representatives to the executive committee of the workers' and soldiers' congress. That corresponded to the peasants' way of thinking at the time.

Fascism

A.: The party speaks of social fascism, archiofascism, agrarian fascism, and monarchofascism.

Trotsky: Does any real fascist organization exist?

A.: There are fascist organizations that are politically insignificant, artificial imitations of Italian fascism. Recently, an organization of combat veterans and nationalists was formed. It is carrying out a certain amount of activity and focuses on attacking the Communists. But it does not call itself fascist and does not constitute a political organization in the full sense. It is an imitation of the Stahlhelme, from whom they have also borrowed their name. The group is based in Salonika, where they have already been able to break up trade union meetings.

Trotsky: You have said nothing about the national question. What about Macedonia and the minorities?
A.: Our congress passed a resolution opposing the slogan of independence for Macedonia, which was adopted by the party in 1925.

Trotsky: Why?

A.: This came after there had been a complete population exchange of Greeks, Turks, and Bulgarians. Bulgarian Macedonia had 90 percent Bulgarians, Greek Macedonia 90 percent Greeks, Serbian Macedonia the same. Excluding the Jewish minority, who live only in the cities, all of those in the countryside are Greeks from Asia Minor and the Black Sea area.

Trotsky: Why did the party raise the slogan for Macedonian independence?

A.: Manuilsky and Kolarov\(^{175}\) pressed for it. At the time, the Bulgarian party had made an alliance with Bulgarian nationalists, who called themselves “Macedonians,” and hoped to win them over. It was on this basis that the slogan for Macedonian independence was raised. But the “Macedonians,” under the leadership of Zankov, immediately began to train their fire on the Communists.

Trotsky: Should it be a question of the independence of Macedonia as a whole?

A.: Yes.

Trotsky: I’m not certain whether it is correct to reject this slogan. We cannot say we are opposed to it because the population will be against it. The population must be asked for its opinion on this. The “Bulgarians” represent an oppressed layer. We must explain that the people have the right to decide for themselves. If the government rejects a referendum, then we must struggle against this decision. If the oppressed nationality rises up against the government, then we must support them. This is the kind of language we have to talk. And if the Macedonian Greeks declare their opposition to the Athens government, demanding their independence, should we dogmatically oppose it? I doubt it. But I am not familiar enough with the question, since I only came into contact with the Macedonian problem in 1913.\(^{176}\)

A.: The Comintern dumped this slogan, because it turned out to be unrealizable: Macedonia is not a uniform national whole.

Trotsky: But neither is Greece. Why couldn’t Macedonia likewise exist as an autonomous union with different nationalities? The population has to be polled about this.

A.: What are the forces which will support this?

Trotsky: It’s not our task to organize nationalist uprisings. We
merely say that if the Macedonians want it, we will then side with them, that they should be allowed to decide, and we will also support their decision. What disturbs me is not so much the question of the Macedonian peasants, but rather whether there isn’t a touch of chauvinist poison in Greek workers. That is very dangerous. For us, who are for a Balkan federation of soviet states, it is all the same if Macedonia belongs to this federation as an autonomous whole or part of another state. However, if the Macedonians are oppressed by the bourgeois government, or feel that they are oppressed, we must give them support.

Is there a movement of Macedonians in Greece for autonomy?

A.: No.

Trotsky: In Sofia there is a Macedonian committee, which is, of course, supported by the government; however, in Vienna during 1929-30, there existed (and still exists?) a Macedonian newspaper that was published by a committee backed by the Comintern. What do you propose for the Balkans as a whole?

A.: A soviet federation.

Trotsky: And the party?

A.: A soviet Greece. They say nothing about a Balkan federation of soviet states. The party criticizes our slogan for a federation, because they claim we use it to hide the fact that we are opposed to a soviet Greece.

Trotsky: Prior to the war there were the Tesniaki (left Social Democrats) in Bulgaria, who supported a Balkan federation. At that time, this slogan played a big role. We took it up although what was proposed was a [bourgeois] democratic federation. It is now clear that no democratic power exists in the Balkans that could make such a federation a reality. Rather this is a task for the proletariat. The perspective of a workers’ congress, a peasants’ movement, a general strike, that is, the prelude to insurrection in Greece, will pose the question of the Balkan federation with greater force. “How can anyone imagine a victorious revolution in a Greece caught in this birdcage system of the Balkan states, hemmed in on all sides by dictatorship and fascism?” some will say. We will answer: “A revolutionary perspective is impossible without a federation of the Balkan states, which obviously will not stop here, but rather will extend into the federation of the United Soviet States of Europe.”
The Trade Union Question

A.: Our slogan on the trade union question is for trade union unity, with workers' democracy and the right of factions. The party counterposes unity in the United General Confederation of Labor (the red trade union).

Trotsky: Which of the existing trade union federations is the strongest?

A.: They are almost equal in strength, but the Stalinist federation is more active. We participate in all the trade unions, but we are strongest in the United General Confederation.

Trotsky: Is the party's influence in the United General Confederation stronger than ours?

A.: The party holds on to the leadership through artificial and violent means. Although we are in the leadership in several trade unions in the United Confederation, up to now we have not been able to get a single representative in the national leadership. We hold the leadership in the following United Confederation trade unions in Athens: textiles, cement, bakers, pretzel makers, blacksmiths. In the reformist federation we lead the cobblers, construction workers, carpenters, and barbers. The metal workers' organization in Piraeus, which was under our leadership, and later won by the Stalinists, is now in the hands of the reformists, who are directly in league with the employers, the state, and the police. In Athens we have thirty-two fractions (minority groupings). Each of these fractions holds regular evening discussions, in which numerous sympathizers participate. Finally, there are still a number of independent trade unions that are not connected to any federation, mostly those that have been expelled from one or the other.

Elections

Trotsky: What position did the Archio-Marxists take on this question? What experience have they had, and what is their present stand?

A.: We approach this question from the standpoint of the relationship of forces.

Trotsky: How can our poor vote in the 1931 local elections in Salonika be explained?

A.: That question was discussed at the congress and it was established that there had been a wrong estimate of the relationship of forces. The information that we received from Salonika
before the elections was that the party organ was selling 70 copies an issue, our organ 3,000 an issue. The party had almost no support in the trade unions. We held the leadership in six trade union organizations. The crowds at the party's public election rallies never numbered more than 300, while we drew 1,000 to 1,500. The unemployed movement was also under our leadership. The results of the election were 2,300 votes for the party, 390 votes for us. The discussion at the conference revealed the following: (1) The information about newspaper sales was false; not all copies were sold, many were merely distributed. (2) The trade unions were not exactly mass organizations, and the sympathy toward us was more local and personal than political in character. Moreover, our influence was not as great as had been reported to us. (3) A considerable portion of our supporters is young, still without the right to vote; another section of workers couldn't get voters cards. (4) The party got the votes of the passive elements, who do not attend rallies, cannot be mobilized by the party, and whose activity consists only in voting. Our influence, on the other hand, is precisely among the active elements of the proletariat. (5) Behind the party stands the authority of the Soviet Union and the Comintern.

Trotsky: Points 1 to 4 could explain the party getting 2,000 votes and our also only getting 2,000 or even 1,000. Therefore it is obvious, in view of the results, that the last reason cited is the decisive one. Only this can explain why the passive elements vote for the party and not for us. Why must we especially stress this reason? Because along with the local and national factors, the authority of the October Revolution and the Comintern enters in as a powerful component of the relationship of forces. There is experience to confirm this: Germany (Urbahns, the Brandlerites, and-most recently the SAP); Belgium (Overstraeten); in addition, the experience of a new Opposition group in Kosice in Czechoslovakia.

That proves that the historical conditions still do not exist for a second party. In the prewar International, the left wing struggled for years as a small group. Mammoth events like the World War, the collapse of the Second International, the Russian Revolution, were necessary to create prerequisites for establishing a new International. In the present era, events have not yet taken place that in the eyes of the masses are of decisive enough importance to justify establishing a new party. For that reason, not only can we not establish a new party but rather we are caught up in the same receding wave as the official party, since
we are viewed by the masses as a part of the Communist camp. This fact is very important for Spain. There we have a new group that now has somewhat over 1,000 members and whose leadership has just declared that they do not want to continue tailending the party, but want to present their own slate in the elections. They will propose a united front to the party and following the anticipated refusal, put forward independent candidates. The danger facing the Spanish organization along this path is tremendous.

At the time of the elections the Greek comrades had already had their own organ for ten months, and for an even longer time a number of trade union newspapers. Until just recently, the Spanish organization only had a monthly theoretical journal. If our organization in Greece has 1,600 members out of a population of seven million, the Spanish organization, which arose in the exceedingly favorable conditions of a rising revolutionary wave, should have at least five times as many members. In short, running our own candidates against those of the Spanish Communist Party, which has grown at an incomparably greater rate than the Opposition and which has incomparably greater resources at its command, will lead to even less favorable results than was the case in Greece. The stand of our Spanish comrades is very rash and can compromise our organization for a long time.

The National Question

Trotsky: I would again like to raise the question of Macedonia and Epirus. So far as I understand, not much importance has been given to this question up to now. However, this question is very important for educating the Greek workers, for liberating them from national prejudices, for improving their understanding of the international situation in the Balkans and generally. Official statistics give the following information: There are 82,000 Macedonian Slavs among Macedonia’s 1,400,000 inhabitants; there are 19,000 Albanians among Epirus’s 300,000 inhabitants. The first question that comes to mind is: Are these figures accurate? Our first task is to take an attitude of total skepticism toward these figures. The statistics were drawn up in the year 1925, at the time of the resettlement, under the bayonets of military authority. What do they call “Greek”? Perhaps those who speak Greek because they have to but don’t consider themselves Greeks. If these figures are inaccurate, that fact must
evoke dissatisfaction and hatred among the nationalist elements. If we say that the official statistics must be regarded with great skepticism, we will win a lot of sympathy. Most important, in this way we can win the confidence of the Bulgarian proletariat. Even before the war the Bulgarians were also very distrustful of the Greeks, since the Greeks are very nationalistic.

But even if there really were no more than 82,000 Slavs in Macedonia, this question would retain its great significance. Where does this minority of 82,000 live? Probably on the Bulgarian border. The small size of this national layer does not rule out autonomy. Thus in Russia there is the tiny country of Moldavia, near Romania, existing as an independent entity. The question will be asked: Do you want even more Balkanization? To this we answer: We are for the formation of large economic units. But this cannot occur against the will of the masses. If these masses want separation, we must say: Go through your experiment, you will come back to the soviet federation. However, insofar as the bourgeois government of the ruling nation prevents you from separating, we will defend you. The importance of posing the question in this way is best illustrated by the fate of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and czarist monarchy.

In Austria the semi-Marxists always came up with wise economic, pseudorevolutionary arguments to prove the need for retaining the oppressed nations within the framework of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The result: Austro-Hungary disintegrated into its component parts. In Russia the Bolsheviks always championed the right of each nation to its autonomy. As a result, Russia survived as an economic entity. This was possible only because through their long years of struggle for the right of self-determination of nations, the Bolsheviks won the confidence of the nationally oppressed popular masses and, above all, of the proletariat. I believe that the Greek and international press must devote several articles to this question. The entire problem must be thoroughly studied and a small conference held with the Bulgarian comrades, so as to work out a uniform policy.

A.: This year large national revolutionary mobilizations against England occurred in Cyprus. We spoke out in defense of the population’s right of self-determination and explained the need for revolutionary struggles. We took the same position with respect to the Dodecanese, which are occupied by the Italians. The organization has concerned itself with the Macedonian question for several years. The party’s alliance with the Bulgarian nationalists severely undermined it. I will write about this.
Trotsky: In Cyprus and the Dodecanese it was oppressed Greeks, in Macedonia, oppressed Slavs. If Communists stand up for the oppressed Greeks, but do not support the oppressed Slavs against the Greek oppressor, mistrust of us can only grow. If I am not mistaken, Engels said in a polemic against Bakunin:\textsuperscript{178} Any revolutionary who holds out one little finger to pan-Slavism is lost.

The Agrarian Question

Trotsky: What are the Archio-Marxists’ slogans on the agrarian question?

A.: The conference drew up a series of demands: Cancel the debts of the refugees and those of the poor peasants (debts to the National Bank, usurers, outstanding unpaid taxes). Abolish the produce taxes (on harvests and livestock).

Trotsky: It is paid according to quantity of produce, and you want to repeal this tax for poor peasants?

A.: Yes. Our conference and our regional committees, moreover, put forward a series of partial demands, divided by category—wine, tobacco, and olive oil, which represent the most important products of Greek agriculture. The conference commissioned the members of the Central Committee to draft a separate report for each region. These reports are still in preparation. For some time we had a general position on the agrarian question. However, only this year did we set very practical tasks for ourselves in this field.

We also opposed the Agrarian Party, since a peasants’ party, which would stand between or above the two principal classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, isn’t possible. A “neutral” Agrarian Party can only be an organ of the bourgeoisie. Many members of the Agrarian Party are former Communists who were demoralized by the policy of the official Communist Party and have since turned toward the new party, believing that it is also a revolutionary party.

Through systematic work and theoretical clarification, large sections of this party can be won to us. In certain peasant areas revolutionary sentiments can be seen. Our comrades who live in nearby towns are invited to villages to speak by peasant members of the Agrarian Party. Peasants from entire villages are called together and listen to our speakers with great sympathy. In a number of areas the peasants are actively working to distribute our newspaper. The situation is rather favorable for us,
and it is not excluded that under the pressure of the peasants, who are a hundred times more to the left than the party leadership, as well as under the influence of our activity, the Agrarian Party may quickly disintegrate.

Our comrades are working out specific demands for each area that answer to the needs of the peasantry there. Moreover, in accordance with the decision of the conference, in the near future we will publish a special peasants’ paper. As for the Communist Party, it labels the Agrarian Party “agrarian fascism.” The Communist Party projects forming farm workers’ trade unions. We are not opposed to this idea, but it will not solve the peasant question, since the farm workers constitute a negligible percentage of the farming population and are found in only some areas. We put forward the slogan for forming associations of poor peasants.

A few more experiences: In Macedonia and Thrace the official party had a great influence over the peasant population at one time. Now, however, the party is visibly losing ground to the Agrarian Party; we have to struggle against the Agrarian Party all the more, so as to win back what the Communist Party has lost. The CP publishes a fortnightly newspaper for the peasants. The Agrarian Party has two daily newspapers and one monthly organ (that is, bourgeois newspapers that have taken up support of the Agrarian Party). In the last elections the Agrarian Party won a large vote. In some villages, where the CP is not running any candidates, and where we have workers native to the area who enjoy authority in the village, we want to run candidates in order to carry out communist propaganda. The Agrarian Party is very heterogeneous; they try to pull in everyone without regard to their ideas. In their magazine you can find articles from totally conflicting tendencies. The leaders of the same organization write for and against socialism, for and against small property.

Another serious problem in Greece is a lack of arable land. In some areas reclamation is being carried out. The dearth of land has produced a large migration from the countryside to the towns. This includes people looking for work, artisans, merchants, as well as lumpenproletarian elements.

Trotsky: Do the agricultural workers’ trade unions already exist? And the peasants’ associations?

A.: No, not agricultural workers’ trade unions. A few local peasants’ associations. (Reads from the [Archio-Marxist] magazine Daulos [Torch] the report of a regional committee and the struggle program advanced by the committee.)
Trotsky: The facts are very interesting and create the impression of a prerevolutionary situation. I have the impression that in the present circumstances our organization's slogans are no longer adequate. This situation requires advancing, along with limited demands, general slogans that can give a common direction to the movement. One might be workers' and peasants' control of the banks. For example, let's consider the question of remitting debts and granting credits. There are, of course, poor and rich peasants, and there must be control over whose debts are to be canceled and who is to be granted credit. There have to be organizations that can exercise this supervision—peasant committees. Peasant associations are semipolitical organizations that we can utilize to increase our influence. Peasant committees are revolutionary bodies that turn against the state one day and become revolutionary organs of state power the next. These committees correspond entirely to workers' soviets in the city. We must combine the question of debt remission and credit with the demand for control of the banks and for forming peasant committees. Peasants' control! No secret diplomacy in the granting of credit! Open the books of all banks! But since the peasants cannot understand the books, they will turn to the workers in the city and ask their help. We must understand how to crown limited and local demands with demands of national scope and give the movement revolutionary perspectives.

The formation of the Agrarian Party is a symptom of a revolutionary crisis like the events in Bulgaria in 1924. It is true that it cannot be an independent class party. However, besides this correct theoretical evaluation, we have to have a correct policy toward this party, whose existence is now a fact. Our policy cannot be simply negative. We must initiate a sorting-out process in this party and show on the basis of the facts that it cannot be a substitute for a Communist Party, but that rather it must be replaced by a Communist Party. Our policy has already been defined by the demands we have raised. We propose common struggles on the basis of these demands. Either we will win over the revolutionary elements of this party or else unmask them in front of the peasants. The same holds true for the slogan for control of the banks and forming peasant committees.

In the elections we can also run not only local workers, but even revolutionary peasants as our candidates, asking them to embrace our demands and to commit themselves to fight for these demands. Even if peasants are members of the Agrarian Party, we can put them on our slates if they embrace our program, since
the Agrarian Party is not a party but rather a collection of tendencies that must be broken up. Of course, that does not rule out the possibility that one or another peasant that we push to the fore will become corrupted after being elected and will betray us rather than be decisively won over to us. During the Duma elections the Bolsheviks again and again formed voting blocs with the Social Revolutionaries, a tactic that was severely criticized by the Mensheviks. To these criticisms, the Bolsheviks answered: Our bloc is based on the struggle for democratic demands. The liberal bourgeoisie is antidemocratic. We are prepared, along with the SRs, to clash with the liberal bourgeoisie and its Menshevik allies. The big difference between Russia and Greece is that in the latter feudalism no longer exists. However, what still exists is the bill presented by feudalism in the form of the debt owed by the refugees and poor peasants for the land they have occupied. The struggle to abolish this indebtedness is the struggle for the final elimination of feudalism.

Developments in the USSR

A.: A question about the meaning of the latest turn in Russia. Trotsky: We have written many times that a retreat was unavoidable. The Stalinist bureaucracy proclaimed the program for thorough collectivization on the basis of a completely inadequate technical and economic foundation: It hoped to liquidate the kulaks by administrative measures. It forced the middle peasants to enter the collective farms and to acclaim this collectivization as a magnificent success. We said that the peasants would consume their basic agricultural capital, and the crisis would inevitably spread beyond this sector. Collectivization cannot be carried through without a technological foundation and without the necessary psychological preparation. The outcome is evident: The existing grain and livestock have fallen below minimum needs. In Moscow, Petrograd [Leningrad], and other big cities, there are already difficulties in maintaining the supply of food. In the provinces, on the other hand, there is famine. That is true also in the peasant villages (especially there, where grain must be brought in). The petty bourgeoisie is suffering as a result, but so is the working class. The number of collectivized peasants is now dropping. Independent peasants—who previously were said not to exist—are now beginning to be protected. Individual property and the free market are being
encouraged, a process of differentiation is being generated among the collective farms and even more so among independent peasants. After ruining the kulaks by administrative violence, the bureaucracy is once again giving them the opportunity to thrive. We have always proposed controlling the kulaks, trimming their claws. The kulaks cannot be eliminated all at once, but they can be regulated and cut down to size until the technical and cultural bases have been laid for collectivization on a wide scale. Until February 1928, the kulaks were encouraged. The kulaks, who comprise 5 percent of the peasantry, owned 40 percent (official figure?) of the grain supply destined for the market and finally refused to deliver grain to the cities, which resulted in the threat of famine. This is when the Stalinist bureaucracy first launched its attack against the kulaks and transformed the grain requisitioning campaign into a campaign of annihilation against the kulaks. Now, they have returned to the old position, but on a new basis. This will have the greatest consequences for the collectivization, and for the five-year plan. The distribution of goods will be regulated not only by the plan but also by the free market. How far this will go remains to be seen, since it cannot be predicted how far the retreat will go. The introduction of the NEP was very carefully managed, and nevertheless it touched off an elemental growth of the free market. But at that time we had the party, which attentively followed and controlled all developments. At present, economically speaking, we are starting from a more advantageous position: Industry has grown, the socialist sector has become stronger. But the political factors are less favorable and they may get the upper hand over the economic factors: (1) The workers suffered greatly while industry was being built up, but they were told that this was the advent of socialism. We warned of the disillusionment that would inevitably be provoked by such phrases. Now, not only will the kulaks in the village accumulate capital but the Nepman in the city will also, and a new process of social differentiation will arise. The masses have become more critical politically and more demanding, but also more disillusioned. (2) For the peasants relinquishing their individual farms meant a catastrophic change in their way of living. Now a return to an independent peasant economy is starting. The peasants will say to themselves: “What they forbid yesterday, they permit today. Why then did they turn us out of our farms?” The authority of the state will be violently shaken, and, on the other hand, the class consciousness of the kulaks will be reinforced. (3)
However, the most important element is the *party*. Russia is a country with a vast, scattered petty-bourgeois population (110 million peasants). More than half of them are collectivized. We always predicted the inevitable differentiation and the danger of the kulakization of the collective farms; we always stressed that the collective farms represent only a transitional economic form, and that they have to be regulated. The new turn will accelerate the differentiation within the individual collective farms and among them. In order to observe all these molecular processes and sound a timely alarm, thousands and thousands of active leaders are needed. The bureaucracy and statistics cannot be substituted for this. There must be an independent revolutionary proletarian party, and this does not exist. The NEP meant continual latent class struggle. It was the task of the party to lay this bare. The party has now been displaced by the bureaucracy, which *deceives* the party and the proletariat about the situation and the tasks. In 1921 we told the party and the proletariat the absolute truth, that we had to retreat to capitalist methods; we made clear the dangers involved and warned against them. Even if we were obliged to arm the kulaks *economically*, we armed the proletariat *politically* and *militarily*. The party does not exist as a party now. Everything takes place in the dark. Nothing can be foreseen. Hence the great dangers.

**AFTER THE CLA PLENUM**


dear comrade shachtman:

your letter of june 18 was a great relief to me in every respect. first, i hope that our friendly association will now be developed further unhampered and will gain in mutual frankness. second, the fact that the disputed questions were decided unanimously at the plenum and you personally were unanimously assigned to the editorship of *the militant* is a guarantee of the unity and solidity of the league for the future. third, your statement on the international questions in connection with the decisions of the plenum is highly important for the adjustment of the spanish
question, which now disturbs me most keenly.

The more determinedly the international public opinion of our organization shows itself towards the obvious politically false steps of the Spanish section, the greater hope will exist that the Spanish comrades will be assisted to tread the right road again without personal convulsions. Unfortunately, the most difficult thing in connection with the leading comrades in Madrid and Barcelona is that they consider a programmatic rejoinder or a political criticism always only from purely personal standpoints and thereby render a discussion difficult in the highest degree. If I ask them: on what political grounds have you done this or that?—they answer me: we have the right to our own opinion; as if anybody disputes this right and as if the question did not consist of what concrete use one makes of this right in the concrete case.

Really healthy party democracy presupposes a certain public opinion, which has crystallized itself out of common experience. Without this foundation, one would each time have to begin from the beginning, and that is the case with the Spanish comrades: instead of learning from our previous experiences, they want to compel us to begin again from the first letters of the alphabet.

With best greetings and wishes.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

PERMANENT FACTIONALISM IS NOT NEEDED

July 4, 1932

Dear Comrade Glotzer:

Many thanks for your letters of June 5 and 18. I am also writing to Comrade Shachtman to express how happy I am about the success of the plenum and his forthright statement. The American League really does not need a split or permanent internal factionalism. Many symptoms indicate that we are on the eve of a new chapter in the development of the Left Opposi-
tion and that this chapter will be much broader and richer in opportunities than all the previous ones. Right now we cannot afford to disturb or slow the pace of our own development through our own carelessness or excesses.

I agree with you completely that youth work must be coordinated internationally in some form or other. As far as I know, the International Secretariat is at present taking steps in this direction. Comrade Otto Schuessler informs me that the Belgian and French comrades had called for the same thing months ago.

As for *Young Spartacus*, I will fulfill my obligations, i.e., I'll send it an article very soon.

With communist greetings for you and other friends.

Yours,

L. Trotsky

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**HOPE FOR CLA UNITY**

*July 18, 1932*

Dear Comrade Glotzer:

Received your last letter. I do not yet have an adequate estimate of the importance of the differences which have recently arisen. In any case, I hope, and it is without doubt the hope of the whole European Opposition, that the most important achievement of the last plenum—the restoration of unity—will not be sacrificed.

As far as the Frey group is concerned, I can understand the reservations of our American friends. Almost all sections have these same reservations. I myself am not at all sure that things will develop smoothly. But I think that we cannot pass up the opportunity to put this to the test again. For the sake of argument, let us assume the worst: Once again Frey feels uncomfortable in our midst and leaves our ranks. One can say with assurance that this time he won't tear his whole group away from us. And then we will have a select nucleus for the Left Opposition in Austria.
A Discussion With Herbert Solow

I've received three copies of the China book [Problems of the Chinese Revolution]. It is a first-rate publishing effort. I remember very well how hesitant and even skeptical I was about Comrade Shachtman's plans for this book. I am very glad that the comrades who read English now have the opportunity to follow the entire course of our struggle on this question after the events. It would be possible to put together a neat little volume on the Anglo-Russian Committee. I am not sure, however, that I have the most important materials here. Moreover, there are too many important current questions now facing us to devote too much time to the past.

Comrade Shachtman is devoting a series of articles to the development of the Left Opposition. Unfortunately I haven't read all the articles carefully, but in general it seems to me that this study is very useful and important. It should be made into a pamphlet and translated into other languages.

Eastman was here a week ago. We discussed various questions. His attitude toward dialectical materialism alienates him from our world outlook to a very high degree, despite his active political sympathies for the Left Opposition. Even though he has rejected philosophy, he has a philosophy of his own—more or less eighteenth-century French rationalism translated into the language of Anglo-Saxon empirical-utilitarianism (engineering mind). Despite our strong sympathy for Eastman, we will have to draw a sharp line on this most important of questions when the occasion presents itself.

Most cordial greetings.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

A DISCUSSION WITH HERBERT SOLOW

Summer 1932

Comrade Solow would like to say a few things about the American Communist Party's policy on the war question.

The policy of the American CP is in general the same as that of
the European parties. That goes also for the question of the antiwar congress. On Muenzenberg's orders a certain Urivitch came to New York from Berlin with the responsibility of directing the organization of the antiwar campaign. He was furnished with recommendations to American pacifists and leaders of the CP. At a preparatory conference which was attended by twenty-thirty persons, including party members, Urivitch declared that the antiwar movement would be based on the following slogan: True patriotism does not mean being in favor of war, but being against it.

Comrade Solow referred further to a question which has stood at the focal point of discussions in the American CP as well as among the American public as a whole in the recent period: that is, the tension between Russia and Japan on the one hand, between America and Japan on the other, and the resulting "community of interest" between America and Russia in the event of war. He cites a list of examples of which the following is the most characteristic of an alleged danger of social chauvinistic tendencies in the American CP: Trachtenberg, a leading party functionary, is occupying himself with collecting quotations from Marx designed to prove that an American war against Japan would be a progressive war.

Also, there is at present great interest in the question of American recognition of the Soviet Union. Senator Borah plays the role of energetic advocate of recognition. His main arguments are two: first, America needs to expand its business interests, and second, America must not stand alone in the Far East. In the Chinese-American conflict the interests of China are at issue as well as those of Russia and America. Solow believes that the movement for recognition will go forward—because it will be pointed out that Stalin drove the real revolutionaries out of the leadership long ago.

With respect to both problems, Solow believes that it is no longer possible to assume responsibility for the actions of the Third International. "If I had a group around me," he says, "I would found a Fourth International today—but then I am not a very experienced politician."

Trotsky: What you have said on the attitude of the American CP towards "alliances" between America and Russia against Japan, exaggeration aside, cannot by a long shot be regarded as social patriotism and social chauvinism. Social patriotism means going with the bourgeoisie through thick and thin while declaring the "common interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat."
In case of a conflict between America and Japan, should we place obstacles in the path of the American government? Yes or no?

The American CP and the American proletariat can in no way declare the interests of the American government to be their interests, can in no case give up opposition to the government. They must vote against war appropriations, and declare that they have no confidence that the American bourgeoisie will not use those weapons to stab the Soviet Union in the back, perhaps the very next day. We must do nothing to make us responsible [for the government] in the eyes of the masses. The means of struggle against the government are varied. Perhaps at a certain moment [in a war] we do not call for strikes. When we are strong enough to take power, however, then we must immediately bring down the government and lead the war against Japan ourselves. But if we are so weak that we cannot lead even small strikes, then this question does not arise. If we are not sufficiently strong to create major difficulties, then in that case I would suggest an oppositional policy by all means, but not an aggressive one. If the government does indeed make a turn, then we also make a turn.

**Solow:** Is that to say that the interests of the American revolution have to be sacrificed to the interests of the Soviet state?

**Trotsky:** No. I refer to Lenin’s example. He spoke of the eventuality of sacrificing the Soviet Union to the interests of the German revolution. In the very same manner the Soviet state must now declare that a Hitler regime in Germany means war with the Soviet Union.¹⁹¹

There are different methods of fighting one’s own bourgeoisie:

1. In case of war by the American bourgeoisie against the Soviet Union.
2. In case of war by the American bourgeoisie against Japan.

Is there a difference between the two cases in the attitude of the American proletariat toward the American bourgeoisie?

In the first case we have to stake everything on one card.

Are we duty-bound to do the same in the second case? No. In this case we can take a wait-and-see, although active, attitude. This war will have [mass] discontent as a by-product, like every other war. The CP must ready itself for the seizure of power, but the immediate tactical approach will be different from the first case.

**Solow:** Should strikes be renounced in general?

**Trotsky:** Of course the class struggle does not stop. We will
do all we can to raise wages, etc., including strikes—although in those plants that do work for the Soviet Union we shall try to settle matters without a strike. But all those are tactical questions, which will be settled according to the concrete situation. The main thing is the strategy—whether the policy of the CP is to be the same if America fights the Soviet Union or if it fights an enemy of the Soviet Union. The strategic line remains the same—the struggle to prepare the seizure of power by the proletariat. What changes, however, is the tactical line, and these changes can go quite far. One thing remains certain: we must undertake nothing that can make us responsible for the American bourgeoisie, for the motives, goals, and methods of their policies.

Solow: Some American comrades say the German revolution must now be sacrificed for the sake of the Russian Revolution.

Trotsky: The Stalinists say that too, but they sacrifice it not for the sake of the Russian Revolution, but rather for the sake of the bureaucracy.

Solow: What criterion do we use to judge when we no longer have a dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia?

(Trotsky answers with an exposition of the thoughts that are presented fully in his pamphlet against Urbahns, "Defense of the Soviet Republic and the Opposition [Writings 29]." He continues:)

The question of the Third or the Fourth International is indeed bound closely to the destiny of the proletarian state together with which the Third International is closely entwined—through tradition, through cadres, through moral and material influence. The collapse of the Soviet Union would be the simultaneous collapse of the Communist International and would place the founding of a new International on the agenda. Should the Soviet Union find the road to the international revolution (which would mean the replacement of the Stalin bureaucracy and a regroupment in the [Soviet] party), then the external and internal dangers for the Soviet Union would be swept aside and the Third International would remain intact. Perhaps with such internal regroupments there would also be very important splits in the various parties.

The Second and the Third Internationals are divided from one another by a deep chasm. In that sense the continuity has really been broken. Nevertheless, we have already seen how after the split in France, for example, the followers of the Third International did not immediately carry the split through, but instead fought to win the majority and the newspapers, etc., inside the
old party. So we see that no prophecies of any kind can be made as regards organizational matters.

One result of the fact that there is still a Second International is that as yet only the most revolutionary elements are assembled in the Third International, although they are confused and partly corrupted. So then, in order to counterpose a Fourth to the Third International one would have to be sure that it can do better than the Third. But do we really have the necessary cadres for that? Have there already occurred sufficiently crucial events in which to test our cadres and to win over broad layers? The Third International was formally founded following the October Revolution, and even then Eberlein (at the First World Congress) opposed founding it immediately.

The cadres for a Fourth International must first prove themselves, steel themselves, and gain experience within the Third International. We have already had a fourth international under Gorter. It was a miscarriage. We must have the great historical perspective of a linkup of the Soviet Union with the revolution, but we must also see the possibility of the demise of the Soviet Union. If we count ourselves as belonging to the Third International it is not out of organizational cretinism, but because millions of workers still see their salvation in the Third International. A “new founding” now would be absolutely wrong. It would make us look foolish in the eyes of the most serious workers, and to look foolish is fatal, especially in revolutionary politics.

Concerning this business of Muenzenberg’s antics it is necessary to expose the entire history of the Anglo-Russian Committee, which became a prop for English imperialism.

Since you have a small group of intellectuals, I would like to say the following to you: The kind of interest that is engendered by a historical work is of a rather platonic-contemplative nature. But in order to make a selection [of cadre], I think you should suggest the reading of a “dry work,” for example, the documents on the Chinese revolution that were assembled and published by the American Left Opposition. They are concerned with disputed questions. Do try to initiate such a discussion.
Mr. Aage Faerge  
Vice-president  
Social Democratic Students  
Copenhagen

Dear Sir:

I would be very willing to give the Danish student youth a lecture about the Russian Revolution, under the approximate title of “The Creation of the Soviet State.” Since I unfortunately do not speak Danish, I would give the lecture in German. Because you may perhaps have difficulties with the Danish administration regarding a visa for me, I consider it useful to make the following points in advance:

(a) My lecture would have a purely scientific character.
(b) I am willing to limit my stay in Denmark to a very few days and to devote my time only to the purpose of the lecture.

Since I will stay at a Central European health resort from about mid-September to mid-November, the second half of November can be considered for the lecture. About details we should be able to come to agreement later.

Respectfully,

Leon Trotsky
AFTER THE BRITISH EXPULSIONS

September 6, 1932

Dear Comrade Groves:

Thank you for your very interesting information. You ask for advice as to the attitude toward the party and the workers' movement, in general. My impression is that you don't need any advice in that respect, as your activity seems to be totally "all right." We are a fraction of the party, but we are a very peculiar fraction, which has been expelled from the party and is acting outside of the party. We must naturally occupy not only a theoretical position but a practical organizational position in every branch of the workers' movement. Our political adherence to the party is expressed not in our abstention from any work outside of the party, but in the content of that work.

I had a minor disagreement with our International Secretariat about the "friendly" estimation of Pollitt by Comrade Purkis, but we are all fully agreed that the Left Opposition would be committing suicide by restricting itself to internal criticism of the party's actions, without devoting a great and growing part of its forces to the immediate action in the mass organizations under the centralized control of the Left Opposition as such.

I am sending you an article by Comrade Field on the German economic situation. I hope this article will interest the English comrades.

With communist greetings,
L. Trotsky
MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION: I

September 18, 1932

Trotsky: As its task the commission proposes to take up current problems of the International Left Opposition and to aid the International Secretariat, so far as possible, in the preparation of the international conference. First of all, proposals should be made for the agenda of the international conference and also on the content of the preparatory work and on the theses, resolutions, and draft programs.

Field: The international conference should, above all, set the conditions for the membership of the national sections. The present conditions are very loose.

Trotsky: Conditions for the individual members or for the sections?

Field: Both. Among these conditions the following should be mentioned:

1. A return to the twenty-one conditions of the Comintern on one hand, and on the other, a clear overview of our differences with the present leadership of the Comintern.

2. The organization’s principles—the question of the world revolution and of socialism in one country.

3. Our relationship to the party—our position as a faction. How far can differences go inside the faction while still remaining in the movement?

4. Work of the Opposition: What are its tasks? Relationship of propaganda and work among the masses, the education of the cadre, proposals to the party.

Trotsky proposes concretely that a comrade be instructed to provide and work through the twenty-one conditions and the resolutions of the [Comintern’s] first four world congresses.

Under the first point it would read approximately as follows: The Left Opposition recognizes the twenty-one conditions and the fundamental, principled resolutions of the first four world congresses.

However, that isn’t enough. We must enumerate the resolutions we consider decisive, because there are also secondary resolutions which are no longer applicable.
A small commission or a single comrade should be assigned to carry out the necessary preparation, to produce, enumerate, and write out the resolutions in question, because these must go into the resolution of the international conference.

Resolved: Comrade Frankel is unanimously chosen for this work.

Trotsky: Our differences with the Stalinists—with the epigones—in general—must be laid out precisely. In the text which we are now planning it will say: "A Critique of the Resolutions of the Fifth and Sixth World Congresses and the Subsequent Plenums." The resolutions of these meetings should be summarized as a sort of catalog of the mistakes of the epigone leadership.

Resolved: Comrade Otto [Schuessler] is unanimously chosen for this work. Comrades Frankel and Otto will form a commission to treat the work of all the world congresses, etc.

Trotsky: I believe it would be good to illustrate the questions critically through a specific example, and which example is obvious: Spain. Even in general we will have to be concrete, but Spain offers us a fresh example which has shaken up all questions again. If the current situation lasts long, we could lose a national section there.

Our tasks: First, to work out the programmatic part: the social structure of Spain, to study the programmatic line of the party and of the Left Opposition, and make our own proposals.

Other aspects of the question: to work through the resolutions of the Spanish section and their literature that we have on hand and, in the case of questions which are at issue—for example, the question of the relationship to the party, faction, work of the faction—to determine what is false in the activity of the Spanish section. That should be begun at once and at an accelerated tempo.

A resolution was passed unanimously establishing a committee consisting of Comrades Field, Frank, and Frankel to treat the Spanish question.

Trotsky: Extracts from the correspondence with the leadership of the Spanish section should be communicated to the membership of the Spanish section and the International Left Opposition. We must learn from the Spanish mistakes and experiences.

The Spanish committee has two-three parallel tasks to perform:
1. Principled political questions,
2. Internal questions, and
3. Personal-organizational questions.
After we have carried out the preparatory work, our organizational proposal should lead to the conclusion that the Spanish section should convene a new national conference to express its views on the proposals of the International Secretariat. Comrades delegated by the International Secretariat must be present when the conference takes place.

The latest issue of the Moscow Pravda [September 9] published an article by [ ] on Spain, saying among other things:

"After the defeat of the general strike in January, the Trotskyists and other renegades of communism asserted that the revolution was beaten and that the period of defeats had begun. The new waves have since repeatedly demonstrated that the renegades were wrong. The swiftness and ease with which the generals' revolt\textsuperscript{201} was smashed shows that the forces of the revolution are not broken," etc.

Thus the article contains the claim that the Spanish Trotskyists had declared that the revolution was over. Comrade Weisbord gives a similar account in a letter on Spain.

This question can become the starting point of part of our Spanish work. We can ask questions of the Spaniards and so on.

It is necessary to draw very sharp lines on this question. Sudden turns and crises appear in the course of every revolution. The question is also treated in the second Spanish pamphlet ["The Spanish Revolution and the Dangers Threatening It," May 28, 1931, in The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)] insufficiently to be sure, and in comparison to the Russian Revolution and the Great French Revolution. The Russian Revolution reached its high point in the course of eight months—the Great French Revolution began in 1789 and reached its high point only in 1793, that is, in close to four years. Some characteristics of Spain perhaps place it closer to the old French example. In any case, the opinion is expressed in the pamphlet that it is entirely possible that the Spanish revolution will develop for some years before reaching its culmination point, especially since the Spanish proletariat is unprepared. During the Great French Revolution the programs and goals were worked out in the course of the long struggle. It was entirely different in Russia, where a revolutionary party existed for decades beforehand.

When Comrade Nin said, after the January mass strike: "Now we've entered into a period of slump," that didn't mean anything. One must determine exactly the character of this slump.

A second question, which, however, concerns the Stalinists more, is the following: the Pravda article already mentioned says
that in general the positions of the party were correct, then goes on more or less:

"Not all party branches, not all provincial organizations were successful in establishing the face of the Communist Party, counterposing it to the maneuvering social fascists and Republicans, even though there was an opportunity to show that the party fights not only against the monarchists, but also against the republican government which gives the monarchists cover," etc.

Thus, it has become evident that the party was surprised by events and that the whole theory of social fascism came to nothing. Not only had the party not differentiated itself from the Socialists, but it didn't even differentiate itself from the Republicans. The article itself expresses, in a cowardly way, the typical, opportunistic bankruptcy of the ultraleftists in confronting reality. For us it is of the greatest importance to obtain and compile the facts. For us this will be a classical example.

I will try, on the basis of the Pravda article, to write a letter in the form of an inquiry to Comrade Nin.

Field: In addition we must determine the general content of the platform of the International Left Opposition.

Trotsky: We must begin with an analysis of the current world situation, drawing up perspectives, the strategic tasks of the proletariat, and the subsequent consequences for individual countries.

Frankel: The IS should propose to the individual national sections that they send in a political and organization report. It is absolutely necessary that Comrade Trotsky give directives for this work.

Trotsky: These directives must first be worked out in discussions. It is possible to propose a short sketch of the general situation and the perspectives to each section.

Frankel: It is important to draw the lessons of the internal struggles up to now. This should be considered later.

Field: The treatment of the Russian Revolution in the framework of the permanent revolution.

Trotsky: This belongs more or less in the framework of the general platform. The Russian draft platform ["Problems of the Development of the USSR"] has not yet been discussed. Things in Russia are going very badly now. The latest newspapers bring very alarming news—economically it can't get worse. The cumulative effect is making itself felt now.

Frankel: We should discuss the Russian draft platform here.
Field: Also the first platform of the Russian Opposition.\textsuperscript{202}

Schuessler: In addition, the slogans of the United Soviet States of Europe and of the Soviet Federation of the Balkan States should be taken up. Additional comrades should be drawn into the work, for example, Comrades Schuerer and Neurath.\textsuperscript{203} Comrade Schuerer on the question of the Brandlerites, their development in the course of the last years in light of events and quotations.

Frank proposes that the Italian question be taken up.

Trotsky: A practical proposal—the International Secretariat should set up a "fund for the international conference" to finance individual delegations.

At the next meeting the Spanish question will be taken up.

\textbf{MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION: II}\textsuperscript{204}

September 23, 1932

(Comrade Field reports on the problems of the Spanish revolution and the International Left Opposition.)

Field: The relations between the Spanish Left Opposition and the international organization have developed badly, especially in the last period. To correctly evaluate the crisis of the Spanish Opposition, one must begin with the Spanish Left Opposition's assessment of the situation over the course of time.

In a letter of [ ] Comrade Lacroix denies the importance of the student movement and fails to see its symptomatic significance.

Comrade Nin in his letter of January 26, 1931, speaks against the [electoral] boycott in and of itself. If, however, the Republicans go through with the boycott, the Communists must do likewise. He did not expect the April [1931] revolution and was unprepared for it.

Trotsky: He did not sufficiently appreciate the bind that the bourgeoisie was in.

Field reports further on Comrade Nin's letter of December 7,
1931, in which he does not share L. D. [Trotsky]'s assessment of the situation.

The theses of the national conference rest on an identical standpoint. The present situation is described as a “slump” (August issue of Comunismo).

**Trotsky:** It has to be determined whether that appraisal was made before or after the revolt of General Sanjurjo.205

**Field:** That formulation goes back to last December.

**Trotsky:** In January Spain experienced a general strike. Before that there was of course something of an upsurge and after the repression a certain lull.

**Field:** At the beginning of December Comrade Nin put out the call for sporadic strikes.

The question of the fascist danger or the monarchist counter-revolution was never clearly raised. In the theses it says that the present government does everything that a fascist government could do. That roughly corresponds to the Stalinists’ appraisal of the German situation.

**Trotsky:** It’s even worse. In Germany the holdings of large landlords were not expropriated.

**Field:** This attitude contains more or less unwittingly the theory of social fascism.

The national conference raised twelve democratic slogans without tying them to revolutionary slogans. (Far-reaching freedom of the press, of assembly and strike, etc.—Abolition of the Law for the Security of the Republic and of administrative arrests.—Abolition of the civil guard.—Confiscation of church property and large landholdings without compensation and their distribution among the peasants.—Recognition of the right of self-determination for Catalonia up to and including separation.—Relief for the unemployed, etc., etc.) These slogans are in no way communist.

**Trotsky:** Why?

**Field:** Because they also appear in the Social Democratic platform.

**Trotsky:** But the Social Democrats don’t fight for them.

**Field:** These slogans must be posed in connection with the seizure of power.

On the question of the elections the Spanish Left Opposition follows a zigzag policy. On the all-important agrarian question it takes no clear-cut stand. The theses themselves haven’t even been published three months after the conference.

The attitude of the Spanish Left Opposition, and that of...
Comrade Nin in particular, towards Maurin's group was very equivocal.

Trotsky: The bad part of it wasn't the attempt to work within the Maurin group—the worst part was that no independent propaganda was carried out and no independent group was formed. These errors weren't accidental, otherwise joint work with Maurin would have been impossible, even for one hour. Comrade Nin even kept quiet about his Left Opposition views, for which he was indicted by Comrade Lacroix.

Field: Comrade Nin edited the theses of the Maurin group, although he was not on their central committee. Despite his relations with thousands of workers in the Maurin group, he was still thrown out by Maurin and he took no workers with him. He writes only of "sympathies."

Trotsky: One can say that this was an example of the worst form of united front policy, a Kuomintangization of the policy of the Left Opposition. Comrade Nin posed this question as a purely personal one in the hope of winning Maurin for the Left Opposition. It is important to use this opportunity to emphasize that comrades often place personal above political considerations. That is petty-bourgeois in the most concrete and worst meaning of the word.

Field: We come to the question of the last conference. The theses were not sufficiently prepared before the conference. There was no opportunity for an international discussion and probably not for a national one. The handling of the theses at the conference itself revealed a poor state of affairs within the organization. The most important theses went back to the individual groups because no agreement could be reached.

Trotsky: What were the differences of opinion over? That must be ascertained.

Field: There were two views on the agrarian theses, for example:

1. The land has to be divided among the peasants.
2. Division of the land among the peasants is very damaging for a future collectivization, therefore no division of the land.

The conference itself did not come to any resolution of the question.

Trotsky: The fact of the two tendencies is more significant than the conference itself. All nuances should be well assessed and classified in advance.

Field: The internal life of the organization does not emerge from its press. There is no indication of whether there is any
political discussion at all. There is no sign of collective leadership.

There is no longer any Spanish leadership—it has already broken down officially.

One of the most important questions, the training of the cadres, is handled neither in the correspondence nor in the press. Comrade Nin puts great store in reports, personal correspondence with individuals, and diplomatic relations with the leaderships of other organizations.

As regards the party, it can be said that the Spanish Left Opposition understands unity of a communist party to be the same as trade union unity—namely, an association of all tendencies. This emerges from the correspondence and the conference theses.

**Trotsky:** Comrade Nin writes, for example, that there is no Communist Party in Spain, that the Maurin group is actually the party. He also denies the development of the CP throughout Spain.

**Field:** In a letter of August 25, 1931, Comrade Nin asks whether the new elements that join the Left Opposition should be sent into the party or into Maurin's federation. The theses' evaluation of the party is completely vague. It is said for example, "The greatest obstacle to the construction of a large Communist Party is the Comintern and in our country the CP."

**Trotsky:** Is any characterization made of the party and the Maurin group?

**Field:** No.

**Trotsky:** Are the politics of the party evaluated theoretically? It is a sign of a petty-bourgeois attitude if the party is generally referred to as "nitwits," etc. Is it stated why we are Left Oppositionists?

**Field:** That is contained in special theses.

**Trotsky:** That is the most important. What is said about the party must be studied. It must be demanded of the Spanish comrades that they analyze party policy over a period of time, in chronological order.

**Field:** They do that in special theses on the party.

**Trotsky:** These theses must be gone over. It is entirely possible that the party in many cases carries out a more correct policy than our comrades. If we reinforce the errors of our comrades, then we are cutting ourselves off from future perspectives.

**Field:** The question of a "broad" or a "narrow" faction has never been understood by Comrade Nin. He poses the question of
whether new members should be sent into the party or into the Maurin group. Later he writes that it is right for new members to be sent to the party. He believes that it is impossible to take new members directly into the Left Opposition since that would signify laying the groundwork for a second party. On December 3, 1930, he himself spoke out for a second party—for a "communist unity" against the party.

The theses themselves are very vague. At the end is an entirely formal renunciation of any second party, but this itself is again in contradiction with the practice of the Spanish Left Opposition. In the theses the party is called the "party of opportunism."

**Trotsky:** Nothing about adventurism?

**Field:** Not in this context. It is said, "Only the Left Opposition can create the weapon of the proletariat, a mass party."

In the provinces the confusion is even greater. A group in Seville issued a leaflet "To the Workers" which ended: "Long live the united front based on the CNT! Long live the International Left Opposition!" With this attitude the Spanish Left Opposition is presented as "one more" communist group which is against the Communist Party in the style of the Maurin group. Also the handling of international questions reveals the astonishing weakness of the Spanish section.

**Trotsky:** In one of his most recent letters Comrade Lacroix admits that the line of the Spanish conference meant a second party line, and he was opposed to this.

That also explains why the Spanish section is taking on another name.208

Precisely around the question of a second party we have had major disputes—in Russia with the Sapronov group, in Germany with the Leninbund, in Belgium with Overstraeten. All of these experiences and lessons are being ignored by the Spanish. The struggle over the question of the second party went on for long years and created an important body of literature. Comrade Nin was with the Sapronov group in Russia during these disputes.

But despite everything the Spanish comrades declare: We have no differences of opinion with the ILO.

**Field:** There is no sign that international questions are discussed in the ranks of the Spanish section.

**Trotsky:** It is necessary to say that all the accusations that Comrade Lacroix now makes against the leading comrades of the ILO are nothing more than the mindless repetition of what Rosmer, Landau, and Urbahns have already said.

There were often elements expelled from the party who could
not come to terms with revolutionary discipline. They have also at times come to the Left Opposition because they hoped to find in it a playground of indiscipline and a haven for all possible and impossible ideas. But as these elements saw that the Left Opposition unerringly followed its revolutionary line and demanded revolutionary discipline, they screamed that the Left Opposition was worse than the party. The character of the petty bourgeois was thus revealed.

**Field:** That is expressed for example in the demand of the Spanish section that every imaginable splinter group should be allowed to participate in the international conference.

The trade union question: Only draft theses are under consideration and the criticisms have been sketchily incorporated. The formulations of the relations between party and trade union are extremely bad. It is stated that trade unions should not serve the goals of a party. They oppose trade union unity inside the CNT. Not a word is said about the Social Democratic UGT.  

**Trotsky:** What is the relationship of forces?  

**Frank:** CNT, then UGT.  

**Frankel:** In a letter Comrade Nin wrote that in Barcelona the UGT had the leadership in an action.  

**Trotsky:** Then what do they call “unity”? With whom? Does there now exist a purely communist trade union? An RGO?  

**Frank:** Only in Seville.  

**Field:** The Spanish comrades even go so far as to say in their political theses that it was the anarchists who best understood the political situation. But later on they say that the anarchists contributed the most to the maintenance of democratic illusions.  

**Trotsky:** So an anarcho-syndicalist trade union center exists and a second, Social Democratic one. Aside from them there are still small local centers, those of the Communists. The anarchists and the Social Democrats want no unity and the Communists want unity under their own banner. The Left Opposition wants to make the CNT the basis of unity.  

Are there any reports on Left Opposition work in the trade unions?  

**Field:** There is at present no trace of any real mass work. *El Soviet* reports nothing about trade union work in its column on the inner life of the organization.

The draft theses on trade union work contain a slogan for a national proletarian congress as a counterpart to the bourgeois parliament. That is a syndicalist idea.  

**Trotsky:** Why?
Field: Because it is only proposed as a trade union gathering.

Frankel: For his part, Maurin demanded that the trade unions take power.

Trotsky: That reflects the Catalan tradition: we don’t need soviets, we have the unions.

The Spanish section’s slogan is an attempt to carry out a political action on the trade union plane. Why shouldn’t one try to counterpose other bodies to the Cortes [parliament]? Why shouldn’t one propose that the Spanish proletariat proclaim its position as a class—for example, on the agrarian question? At the congress itself the different tendencies would wrestle over the solution to the agrarian question.

I conceive of such a congress as a congress of the working class. In a revolutionary epoch it can have good results. This congress would naturally also serve the cause of trade union unity.

Field: The comrades demand this congress from the trade union centers.

Trotsky: It should be suggested that the congress be broadened, but it is not a mistake to have the trade union base.

Frankel: It is a complicated contrivance for the creation of trade union unity, and the congress is only supposed to serve that goal.

Trotsky: It is entirely possible that among the Spanish syndicalists the idea is prevalent that it is impossible to unite with the Social Democratic trade unions, who in fact serve a party. Perhaps the Spanish comrades are therefore searching for ways to make unity possible.

Field: The Spanish comrades have absolutely no fear of a syndicalist danger. They say the anarcho-syndicalists will be our allies, and not our opponents.

Trotsky: One must know whether this formulation is meant in general or only for certain cases. In Russia too the anarcho-syndicalists took part in the October Revolution. In Spain, however, the relationship of forces is just the opposite and the syndicalist danger therefore stronger. But if the Spanish comrades only mean that one can go into the struggles shoulder to shoulder with the anarcho-syndicalists, then one shouldn’t draw any further conclusions from it.

Field reads aloud a quotation in which the approach of large sections of the anarcho-syndicalists to Marxist ideology is discussed.

Trotsky: It is an inevitable process. At the moment when the
syndicalists push away the anarchists they unavoidably come closer to Marxism.

Field: We must ask for a more precise formulation of this notion from the Spanish comrades.

A few suggestions: a new Spanish conference, fully prepared and held with the participation of the ILO.

The following questions, among others, must be on the agenda: the political situation, the relationship with the party, trade union work, organizational questions inside the Spanish Left Opposition.

A work plan for a specific period of time must be worked out beforehand by the leadership with consideration given to the creation of fractions within the party, trade union work, and the press. The Spanish section must publish the International Bulletin in the Spanish language.

Here is a statistical presentation on eleven issues of El Soviet concerning international questions:

In the last two issues nothing at all on international affairs. Each issue has 20 columns, of which 18 columns are used for purely Spanish questions. On an average, international questions are conceded 1½ columns per issue, that is 7.5 percent. Of 350 pages in Comunismo, 49 pages are for international questions, that is, 14 percent.

Trotsky: In the next session the question of faction or party must be taken up in detail.

Field: The commission will prepare a sort of bibliography on the individual questions.

Trotsky: A convenient point of departure for the handling of this question is: (1) the decision of the conference, and (2) Comrade Lacroix's recognition that this decision represents nothing other than a tendency toward a second party. The question of the history of the ILO should then be taken up briefly. It is an historical-political question, a question of context and timing. The life and death of the Left Opposition depends on it.

Just as dangerous is putting up independent candidates in a situation where, for example, we cannot even publish a weekly newspaper.

Very important, furthermore, is the characterization of the Spanish comrades' individual-psychological method in dealing with all questions.

The Spanish comrades must be told that we are sure that 99 percent of the Spanish section is with the ILO and not with Urbahns, Landau, and the others. But we accuse the Spanish
leadership of not clearly posing all questions, of always presenting them as only purely personal questions. The Spanish leadership wants Rosmer's participation in the international conference, but it has never expressed itself on Rosmer's position. The political posing of a question must be counterposed to the personal-psychological.

**Frankel:** Special prominence must be given to the inadequate orientation to the proletarian revolution.

**Trotsky:** If there is evidence of their pessimistic views, we must say to the Spanish comrades: The most damaging thing for a revolutionary organization is to fail to measure up to a revolutionary epoch, to a revolutionary situation, to view them from a minimalist standpoint, and to regard a revolutionary perspective with skepticism and distrust. We are far from ascribing such a conception to the Spanish comrades, but there is a series of factors which appear serious to us, for example the orientation toward a second party. We are sure that on this question also the majority of the Spanish comrades are with us. Yet these questions have not been clearly posed inside the Spanish section, and never on the scale of the international experiences of the Left Opposition.

We should also indicate the ambiguities on the trade union question, the relation to Sorel, etc.\(^2\)\(^1\)\(^3\)

We should say to them finally: We draw optimistic conclusions. We are certain that we shall reach agreement through political and theoretical discussion, and that at a new national conference—one that must be well prepared—the Spanish comrades will treat these questions thoroughly.

(In the next session the Spanish commission will present its draft of a letter to the members of the Spanish section.)
Dear Comrade Swabeck:

How do things stand with the printing of *The History of the Russian Revolution* in the Yiddish paper? I see in *The Militant* that the League is having money troubles again. But the American section seems to be very rich in comparison with our European sections.

Has anyone approached the paper with this suggestion? What was the paper's response? When did the transaction take place? If I don't get a precise answer this time I will have to look for other ways to resolve this question.

I have received a letter from Stockholm from Comrade Carlsson, who sends his greetings to you. Comrade Carlsson want to organize the work of the Left Opposition in Sweden. His letter made a very good impression on me and I answered him accordingly. I hope that I haven't made a mistake.

Dear Comrade Glotzer:

I haven't written to you in a long time. The latest issue of *Young Spartacus* is very impressive. I find less impressive the fact that *The Militant* is in danger of going under. I am afraid—and I must say this—that not just the objectively unfavorable conditions are the cause of this, but also the internal battles are partially responsible.

Enclosed is a copy of my letter to Comrade Swabeck concerning the Yiddish paper. Please talk to Comrade Shachtman about this. The comrades have been waiting for this money for months. The poverty of our European sections is terrible. The American comrades have the absolute duty and responsibility to set this matter in order.

With cordial greetings.

Yours,

L. Trotsky
A DUTY TO SPEAK

October 20, 1932

Dear Comrade Swabeck:

I will try to send you the greeting for the fourth anniversary of The Militant.

A Danish Social Democratic student organization has approached me with the suggestion that I give a "scientific" lecture on the Russian Revolution. Naturally I responded immediately in the affirmative, and they acquired a visa for me from their government. If I overcome the transportation and other difficulties, I will go to Copenhagen. The Stalinist press, of course, will scream about my being a "comrade-in-arms" of the Social Democracy. We have to take these political expenses into the bargain. It does not need to be proved that a Communist who has the opportunity to speak before a Social Democratic audience is duty bound to exploit that opportunity. It is clear that among the Social Democratic students a certain theoretical interest in the Russian Revolution plays a role—perhaps also a personal curiosity about the lecturer. Not to exploit this would be stupid. I inform you of this for your possible orientation.

With best greetings.

Yours,

L. Trotsky

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION: III

October 28, 1932

Trotsky: The personal signatures are a big mistake; we must correct the error and explain that the letter is addressed to the leaderships of sections. We have no need of a collection of signatures of isolated individuals. We must send the letter to the the leaderships of the sections. If it is adopted and signed with the names of the leading members, it will carry more weight than if simply signed by the section. But what is unacceptable is the signatures of isolated individuals; we don’t want a faction within a faction.

Frank reads Souzo’s letter on the Spanish question.

Trotsky: Lacroix retracts his mistakes with respect to the second party, recognizes his error, but fights those who are fighting against these errors. Here is what might be said in the letter:

Some comrades, like Lacroix, recognize that the decisions of the national conference represent tendencies toward the formation of a second party, but instead of denouncing those tendencies, these comrades fight the foreign sections that have correct positions.

The quotation from Lacroix in Souzo’s letter (acknowledging the error of the national conference decisions) can be misleading, but it is “lip service”; he acknowledges it in order to defend his section against the others. Nowhere does he recognize clearly and in writing that it is wrong. Lacroix recognized the error only in a personal letter; he said nothing in Comunismo. This double-dealing should be noted in the letter.

Souzo’s suggestions on the whole are correct. The question of the two parties can be amplified somewhat in the letter. It must be emphasized that the criticism of the conference resolution by Lacroix serves only to provide him with a cover for the errors of his comrades.

As for the suggestions of the French League, I don’t think it is necessary to call an enlarged IS session at the present time. It’s an appropriate idea, but more suitable for a later stage. It is necessary to create in the Spanish Left Opposition a current critical of the errors that have been made; and on the basis of this process a meeting of the IS, enlarged to include the representatives of the various tendencies of the Spanish Left Opposition, would be very useful. At the present time, it is a big effort just to get the letter ready, let alone do more; an enlarged IS will have great importance after some responses have been received, after the proposal has been discussed internally. (The letter will, moreover, be the instrument for this.) At the present time, it is not
a useful way to proceed. On the other hand, I am in general agreement that enlarged IS conferences should be convened periodically to resolve important political issues.

(On L. D. [Trotsky]'s proposal, the following was decided:)

1. To eliminate immediately the misunderstanding over the use of strictly personal signatures. What is wanted is decisions by the leaderships of national sections. (It was desirable at this stage to avoid an appeal directed to all members, in order not to unnecessarily complicate things.)

But to demonstrate to the Spanish comrades that it is an action taken with due deliberation and analysis, each member of the leadership of the sections should take responsibility.

2. To use the suggestions of the Italian comrades in editing the letter.

3. To endorse the proposal of the French League concerning the calling of an enlarged IS. To consider this proposal as an appropriate one, but to postpone it until the results of the letter and perhaps a trip by a preparatory commission of the IS have created favorable conditions for such a session of the IS.

4. At this time we propose to broaden the proposal of the French League of calling sessions of the enlarged IS periodically (every month or two), except in emergency situations as determined by events (for example, before Amsterdam [the antiwar congress]).

**Frank:** The French League disagrees on the question of the control commission. I wrote to the League: During the peace of Prinkipo we nominated a control commission that has never functioned and now Mill is taking advantage of this.

**Trotsky:** You can't spread harmful accusations about the organization, without proof, like old gossips.

(With respect to the work on the draft platform: the new documentation has not yet arrived.)

**Frank** reports on the present work of the commission on the trade union question, presenting excerpts from resolutions and discussions of the Comintern.

See L. D's theses in *La Verite*; L. D.'s contribution to the discussion on trade union unity (in *La Verite*); the minutes of the Profintern.

At first the Comintern encompassed unions, then it formed a trade union section of unions adhering to the Comintern, and then the Red International of Labor Unions [RILU or Profintern] was created. The exact relations [between party and unions] were not very clear at first: at the Third Congress there was still talk of
a single International, grouping the Communist parties and the other forms of workers' organizations.

On the other hand, with respect to trade union unity, this unity was to extend to the international sphere.

**Trotsky:** With respect to the relations between the party and the trade unions, a much more rapid development was anticipated at the Third Congress—the transitional period had been prolonged, and the Communists instead of gaining had lost ground.

As for unity internationally: if unity is to be achieved on the national level, why not have a fusion of the RILU with the Amsterdam trade union federation? Not at the top, of course, for that would be a caricature of unity.

**Van** noted the work done so far on the question of the united front. The first three congresses contribute little to this question. It was put on the agenda with the situation in 1921, and the events surrounding it. An important article by Zinoviev posed it and at the Executive Committee's meeting in February 1922 an important resolution was voted on this question, but following that there are no documents.

**Field** examined the following material on workers' control:
The First and Second Congresses of the Comintern and the first three conferences of the German CP.
The issue was ignored after the Fourth Congress. We also have what L. D. wrote on this question with respect to Germany. But on the question of nationalization there is a lack of material.

Promises to present a draft resolution on the question at the next meeting.

Present: Trotsky, Field, Frank, Otto, Van (secretary).

Excused: Frankel.

The commission did not have time to look over the minutes. They are the responsibility of the secretariat [at Prinkipo] (Frank and Van). The secretariat is to communicate them to the IS as information.
All the letters we have received recently testify that the most popular saying in party circles, particularly in Moscow, is: "Down with Stalin." To understand the origin of this concise and limited slogan is not difficult. But it is nevertheless clearly untenable. Individually, Stalin does not exist: he does not write, speak, or even appear at the Comintern plenum. He lives as the bureaucracy's unifying myth. Molotov and even Kaganovich could well take Stalin's place. At one time, for certain purposes, the Austrian governor in Switzerland, Gessler, was replaced by his hat.

Is it a matter of differences on fundamentals or only over the way the slogan has been formulated? This will be more quickly determined the more we try to grasp the precise essence of the problem.

Three basic groupings live and struggle within the party: the left, the centrist, and the right. Among them and around them subfactions and shadings are arranging themselves. Stalin's name is the name of the apparatus faction which today still rules. Do we consider it necessary to make an organizational break with this faction? And further: Do we believe it is possible to call for its armed overthrow?

Political slogans must now be evaluated, not within the narrow confines of "inner-party discussion," but within the broad framework of the class groupings in the country. For the Thermidorean forces the slogan "Down with Stalin" is only a personalized expression of the slogan "Down with the Bolsheviks."

If the Left Opposition were today so strong that it could, by direct action of the proletarian vanguard, liquidate the dictatorship of the bureaucracy, the slogan "Down with Stalin" would have a fully-defined meaning: reform of the party regime under the leadership of the Bolshevik-Leninists. It was precisely in this "propagandistic" sense that we wrote in the open letter to the
central Executive Committee that it was time to heed Lenin's advice and remove Stalin.\textsuperscript{226} But the Opposition today cannot directly aspire to take the place of the Stalinist faction and secure the reform of the party and the Soviets. In the time ahead, diverse variants are possible. The pressure of the Thermidorean forces may, even in the near future, take on such a character that we will find ourselves in a united front with the Stalinists and even with a significant sector of the right wing of the party.

The possibility is not at all excluded that the Stalinist upper echelon, and Stalin included, will not want, or will not know how, to break with the Thermidorean forces at the necessary moment but, on the contrary, will lead them for a time in the interests of self-preservation. Under those circumstances, the slogan “Down with Stalin” would mean a call for a direct struggle against the forces of Thermidor.

The most serious consequence of the illusions and disappointments of the first five-year plan is the demoralization of the working class. All the letters refer to the mood of “pessimism” and “depression.”

“In the work of the party organization,” even \textit{Pravda} writes in connection with the Stalingrad tractor factory, “there is not now that Bolshevik spark, that energy, which is a prerequisite for success.” And where would it come from?

It would be contrary to human nature for the workers, coming into the second five-year plan in the midst of serious privations, to maintain those feelings of enthusiasm which accompanied the first two years of the first five-year plan. The political moods of the proletariat, the most tempered and stable class, have their ups and downs too. But it would be fundamentally false to think that the Russian proletariat has exhausted its historic revolutionary role for a long time to come, if not forever, as happened with the bourgeoisie, or, more accurately, the petty bourgeoisie, during the bourgeois revolutions. The bourgeoisie achieved its goal. The continuation of the revolutions could only have worked against it. The proletariat has not achieved its goals. The excessive strain on its energies and its disillusionment undoubtedly introduce corruptive elements into its present condition. But it is safe to say, even from afar, that the sense of confusion is taking the heaviest toll on the consciousness of the proletariat. Over the past nine years, the proletariat has been present, more and more in the capacity of observer, as the old leadership was smashed, all power was concentrated in the hands of the apparatus, power
was gradually transferred to the highest echelons of the apparatus, and all knowledge, qualities, authority, and finally absolute infallibility, became concentrated, first in the “Leninist Central Committee,” and then in Stalin alone. The consequences of Stalin’s leadership are plain for all to see. Stalin himself has politically vanished.

All those who are still speaking are for the present speaking in the name of Stalin. But they are talking only in order to say nothing. The vanguard of the proletariat is confused; it is inclined to regard any new plans and formulas with a preconceived mistrust.

Major developments, clearly posed tasks, and an immediate concrete danger would show at once how strong the forces of the Soviet proletariat are.

A major development, in fact the most important, would of course be a revolution in the West. Germany is clearly next in line. The Stalinist bureaucracy’s sabotage with respect to the German revolution is right now the most terrible of historical crimes. The course of German events drills into us imperiously the lesson that to carry out revolutionary policy in a single country is impossible. The regeneration of the CPSU is inextricably linked with the regeneration of the Comintern.

But, on the other hand, a strengthening of reaction in Germany and the associated danger of an imperialist war against the USSR may serve as a direct impetus for a new political upsurge of the Soviet proletariat. Finally, the actual results of the first five-year plan could have the same effect when the hour of a decisive reckoning comes.

In order to tap their own sources of potential energy, the workers must analyze, understand, and verify what has taken place, understand the causes, and clear a path to the future.

It is precisely here that the historical function of the Left Opposition opens up.

We will not at this time try to guess which possible variant is more likely or more imminent. On the basis of guesses alone, however well-grounded they may be in and of themselves, it is impossible to construct a policy. It is necessary to keep different tactical variants in mind.

It is true that the slogan “Down with Stalin” is very popular right now not only inside the party but also far beyond its perimeters. In this one can see the advantage of the slogan but at the same time, undoubtedly, also its danger. To assume a protective coloring and politically dissolve into the general
dissatisfaction with the Stalinist regime is something we cannot, we will not, and we must not do.

How quickly the impending events will unfold, we, from here—from afar—will not try to predict. And what is more, it is hardly possible even at close range to make such predictions. In general, they are made extremely difficult, if not excluded, by the very nature of the crisis, which politically is more and more taking the form of an open conflict between the bureaucracy and the class which produced it.

The slogan “Down with Stalin” that has been advanced, allegedly by a new opposition, we believe to be incorrect because it is ambiguous. On the one hand, it can be interpreted in the spirit of the French saying: “Get up so that I can sit in your place.” On the other hand, it can be interpreted as a call to smash the Stalinist faction, expel its members from the party, etc. Neither of these is our goal. We need a change of the party regime as a prerequisite for fundamental reform of the workers’ state. Least of all are we forsaking collaboration with the Stalinist grouping. We have no doubt that the right wing will produce from its midst not a few elements who will find their place and make their stand on our side of the barricades. Due to the character of the regime, the present groupings—as regards their cadre—are embryonic, rough-hewn, and moreover, very limited. Real political differentiation in all respects is still a thing of the future.

The Left Opposition will not tie its own hands by reminiscences of yesterday and by old deportment records. While forgetting nothing, it opens the way to the future.

In essence, the entire program was outlined concretely enough during the last two years in the works of the Left Opposition, especially in the remarkable article by C.G. Rakovsky. He warned against haste and demanded that the time period of the plans be increased. The result is well known: at any rate, Rakovsky’s term of exile was increased—by three more years.

There is a great deal of dissatisfaction and criticism in the party. The number of opposition groupings and tendencies is continuously growing, and the old political groupings, which it seemed had been totally liquidated or had totally liquidated themselves, are coming to life. Such always happens in the first stages of political crisis. These manifestations of the chaotic state of the opposition will inevitably grow for a certain period of time. The Left Opposition can even find itself, for a certain time, pushed back into a secondary position. There is no reason to be frightened by this. Political correctness paves a way for itself
more quickly during an epoch of crisis than at any other time. The necessary condition for this is the organized emergence of the Left Opposition itself. It must make its voice heard.

A LEFT OPPOSITION STATEMENT SHOULD BE PREPARED

Autumn 1932

Dear Friend:

In the present condition of the USSR, apart from the fundamental critical processes in the sphere of economic and class relations, there is a multitude of additional contradictions and complications created and being created by the apparatus in its struggle for self-preservation. Even if it were possible now purely in an abstract way to work out a finished system of measures for a way out of the crisis, that system, taken by itself, would be suspended in air. It would resemble the second five-year plan, which finds no immediate support in the results of the first five years. True, it is possible to say in advance that the whole economic machine of the USSR must for a certain time go into reverse—before it will be possible to again move forward. But the whole question is: Who will turn it backward? Where is the party? The question of the party is the key to all the remaining questions.

The Left Opposition is the key to the party. It is necessary for it to revive internal communication. It is necessary, no matter what, to travel around to all the places where reliable and experienced Oppositionists still exist.

It is necessary to prepare, and as soon as possible to release, a statement in the name of the Left Opposition. It might be either anonymous or (much better) signed, depending on the degree of weakness of the apparatus’s repression (in this one must expect large and sharp oscillations this way and that).

The statement, it seems to me, should not be given the task of immediately presenting a practical program. The urgent aim of the statement is to say to the party, “We are here! Having remained on the old principled positions, we are at the disposal of the party and the working class, and we are prepared with all our
might to help the party to correct the mistakes, to defeat the
difficulties, and to go forward again on the broad road.”

However great the confusion in the party and apparatus
tomorrow it will become still greater), the Left Opposition, its
banner, and its “name” undoubtedly still appear frightening
today, not only to the most “free-thinking” bureaucrats but also
to a considerable extent to the working class members of the
party.

The Opposition has to accustom the party to itself. It must
show that the feeling of revenge, the desire to smash the
apparatus, to punish opponents, etc., is alien to it. The more
modest and restrained the manner in which the Opposition comes
forward, the more correct (from the standpoint of the setting and
today’s correlation of forces) and politically expedient. The
Opposition has one immediate aim: to be admitted into common
work in the present extremely difficult conditions. Such should
be, in my view, the tone and spirit of the first statement. In other
words, the Opposition should present itself as it is. The appear­
ance of a statement such as this immediately will be accorded
great political significance. People will reach out to the Left
Opposition from various directions. Contacts will be restored, and
work will be resumed. Only thus is it possible to set about
collectively working out a practical program.

Over and above the system of purely economic measures
stands, as previously mentioned, the question of the party. What
kind of results would a fairly convoked party congress yield
today? It is very difficult to answer this, especially from here. It
will only be possible to take our bearings in this to the degree that
the apparatus’s repression has weakened and the masses have
awakened to political activity; the development, one must think,
will come precisely in this direction. There can be no doubt that
the party masses, to the degree of the thaw, will reveal much that
is “unexpected,” in both a positive and a negative sense. To
analyze the interplay of moods and currents, to separate the
healthy from the unhealthy, and to consolidate all the progres­
sive ones around the Left Opposition will be possible only on the
condition that it itself established a firm central nucleus.

The question of party leadership will also extraordinarily
agitate party circles in a purely personal sense. Here we should
display the greatest tact, and should by no means indiscrimi­
nately proclaim the present leadership personnel “everywhere
worthless.” The slogan “remove Stalin” is not our slogan. Down
with the personal regime—that is correct. Not only Stalin and
Molotov, but Zinoviev and Kamenev, Rykov and Tomsky, can still serve the party, if they will revive it. The Left Opposition does not exclude anyone in advance; it demands only that they do not exclude it.

In general the same applies to the Comintern. Here the strategic and tactical questions are much more concrete, because the sections of the Left Opposition in a majority of countries have their own periodical journals and conduct continuous work. The organizational side of the matter will lead to the preparation and convocation in each country of a party congress, and then a congress of the Comintern. It stands to reason that there will be less of the “unexpected” in the West. The tempo of this work will depend in large degree on the pace of reform in the CPSU.

I have completely avoided touching on a program of economic measures in relation to the USSR in this letter. This question is briefly mentioned in the latest issue of the Biulleten (number 29-30). A detailed speech will be in the next issue. But now, more than ever, politics is concentrated economics, and the party is concentrated politics.

P.S.: Concerning the Right Oppositionists: 1. The Rights now doubtless appear as an enormous, shapeless blob. All the discontented people, in the party and outside its boundaries, must be gravitating toward the Right, including potential supporters of the Left Opposition, who find it difficult by hearsay to understand the dialectical character of our tactics. The question of the differentiation of the Rights will become one of the most serious questions of our party politics. 2. During the first stage of the turn, practical disagreements with the Rights will hardly be revealed, as, by the way, will be the case also with a majority of yesterday’s centrists. The “backward movement” of the machine flows too imperatively out of the conditions. Actually the centrists have already set out on this road, but unsystematically, contradictorily, and therefore without results. 3. Disagreements with the Rights will inevitably be revealed at the second stage of the turn. Then will come the real differentiation. Just for that reason, even in the first stage—with complete honesty toward the Rights—it is intolerable to mix up the ranks and blunt the distinctions [between us and the Rights]. 4. In the context of a definite interrelationship not only with the Rights and centrists, but also with the various “left” groupings, we will proceed, of course, not only from the Russian but also from the international questions. This cannot be forgotten even for a minute.
The Left Opposition has made the most of the given situation. Though taken unawares by the Danish visa question, the Bolshevik-Leninists have shown initiative and an ability to mobilize quickly.

The meeting and the discussions among more than 20 comrades from seven countries (Russia, Germany, France, Italy, England, Belgium, and Czechoslovakia) have strengthened their mutual ties.

Radio broadcasts will help the national sections to refute the lies of the Stalinists. Talking films will serve the same end.

It should be added that the Oppositionist comrades who were
present in Copenhagen went to the secretariat of the CP, and offered to have Comrade T. defend the views of the Opposition before the party members in whatever manner the party comrades wished. The leadership dodged the proposal, apparently without consulting the party, while continuing its slander campaign.

The Bolshevik-Leninists returned home after a casual and brief meeting, with a new reserve of strength and an unshakeable certainty of the correctness of their cause.

Report of the Commission on the IS

1. The Commission proposes that a preconference be held, made up of delegates from all the sections, which will meet in December 1932, at the call of the IS, and will have the following points on the agenda:
   a) The composition of the plenum, which will meet as often as possible. The Commission proposes that the four or five most important sections establish its composition.
   b) The appointment of the Administrative Secretariat, composed of three comrades who are capable of doing the work, chosen by the plenum rather than by the section delegates. These comrades are to be responsible to the plenum, which alone can recall them.

   The Commission, except for Comrade Grylewicz, proposes that the Administrative Secretariat be based in Brussels.
   c) Preparation for the international conference.
   d) Decisions to be made so that the subsistence of the IS will be provided for by the sections.

2. For the preparation of the international conference the Commision proposes to follow through on the work that has been begun, and to involve all the sections in this work.

Proposal to Organize Defense for the International Opposition

Whereas:

1. In all parts of the world Oppositionists are undergoing repression—sometimes of the harshest kind, as in the countries of the Far East. Capitalist repression (imprisonment, beatings, arrests, provocations, etc.) combines with the repression and slander of the Stalinists, which goes to show that the enemies of
the proletariat are also active in the ranks of the workers.

2. In recent months and years, this situation has been marked in particular by the following:

a) The frenzied attack of Stalin’s bureaucracy on the Bolshevik-Leninists in the USSR (the execution of Blumkin, deportations, exiles, imprisonment by the thousands, harassment of Oppositionist workers).

b) The offensive against the Oppositionist vanguards in China and Indochina (arrest and torture of militants, smashing of organizations), in Greece, where hundreds of comrades have been thrown into prison, in Bulgaria, Poland, etc. In the revolutionary struggles in Spain, Belgium, South America, etc., Opposition militants have undergone police repression side by side with all Communists. Nevertheless, Stalinist slander continues to dog the Oppositionists, even when they have fallen into the claws of the bourgeoisie. There are numerous cases in Greece and Bulgaria, and generally in all countries, where Oppositionists have been beaten up and harassed in prison by the Stalinists.

c) Lastly, the Stalinists are directly organizing a form of provocation and repression that objectively supports the bourgeoisie (united front with capitalist governments against Comrade Trotsky, provocations in the United States to implicate the Opposition in legal cases of murder, denouncing militants to the police by publishing their names in the press, as in Italy, and brutal acts organized against the Oppositionists of all countries).

3. After the establishment of the Communist International, the international proletariat created an organization for defense and aid to victims of the class struggle (International Red Aid). Under the leadership of the Stalinists the International Red Aid became the instrument of the Stalinist bureaucrats, who support the comrades that belong to or work for their faction but who practically and materially turn their backs on the Left Oppositionists. For this reason we must adopt a firm and uniform line of action on the question of the struggle against repression.

We propose the following:

1. The struggle against repression must be firmly linked to the work we are doing to win over layers of Communist workers to the platform of the Opposition. That is why always and on all occasions the sections or individual members of the Opposition who are attacked in one way or another by repression should campaign to be defended by the International Red Aid.

2. At the same time, every case of repression, harassment, provocation, etc., must be the object of an international campaign
by the Opposition. That is why an International Oppositional Defense Committee must be created, under the direction of the IS, charged with centralizing information, giving impetus to campaigns, and organizing material support. For this work we can call upon comrades who are close to the Opposition but do not formally belong to our ranks.

3. Every time the International Red Aid or the organizations controlled by the Stalinist bureaucrats refuse to help the Opposition, the Oppositional Defense Committee should denounce the fact to the whole working class, while taking measures for the effective support of the comrades and organizations affected. In this way the International Oppositional Defense Committee must appear as the proletarian defense organization that compensates for the default of the organizations that are disabled and disoriented by centrism.

Report of the Spanish Commission

1. In a revolutionary situation that objectively favors its development, the Spanish Left Opposition is not only no longer developing, but it is passing through a serious crisis that puts into question its existence as an organization.

This crisis is marked by conflicts between the Spanish section and the International Opposition on one hand, and by conflicts within the section on the other which have just been illustrated by a change of leadership and by its transfer from Madrid to Barcelona.

2. The Spanish section is composed of a nucleus of leaders of long standing in the revolutionary movement, and a mass of young workers with insufficient communist training, who have come to communism in a revolutionary period, driven by the bureaucratic methods of the Stalinists to the side of the Opposition, but not on a serious political basis.

Such a composition places all the more importance and responsibility on the leadership, which must, through intense political life, assure the education of the workers who have come to the organization out of enthusiasm.

3. The present crisis of the Spanish section finds its most important immediate cause in the attitude of the section towards national and international political problems.

The leadership of the Spanish section has more often replaced political explanations with personal evaluations. That has been shown again in the recent changes that have just come about
Documents from Copenhagen

(Lacroix: "Gangrene has set in." Nin: "Lacroix is a pathological case.").

The gravity of the situation in the Spanish section finds its highest expression in the first letter that the new leadership sent to the IS on the subject of Mill.\textsuperscript{232} In this letter, the new leadership, instead of condemning Mill's capitulation, defended him with an attack on the Left Opposition (Stalinist methods, etc.), going so far as to make the outrageous statement that the Opposition was responsible for Mill's capitulation.

4. Out of the confusion in which the Spanish section operates, we can distinguish the following erroneous tendencies that hinder its development:
   a) tendency towards a second party;
   b) lack of perspectives on the Spanish revolution;
   c) misunderstanding of the problems and development of the International Opposition;
   d) lack of exact policies on questions of considerable immediate importance (trade union, agrarian).

5. Political clarification has been hindered by the characteristics of the two most capable members of the leadership. Comrade Lacroix, by his lack of personal discipline, by his violence of language in place of political explanation, isolated himself from many comrades while he held the most responsible position in the organization, one that required him to associate with many comrades. Comrade Nin, who has some personal prestige, and who has always remained equivocal on the political situation in Spain and also on the general policies of the Left Opposition, waited passively for the moment when Lacroix was completely isolated, and then took over the leadership without political debate.

On the political positions of these two comrades, it appears from the material (articles, letters) that we have at our disposal that Comrade Lacroix is much closer to the general positions of the Left Opposition than is Comrade Nin, whose customary reserve, moreover, has just been shattered by the Mill case.

6. The task of the International Opposition is to intervene to prevent the collapse of the section and to give a positive result to the present crisis.

The intervention of the International Opposition should aim to:
   a) clarify the political differences among all the members of the Spanish organization;
   b) form a leading nucleus selected from the whole organization;
   c) prepare for a new conference for [ ]
7. Our proposal:
   a) Open the political discussion with a letter to all the members of the Spanish Left Opposition (using the draft worked out in Prinkipo) and adding particularly the position of the new leadership on the Mill case.
   b) Ensure the discussion by publishing an internal bulletin.
   c) Send two comrades from the International Opposition [Lesoil\textsuperscript{233} and [   ]] to contribute to the discussion from top to bottom and to help the International Opposition clarify the situation.
   d) Close the discussion with an enlarged meeting of the IS, with the participation of representatives of the various currents that emerge in the Spanish section.

ANSWERS TO PERSONAL QUESTIONS\textsuperscript{234}

December 16, 1932

Dear Sir:

The questions you pose, I must admit, surprise me somewhat: Are they really sufficiently appropriate for defining a person?

"What is your favorite occupation, besides hunting and fishing?" Hunting and fishing, for me, are not occupations but relaxation. My "favorite occupation" is mental activity: reading, thinking, and perhaps, writing.

My "favorite" Soviet writer? The events of the past twenty years have greatly narrowed down the amount of attention I could give to imaginative literature. I did have "favorite" writers twenty-five or thirty years ago. Now the person I read with perhaps the greatest interest is Babel.\textsuperscript{235}

Of foreign writers it is even harder to speak. I do not know the contemporary writers well enough, and my comments would be totally accidental in nature.

Your question about philosophers is also difficult. I look at philosophy (to the extent that I am familiar with it) in the way it develops. And I would be very hard put to specify by name a
philosopher who in my view stood "higher than the others."
The same is true, in a certain sense, of historical figures as well.
I can say that Friedrich Engels, as a human figure, impresses me
in the highest degree. Of course, the historical role of Marx was
much greater.

What time of my life do I consider my happiest? I simply do not
know how to respond to this question. In all periods of my life
there has been a mixture of good and bad. To draw the "balance
sheet" on particular periods is something I have no right to do,
or have I ever regarded my life in that way.

That is all I can say. I wish you every success.

MEMORANDUM ON A FORGERY IN SPAIN

December 19, 1932

1. I do not doubt that the Spanish falsification, the alleged Life
of Lenin, never appeared in Russian. If there existed three copies
in the entire world, one would have reached me. The Russian
emigre press would certainly have written about such a scandal.
In reality, outside of Spain no one knows anything about this
book. It doesn't exist anywhere in the world. Never and nowhere
has it been published. The falsifiers counterfeited only the title
page [in Russian].

2. This single page, taken by itself, is deadly evidence against
the falsifiers.

a. In the small text of the title page there are two very crude
violations of Russian spelling, against the old style as much as
the new. The first word, "Zhizn'," is printed as "Zhizn," without
the "soft sign." The falsifiers heard, evidently, that the Soviet
power abolished the "hard sign" and decided on this occasion to
abolish the "soft sign." This is ungrammatical: the soft sign
plays a large role in pronunciation. The very same mistake is
made also in the final word, "Konstantinopol [Constantinople]."

If the book were published in Russian, any typesetter of any
Russian printing office would certainly point out the illiteracy of
the heading.
b. I have never put my patronymic on my books. In general no one does this. It violates all the literary customs, especially revolutionary ones.

c. I have never placed my civil name, “Bronstein,” on a single one of my books or articles. For the past 30 years I have not signed them otherwise than as Trotsky.

In order to show, evidently, how well informed they were, the falsifiers heaped up on the title page all their knowledge: my patronymic, my civil, and my literary names. By so doing they only underlined the crude character of the forgery.

d. A brief biography of Lenin was written by me only once, in 1926, for the Encyclopedia Britannica. Anyone who is interested may read this article in the most recent edition of that encyclopaedia. It defines my actual attitude toward Lenin. Perhaps it would follow to offer this article for the attention of the court?

4. My bond with Lenin was sealed by the October Revolution, the construction of Soviet society and the Red Army, the years of the civil war, the work on the creation of the Communist International, etc. A series of my books, which defines my attitude toward Lenin with exhaustive completeness, is translated into Spanish. The publisher of Dedalo or its editor cannot help but know these facts. With the slightest attention to his responsibility, with the slightest honesty, even in the absence of any literary insight, the publisher could not have helped doubting, at the very least, the authenticity of the manuscript, and he was obligated to apply to me for information about it. Actually the publisher of Dedalo, in the interests of sensation and sales, obviously tried to cover up the falsification.

The court, I hope, will declare that the social function of publisher cannot coincide with the role of poisoner of the wells of public opinion.

5. I offer in my books and articles a definite theoretical and political course. Whether my ideas are good or bad, they are my own, and I have fought for them in the course of the more than three decades of my political life.

The book published by Dedalo under my name is not a simple literary falsification, capable only of causing the author a certain material loss. No, the case is incomparably worse. This book does not counterfeit my views, as happens in ordinary forgeries, but ascribes to me views and estimates directly opposite to those I defend. Commercial forgery becomes complicated here by political slander, by calumny of my past and present, by slander that
is the more detestable in that the slanderers force me to cover a slander against myself with my own name.

The moral and political damage of the forgery is beyond measure. It will not, however, be exaggerated to say that this is the most poisonous, the most dishonorable form of literary slander of all those that generally are possible.

6. I notified the publisher by a letter on October 24, 1932, of the fact that he was deluding Spanish public opinion, dealing in slander. And what did the publisher do? He converted my warning into an advertisement for his poisonous wares. In order to heighten the interest of his readers and customers, he suggests to them the thought that I am forced by some kind of unworthy motives to deny my own work. The criminal violation of the moral and material interests of a writer and political figure acquires here an especially ill-intentioned character.

I hope that the court of the Spanish republic, irrespective of its attitude toward my views and aims, will bring down a fitting verdict on the heads of those who introduce into the field of literature and publishing the methods of Chicago gangsters.

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Dear Jan:

1. I am enclosing the draft of the resolutions for the preconference. The French translation is moving at a good pace. There is reason to expect that by tomorrow or the day after (at the very latest) the French text will be sent to Paris in several copies.

There remains the question of the German translation: You will have to worry about that because there is no way we could manage to do it here.

2. The enclosed text has parts of different kinds. The whole introductory part is programmatic in character and should go into the platform in revised form, and until the platform has been
worked out and adopted this should serve as a surrogate platform.

The second part of the text (on the Italians, the Spanish, the Frey group, the Germans) is, so to speak, conjunctural in character and consists of a series of separate resolutions.

A strict distinction must be made between these two parts. There may be objections at the preconference to adopting the first part too hastily, since it is to a certain extent programmatic in character. Caution on this point is quite appropriate and proper. On the other hand, we must have theses for a platform, even if they are very brief. (If we had had such a document in the past, it would have been much simpler dealing with Well.)

How to get out of this difficulty? I propose the following way. Since my theses represent nothing new, but simply formulate the views we have in common; and since doubts and objections could not apply to the essence of the ideas but only to formulations, to one or another imprecise statement, omission, etc., it would be best if the preconference could approve these theses as a basis and leave it to the Secretariat to give the theses a final editing, subject to approval by all the sections. I myself would propose a number of additions and corrections to the theses. Other sections would probably do likewise. We could probably have a final text as early as March.

It is a different matter with the second part, that is, the practical resolutions. They should be adopted by the preconference in finished form. It would therefore be desirable to immediately establish a commission to examine the appropriate questions and also, logically, to edit the appropriate resolutions. My draft resolutions should be passed on to each such commission through the proper channels.

3. As before, I think that the main task of the preconference is to elect a Secretariat and sketch out a plan for preparing a full conference. But I must admit that in my preliminary conversations with you I might have outlined the work of the preconference in too limited and narrow a way. The latter cannot help but reflect back on the most urgent questions in the various sections. On the other hand, in order to prepare a conference, platform theses, even if they are most elementary in character, are necessary. That is why I decided to lay other work aside and spend the time to draft the enclosed resolutions. Please discuss my proposals with Witte and the other comrades and come to some preliminary agreement about them.

4. I do not know where and when the preconference will be
A Possible Lecture Tour

February 1, 1933

A thorough outline of the Trotskyist tendency’s attitude toward bourgeois and Communist parties. As for contributing to the bourgeois press, there are a number of factors to consider. A
fully developed CP, which has a daily press, etc., can simply order its members not to contribute to the bourgeois press. Any possible exceptions would have to be motivated by thoroughly unusual and important circumstances and would, of course, always be made under the supervision of the party.

Our situation is completely different. We have been artificially separated from the party; we are not strong in numbers, nor do we have a powerful press. . . . [He goes on to express his apprehension that a visit to the USA could lead to conflicts with White emigres and/or American Stalinists. Further on the plan for a book on the history of the Red Army and the civil war in Russia, which, however, he considers unfeasible because it would be too time-consuming. He mentions a plan for an American tour for the purpose of developing contacts among Communist immigrants.] As for the concrete arrangements, I cannot yet say anything definite. I have heard that American impresarios keep 60 percent of the revenues for themselves, at least for lectures under ordinary circumstances. But in our case there is a certain element of "sensationalism" involved and a more or less large revenue. I would really be interested to know what percentage the impresario takes on W. Churchill's lectures. (I must apologize for this comparison, not to W. Churchill, but to you, and myself.) It would be in order for you to make some inquiries on your end—in a discreet but effective way. In any case, I am sure that this question will not present any insurmountable obstacles.

GREETINGS TO THE GERMAN BOLSHEVIK-LENINISTS

February 2, 1933

Number 4 of Die Permanente Revolution, which we just received, proves that the German Left Opposition passed very successfully the test that was inflicted on them by the plot between a small clique of capitulators, confusionists, careerists, and the Stalinist bureaucracy. What is even more heartening is the firmness and resolution with which the local organizations
broke from the capitulators, without hesitating, with a really remarkable unanimity, even though they included some pretty influential old Oppositionists. Now it is clear to everyone that the German Bolshevik-Leninists have serious, reliable, and independent proletarian cadres. We may say, without overstating: the conspirators-capitulationists rendered a great service to the Left Opposition, not only because they freed it from themselves, but because they helped it to better test its ranks, to tie them more firmly, and to raise their opinion of themselves. It is a very important condition for future successes!

In terms of its political-moral content, the spurious number of *Permanente Revolution*, published by an agency of Stalin with the technical help of the capitulators, cannot be distinguished from the phony "Zinoviev letter," which was put into circulation at one time by the British Conservatives.244 *Rote Fahne's*245 too zealous cries of victory, picked up by the unfortunate SAZ, uncover more clearly the fear that the Left Opposition's tireless criticism prompts in the Stalinists.

After stepping over some political corpses, the German Bolshevik-Leninists will go forward with self-confidence.

Warm revolutionary greetings.
L. Trotsky, N.I. Sedova, O. Schuessler, J. Walter [van Heijenoort], P. Frank

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**A POSSIBLE VISA FOR FRANCE**246

**February 8, 1933**

Dear Comrade Parijanine:247

I thank you once again for your friendly advice on the possibility of my wife's and my coming to France for treatment. I am still quite skeptical, as I have explained to you in my letter the day before yesterday: the reactionary parties have their reactionary arguments and the progressive parties have their progressive arguments—not to run afoul of the government of the USSR. But then, suppose the Daladier government grants me the authorization. I come with my wife, and just as I set foot on French territory, Daladier falls. Mr. Herriot248 sends me and my
wife by force on an Italian cargo ship to float for two or three weeks before arriving back in Prinkipo, and I have spent money out of all proportion to my budget. I am giving you these arguments not because I do not need several months of European medical care. In fact, my wife’s need is quite urgent. But my last experience in Europe [November-December 1932] gives me little cause for hope.

If you see the situation more optimistically than I—which appears to be the case—I beg you to consult with my friends in Paris, especially perhaps with Henri Molinier, who has experience in this area and a correct view of things. But you are completely correct to treat the proposed trip as something quite apart from politics (even though such matters exist in a world corrupted by politics). In any case, I would be quite prepared to give formal assurance that I will not intervene in the political life of the country (no conferences, no meetings, etc.).

You speak of the Riviera and Corsica. I imagine the medical treatment facilities in Corsica are not sufficient. Perhaps the question could be posed in this manner: two months of treatment on the Riviera, and then Corsica. But in that case, the special commissioners would have to be kept well informed, so that they do not confuse Corsica with St. Helena.

With my best regards,

REPLY TO AN INVITATION

February 15, 1933

Dear Comrade Santini:

Forgive me for not having replied for such a long time. Your proposal that I write an open letter to the Italian workers is attractive. But the difficulty that hinders and paralyzes me almost every time I go to write something concrete on Italy is my ignorance of the country. Not only do I not follow the Italian press—even occasionally—but I have never had a prolonged contact with Italian workers in general, or with Italian communists. I would need some more important event to come along soon, to give me a point of departure. That is the difficulty.
That does not mean that my reply to your proposal is no. I will try. I will not make a firm promise, because in many cases my promises to my Italian friends have gone unfulfilled. And in general I am not remiss in keeping promises. The explanation for this is as I have told you above: it is very difficult to throw oneself into the unknown.

Right now I am completely submerged in matters of the Russian economy. The situation is very tragic. Stalin’s report is in screaming contradiction with reality. I believe the months to come will be decisive.

I would be very happy to hear the evaluations and impressions of the Italian comrades who attended or participated in the preconference.

My warmest communist greetings,
L. Trotsky

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN GERMANY?

February 22, 1933

Dear Friend:

For a long time I have wanted to write to you, but it was not known where you were. For the last few days I was awaiting a report from you from Berlin. Meanwhile the last letter arrived from Paris, where you expect, evidently, an answer from me. As a precaution I am sending this letter to Paris and Berlin simultaneously.

The resolutions of the preconference have been received. All are in order. The preconference is a very important achievement: the Stalinists cannot decide to convene an international conference. Of the Brandlerites there is nothing to be said: their international organization does not exist. We convened an international conference and passed a number of resolutions of paramount importance. Unfortunately, neither La Verité nor Permanente managed to emphasize this fact. A special note should be printed, it seems to me, to correct this omission.

It is reported from America that with the coming of the fascist
era in Germany, the League has mobilized all of its members in military fashion to try to shake the members of the Communist Party to their senses. The Militant will be coming out three times a week in the course of the next month. They began this campaign having no resources whatsoever, and apparently met with an immediate response from the workers. The French are also displaying significant activity on the German question. The surprising thing is that the Germans themselves are moving least of all. It is difficult to understand what is the matter here: whether there is a general mood of depression and resignation in Germany, or whether our organization is totally lacking in initiative. I do not doubt that now, when our authority would be rising powerfully if our leadership were active and bold, that the size, at least, of Permanente could be significantly enlarged. This alone would produce a favorable impression, especially after the treason of the Well clique. In Permanente there is not even a real appeal to all friends and sympathizers to now increase tenfold the newspaper sales, collection of money, agitation, and organizing. Everyone is mobilizing except the Germans. Write and tell me, please, after you have acquainted yourself well with the situation, what accounts for this catastrophic inertia: the generally depressed mood of the German proletariat or the specific conditions in our organization.

Expanding the size of Permanente is, it seems to me, the minimal program. That is, it is better to enlarge the size itself rather than to go to six pages; but this, in the end, is a technical question. There should be a circular letter appealing to all local organizations and sympathizers; those who sell the newspaper should be mobilized; and the organization should be be put on a military footing. A drastic change should be made in the character and rhythm of the work. It is best of all to start with the publication of what the French and American sections are doing in connection with Hitler's accession to power. Apparently the Greek section, too, has taken appropriate steps. The Germans should be infected with the examples of the other sections; the spirit of competition and the feeling of political responsibility should be raised.

Tomorrow I hope to send the Russian text of the German pamphlet. This is not the pamphlet on the political situation which I started several weeks ago, but a special pamphlet I have written in the last few days, addressed to the Social Democratic workers. I think that this pamphlet will allow us to make contacts with left Social Democratic elements, inclined toward
revolution, who are repelled by the official party.

Do you have someone who is capable of translating into Russian? In the next issue of the Russian *Biulleten* the resolutions of the preconference should be included. I have the basic text in Russian, but it is necessary to insert amendments and additions according to the final text of the decisions of the preconference. Perhaps this task could be fulfilled in Berlin.

I have called the attention of the Berlin comrades to the SAP several times already. One printed criticism is not enough. Personal contacts are needed. They need to be forced to understand that we are not “beasts” but people, and that nothing human is alien to us. Generally, it is necessary to break out of the vicious circle, which has produced its own routine and, alas, a lack of initiative.

With warm regards.

Yours,
L.T.
Standing: Leon Trotsky, Arne Swabeck, Pierre Frank.
Sitting: Jean van Heijenoort, Rudolf Klement
Swabeck: It is now quite certain that we can expect a much more rapid intensification of the contradictions within American imperialism and its role as a world power as well as an intensification of the class struggle—and this in the near future. This opens up a broad perspective for us. We assume that the role of the workers' organizations in America will increase considerably in the future. In the process the major problems of the trade union movement will be broached along with the theoretical questions of the trade unions and the class struggle in general. Of course, this does not exclude a certain reformist development. Up till now, the reformist parties have made more gains than the Communist Party. The most immediately possible perspective seems to be that developments will be intensified so quickly that perhaps social reformism will not be able to keep pace. That offers great possibilities for the CP. The Social Democracy, the Communist Party, and the unions are still small at the present time. The CP is just as bad or even worse than other CPs and has at most 8,000 members. Of course, the Left Opposition also faces big problems, especially with such a small CP in such a large country. I think we have already taken a number of steps to prepare the Left Opposition for the coming developments.

In the first period of its existence our organization grew very rapidly. Then growth was halted until about the end of 1930. At the beginning of 1931 we built up our center and our apparatus and numbered about 100 members. At the time of our second conference [September 1931] the organization had grown to about 150 members and now we have around 210-212. In general this shows that we have made a certain amount of progress. It was to our advantage that the core cadres were a unified group sharing the same points of view and were expelled from the party for this reason. There were no differences about platform, theses, and the class struggle in general. Naturally there were small differences of opinion. At the beginning of 1931 we decided on an expansion
program, which was primarily a propaganda program, and included among other things the reappearance of *The Militant* as a weekly paper. During this period we attracted elements that perhaps otherwise would not have been attracted to us—they came to us mainly for literary reasons, but of course this does not apply to all of them. With this program we began to undertake organizational steps, chiefly in the direction of expanding and steeling the membership. Our influence is in general greater than our organizational growth.

At the present time we don’t have the right kind of contact with the party, which is chiefly due to the fact that the party is carrying out an extremely sharp struggle against the Left Opposition. For instance, they expel members merely for attending our public meetings. Nevertheless, we have been able to determine on a number of occasions that we do have influence on party members, for example, on the question of our campaign about the situation in Germany, also on the attempt of the party bureaucrats to characterize us as murderers, and on the antiwar question. Our insufficient ties with the party are a weakness. Our opinion is that thus far we have gone through a propaganda period and must now participate in the class struggle more directly. That doesn’t mean a turn but rather one step further along our charted course.

On questions of principle we are in agreement. The differences are manifested only in the working out of these problems. One of the most important problems is creating cadres who can make judgments on all questions.

The entire organization must be oriented in the international questions and able to take a position on them. For a long time we have had disagreements with Comrade Shachtman’s methods in particular. He viewed everything as a personal question. Often he would show us only a small portion of a letter and defend his action by saying that it was a “personal” letter. So up till now the League has always been very slow on the international questions and our international contacts have been too weak. Comrade Glotzer behaves like Comrade Shachtman, too. He returned to America, submitted a statement in which he sharply separated his views from those of Comrade Shachtman. Now he has made an alliance with Comrade Shachtman in order to fight the majority and he says that it was only Shachtman’s views on the international questions that he disagreed with.

The internal situation has become increasingly strained. Comrade Carter published a number of articles on Engels’s views.
We saw these articles as incorrect and dangerous since they were a defense of Social Democratic points of view. This difference gave rise to a further intensification of internal tensions although it was, of course, not the real reason. The Carter group is an independent grouping, but has ties with Comrade Shachtman.

At the last plenum we unanimously approved the resolutions, including the resolution on the international question which the minority at first opposed as totally incorrect. The resolution on the Carter question, which was a resolution condemning the views and the methods of the Carter group, was also unanimously adopted. After the plenum, however, the struggle was resumed and intensified.

The National Committee is composed of nine members: five for the majority, three for the minority, and one (Spector) who more or less supports the minority. The New York branch executive committee has five members. There, however, the minority has a majority. At the plenum we suggested that the New York committee either be reorganized or that one or two representatives of the majority be coopted onto it. The minority agreed with this and a resolution to this effect was adopted. A later statement by the minority reopened this question. Now an attempt is being made to renounce the false position that Shachtman had on the European question. The minority was opposed to sending an official representative to the preconference, just as they were opposed to the preconference in general.

The minority has initiated unprincipled campaigns in various branches. In New York, Chicago, Boston, they have gotten resolutions adopted against the majority.

The differences are not over principled questions, but rather fundamentally over the question of what conception one has of a communist organization. What methods should be employed? The Left Opposition cannot remain a literary circle forever. I'm not implying that that is what the minority wants, but in practice that is what it amounts to. More participation in the class struggle or more literary work? We demand greater responsibility and greater capacity for self-sacrifice from every member. We are against personal combinations.

At the plenum a resolution against Carter was unanimously adopted and his tendency was condemned as scholastic.

Trotsky: This group is not represented on the central committee?

Swabeck: No, only in the youth organization. There it has the majority. It [the Spartacus Youth leadership] was not elected but
instead was appointed by the [CLA] National Committee.

After the plenum the entire Carter group abstained on the international resolution. They asked for more information. We think that this position will bring the minority closer to us. In New York we have proposed the election of a new executive committee because Carter is the dominant force there. We offered the minority a united front on this point, but it refused and entered into a combination against us.

Despite the fact that the minority agreed with us at the plenum on the question of cooptation in New York and said they would not oppose it, they went with the Carter group against us on this question. Cooptation was a matter of life and death. In New York we felt the necessity to change the social base of this group, which is not proletarian enough. In a factional situation this state of affairs complicates and exacerbates matters. We proposed accepting only workers into membership for a period of six months, regarding others as sympathizers until the social base of the group had changed. Further, every member would be obliged to play an active role in a mass organization and to report on his activity. This resolution was strenuously opposed by the Shachtman-Carter combination—especially the first point—and was finally voted down by the New York branch. We hold to our view for the rest of the organization as well.

On the occasion of the trip to Copenhagen and the hue and cry raised by the Stalinists, the minority suggested calling a meeting on this subject. Shachtman and Eastman were to speak. We had nothing against this meeting, but thought that having Eastman as a speaker was out of the question. We had a heated argument over this question in three meetings and finally had to raise the question of discipline. The meeting did not take place.

Trotsky: Was the fight over the meeting or over Eastman?
Swabeck: Over Eastman.

In Boston we have a group of seven. Four came over to us from the CP in 1928. These comrades have never been in agreement with us on the trade union question, from the beginning right up to the present. They hold a sort of tail-endist position vis-a-vis the Stalinist third period. In the National Committee we have general agreement on the trade union question. We have always argued with the Boston comrades, written them long letters, etc. In some instances they even refuse to carry out decisions. On the questions of the cooptation, the international questions, and the international representative there was an alliance between the Boston group and the minority.
In about April or May 1932 the minority began to work as an organized faction, with their own center, their own finances, etc. We, on the other hand, took no steps at that time. But this sort of factionalizing means the first step towards a split. We called a meeting of the comrades who agree with us for the first time just a few months ago, no earlier than that. We have no particular objections to a faction with a political program. But there are no differences of opinion on any political question and the minority has not put forward its own platform dealing with any question. They themselves admit that. In this respect the question of the faction has no principled basis and is very dangerous for the League. On this basis there can be no discipline and the leadership can have no authority.

The strength of the League in its first period was based on the existence of a unified leadership. Since April 1932 this has changed and it is now seriously reducing the authority of the leadership. There are already enough examples of this.

When Weisbord returned to America, he did not get in touch with us and he didn’t write to us either. He only informed us that he was holding a public meeting where he would speak on the subject of his visit to Trotsky. We were invited and if we wished, a representative of ours could speak. We didn’t agree with that at all and turned him down completely. In the New York organization there was a tendency that was conciliatory toward Weisbord. We decided not to take part in the meeting and that our comrades should not attend either, with the exception of one or two observers. A few comrades in the conciliatory tendency said they didn’t care what the decision was. There were four or five of them—finally only two went [to Weisbord’s meeting]: one who didn’t know about the decision and another who openly declared that he didn’t care in the least what had been decided. Even in this case we didn’t propose any [disciplinary] measures. But when the matter was brought up and criticized, the minority and the Carter group entered into a combination against the National Committee and even passed a resolution against the National Committee.

Trotsky: The minority voted against the National Committee in the local organization?

Swabeck: They didn’t vote for the resolution, but they spoke in favor of it—Shachtman in particular, but also Abern258 and Glotzer. But in the elections which followed, the comrade who had attended the Weisbord meeting was nevertheless elected to the branch executive committee on the minority slate. He has
only been in the League for six months. Out of the eleven members of the local leadership in New York, two supported the majority and the [branch] leadership was elected on the basis of a statement by Comrade Shachtman. He wants to have a local leadership that is opposed to the National Committee. This is another example of the unprincipled combination. Once again we had proposed a united front against the Carter group to the minority.

When I left, I proposed that Comrade Cannon be appointed to take my place as national secretary. The minority was strongly opposed to this.

_Trotsky:_ What did the minority suggest?

_Swabeck:_ 1. They counterposed the financial question to this proposal. 2. They said that Comrade Cannon had in the past not fulfilled all of his assignments. (He hadn’t worked full time for the organization for two and a half years. He was in such a bad economic position that he had taken a regular job.) 3. They proposed a secretariat composed of two comrades (Cannon and Abern) who would work as volunteers without pay.

The question of salary was never a serious question. But we think two secretaries are impossible, especially from two different factions, like Cannon and Abern.

The two factions differ in their approach to concepts and methods; especially now when measures have to be taken for strengthening our direct participation in the class struggle. The personal combinations formed by the minority are very dangerous. Unless something changes, there is bound to be a split. There is no other way.

We asked the minority if it wanted to be represented in Europe and at the preconference. They demanded that we call the third [national] conference right away. We have nothing against this. However, we want to have enough time to discuss all questions in detail: how we can carry out our new tasks better; what is the American situation; the world situation; how can we orient ourselves correctly?

_Trotsky:_ What is the composition of the [Militant] editorial board?

_Swabeck:_ It’s made up of five comrades: Cannon, Shachtman, Abern, Spector, Swabeck.

_Trotsky:_ Who has the power of decision—the editor or the committee?

_Swabeck:_ The committee, but collective work with Shachtman
is almost impossible. He keeps the comrades waiting, and edits the paper in a far too individualistic fashion.

The date of the third conference has already been set for the end of June or the beginning of July.

It is possible that we have enough time till then, but we need new theses, the old ones are no longer sufficient. The three years of crisis and the intensified class struggle must be treated in a fundamental way. Basically what we need is enough time so that the international can contribute to the discussion extensively. We want the help of the international sections and their advice, especially in our present situation. If the minority does not change its methods, a split is unavoidable. Playing games with principled questions cannot be tolerated, especially in an organization as young as the League.

Trotsky: It is not clear what is at issue here. I have only been able to determine that the majority of the central committee consists of comrades who are, so to speak, more American, who were involved in revolutionary organizations even before the advent of the Communist Party, in the IWW, while the leaders of the minority are younger comrades who haven’t worked in the unions and the revolutionary organizations. The other point is that according to Comrade Swabeck’s reports the workers in the local organizations, especially those with trade union experience, tend to go with the majority, while the intellectuals, etc., who have come to the organization more or less on an ideological basis, go with the minority. This division is not absolutely accurate, but is more or less correct. It is important insofar as it corresponds to the facts for there are certain socially based points of support. Since the organization was oriented more toward propaganda work, this can account for the fact that these differences or divergences, which are based in the social composition of the organization, have not yet broken through to the surface. Up till now, for both groups, it has been a question of finding the correct propaganda formulations, and since the different compositions of the two groups and the different traditions (or in one case—the absence of traditions) have not yet found political expression, they are channeled, so to speak, into side roads—into organizational and personal questions, etc. That is what is most dangerous. The very fact that the two factions have different social compositions and different traditions is not sufficient to make a split necessary, for every party is formed from different groups, elements, etc., and is not socially homo-
geneous. And every party is a melting pot, but there has to be activity. The present situation in the League corresponds with the beginning of more energetic activity directed outward. The essential question is whether the League will become a melting pot. To a certain extent this is dependent on opportunities and successes. If you score successes, this will weld together the best elements. In case of failures and inch-by-inch development, the discontent can find its expression in a split.

Why were so few members involved in the vote on the plenum resolution on the cooptation question?

Swabeck: At the plenum all resolutions were adopted unanimously so the question arose: "You have decided everything by unanimous vote, why then the cooptation?" We proposed it because we knew how serious the situation still is despite the unanimity. We had to keep an eye on the minority and that's why we demanded guarantees.

Trotsky: Where does Comrade Spector stand?

Swabeck: The question of Comrade Spector is of secondary importance. We had a group in Toronto which began with twenty-seven or twenty-eight members but fell to about ten. It was principally Comrade Spector who was blamed for this. He is to blame to a certain extent because he didn't do everything he had to do. It came to a split there because the majority of the group demanded that he carry out a definite amount of work. Spector demanded that his group be recognized. In the majority of the Toronto group there are elements similar to the Carter group. We passed a resolution in which we support Spector's political tendency but also call for the unification of the two groups. Since the plenum the Spector group has had eighteen members with six more sympathizers around it. This plays no role, however, in our dispute.

Are our differences of opinion personal or political questions? Personal questions always play a role in such discussions, especially at the beginning, when the political differences do not stand out clearly. In our opinion the differences are political although they are not clear or sharply defined.

Trotsky: A split would destroy the League and compromise the movement seriously. One cannot explain a split to the workers by unclear social stratifications on the one hand and the expression that these find in organizational and political forms on the other. When an organization is politically mature and its members have experience in factional struggle, the frictions can be held in check until the major political differences are evident. However, the
The Struggle in the CLA debates often appear to be purely personal and organizational. The special nature of the situation consists in the fact that the intensity of the struggle does not correspond to the stage of development in the formation of factions. Both factions find themselves, so to speak, in a state of infancy, they have no clearly developed form. On the other hand, they are already organized as factions and confront the League more or less with a split. And that can destroy it. When a split takes place after intense political struggles, it can be understandable and natural. But the way things stand in the League, I believe there is also an element of personal fault involved. The fact that the conflict has flared up so prematurely and with such intensity, and that no one knows how to cool it down—that seems to me to be a negative symptom for the leadership.

Let's take the question of cooptation, for instance: Comrade Swabeck himself recognizes that this measure did not benefit the popularity of the leadership. I wonder if the results really justify this measure. The figures are very interesting: the members of the local organizations see that all resolutions have been adopted unanimously and a proposal is made for cooptations in order to reinforce the "majority." The members ask themselves: "What majority? You have been able to clarify your standpoint so that the minority has been forced to follow suit." The cooptation proposal has caused dissatisfaction among the membership. On the one hand, they see it as undemocratic, on the other, as factional, as dangerous for the unity of the organization. So there were very good reasons motivating the no vote. The membership does not want a leadership artificially imposed upon it and, secondly, it has good enough reasons to be concerned about the organization. The result was the vote against the majority and the shaking of the majority's position despite the fact that it wished to strengthen its position. It was an inappropriate measure and revealed perhaps too much organizational intolerance. Given the present situation, it would perhaps be better in the long run not to carry out cooptations.

I am also not quite clear on the question of the secretariat. Of course it was quite natural to propose Cannon as secretary, but perhaps in Cannon's position I would say: "I would like a representative of the minority to work with me as assistant secretary." That would be an attempt to cooperatively regulate the disputed questions and perhaps the frictions would indeed be lessened in the course of day-to-day collaboration. The personal-organizational disputes are out of proportion to the stage of
maturation of the principled differences. It seems to me that in fact an element of organizational "ultimatism" on the part of the majority played a role. It must be kept in mind that a split in the near future would be a fatal blow for the organization.

The third conference in June-July: In the present situation what can it accomplish? Perhaps it can adopt good resolutions, but as far as the disputes between the different groupings are concerned we can say: 110 here and 100 there or the other way around. Everything will be as before. The majority stands only to lose, since it cannot hope to win eight seats as against one for the minority. In such a situation personal relations play a very great role. Naturally, if one says the split is unavoidable, I have my 51 percent, I am going to set a course for throwing the others out—this can be carried through to the end. But there must be political reasons for it. The international organization has as its task to put the brake on this development. We have to warn the American comrades, we can under no circumstances allow ourselves the luxury of a split in America. If the Left Opposition had more money, we would have to send some comrades from the IS to America.

We must express this perspective very clearly: what do the comrades hope to gain from a new conference and what can they hope to gain—110 to 100? If you chart a course toward establishing a majority of a few percent on one side and then changing everything, then you will just lose members, because immediately an element will appear which heads for the sidelines.

The appearance of The Militant three times a week shows that the League is capable of initiative. And there were no differences of opinion on this question. Here the whole League marches in the same step.

What differences of opinion were there about the Weisbord question?

Swabeck: I have read Comrade Shachtman's letter on the Weisbord question in which he says there were opinions on the National Committee which expressed themselves in terms of leaving the League if Weisbord were forced upon them. This is a totally irresponsible way of picturing it.

We do not say there must be a split, rather we ask how we can avoid a split. But the comrades of the minority are forcing a split. We are agreed that we must use all means at our disposal to hold the comrades back, but we also think it is necessary to characterize the situation as it really is.

On cooptation: there is no doubt that it was an unfortunate
tactic, but we were in an unfortunate situation. There was a local organization in which the minority held the majority. We had to do something and the proposal for cooptation was unanimously adopted at the plenum, the minority declared that they would not oppose it. We had to assume that this would not become an issue for dispute, otherwise we would not have made this proposal.

Trotsky: In order to justify the cooptation you would have had to propose a resolution that forced the minority to vote against it. That would have made the emergency measures clear to the organization. But perhaps such a course of action was impossible since there were no such deepgoing differences of opinion, and that very fact made the cooptation an arbitrary measure.

THE SITUATION IN GERMANY

March 3, 1933

Comrade Otto [Schuessler] reports on the German leadership's political resolution, "On the Situation in Germany." The resolution is very turgid and very weak. It does not give enough consideration to the special position of the Left Opposition as contrasted to the position of the other groups and parties.

The first section, on the economic situation, contains general observations, but offers no perspective. War is discussed only in very general terms.

The political section devotes far too much space to the Center Party and the Bruening regime and is more a pure historical presentation. Questionable formulations are also used, as, for instance, "The blows of the Center Reich government and the SPD-Center coalition were directed solely against the KPD." That is not correct since the major attack during the Bruening period was directed against social policy and wages and as such affected the entire working class. Indirectly the resolution itself formulates this in the following sentences where mention is made of the "resistance of their own mass membership base" which made it impossible for the SPD to continue to support Bruening's government by decree.
“Lesser evil” politics is mentioned only in passing and not characterized. This then leads to the formulation: “Looking backward, it can now be said that the big bourgeoisie, knowing that it would have the support of the SPD in this period of preparation for its dictatorship, set the tasks and the SPD carried them out voluntarily and without hesitation.” It cannot be said that the SPD went along with everything “voluntarily.” The decline of reformism and its own position as a whole forced it to go along. It was, so to speak, a case of “forced voluntarism.” The resolution never takes up the situation of reformism and its consequences. Also the question of the Iron Front\textsuperscript{263} and the SAP is hardly mentioned.

On the question of the [1932] presidential elections, the resolution forgets to mention the position of the Left Opposition. At that time there was wavering and uncertainty, and the lessons must be drawn in the resolution and at the conference. In this connection the resolution speaks only in general terms about the party’s false slogan “the SPD is the chief enemy” and fails to give a resolute characterization of the role and the character of the SPD.

A crucial weakness of this political resolution is its extremely unclear and indecisive treatment of Bonapartism,\textsuperscript{264} which is hardly more than mentioned by name. It is this very question of Bonapartism that sharply sets us apart from all other organizations. This question was debated within the German Left Opposition itself. It is necessary that the question of Bonapartism be clarified in the resolution since it will undoubtedly still play a role in coming discussions.

The formulation on Bonapartism in the section “Seizure of power” is ambiguous: “Bonapartism lacks the power of a mass base for carrying out extraordinary economic measures.” It is quite possible that Bonapartism’s striving for a mass base can be successful. The lack of a mass base is to be sure a correct observation as far as Papen-Schleicher\textsuperscript{265} Bonapartism is concerned. But we should not generalize from this case.

In point 3 of the same section on “Seizure of power” it says that the differences that might possibly arise in the government camp are “not decisive.” It seems to me that this formulation is aimed at playing down the importance of differences within the ruling class at the very time when we should be examining these differences and preparing for them. They can become extremely important and can lead to a lull in the development of the
methods of repression, which can be of decisive importance for the working class.

There is also too little that is correct about the section on the “political program of the party.” It contents itself with an enumeration of the party’s various errors and slogans and gives no clear evaluation. It is necessary to offer a clear formulation on the question of “social fascism” and on the “national program” too. These are the very questions that will play an important role in our debates with Stalinism. This is also true of the question of “people’s revolution.”

The term “ultraleft, bureaucratic zigzag,” which Comrade Trotsky polemicized against in his letter to the editorial board of SAZ (published in Permanente Revolution), is a rather conspicuously questionable formulation.

Can one say that the “red referendum” was “an ultraright as well as a criminal adventure”?

Trotsky: The handling of this “referendum” involved a mixture of extreme opportunistic tendencies along with ultraleft tendencies. The bloc with the Nazis was of course an instance of outrageous right adventurism. It is sufficient to say that the handling of the referendum was adventurism.

This resolution totally lacks a perspective; judging by its size and its form, it is more like an article. After making the necessary changes as indicated, it should be used as a commentary, and a resolution about two pages long should be written. If we have to work illegally, how can we make any sense of things on the basis of such a lengthy resolution? The comprehensive commentary can be published in a bulletin, but a two- or three-page summary has to be prepared for use by our agitators. In this summary, the characterization of the crisis and the Center Party, like everything that is general knowledge, should be left out.

The object of the resolution as a resolution is to clearly emphasize those things which separate us from and counterpose us to other organizations, and to show why we exist as an independent organization. General matters can then be taken up in the commentary.

The question of the SAP is rather important. We can make large gains there now. It would be worthwhile to write a letter to the members of the SAP, principled but friendly in tone. We can approach the workers better with a letter than a resolution.

I think our comrades are too formalistic in placing so much emphasis on counterposing ourselves to the SAP on the question
of "faction versus party." For us this question is very important and retains its importance today, although tomorrow that may change. Through our role as a faction we say to the ranks of the party: we belong to you and we want to march together with you.

With the SAP, however, we have a very different situation. It already has a history of its own, it has proclaimed itself as a party and counterposed itself to the KPD. It has developed or can develop in a communist direction. But they are not yet communists and we cannot expect them to understand the question of the "faction." The jumping off point is a communist program. We must say to them: "You are a party. Good. But you have a bad program." But on the question of "faction versus party" we should not be formalistic.

What does it mean when the SAP members say "We are a party"? In their minds it means: We do not wish to work together with the Social Democracy any longer. For them that is a step forward. To demand of them that they consider themselves a faction of the KPD (which has just lately been calling them left social fascists) is absurd. This sort of attitude toward the "faction versus party" question is wrong. We have to raise other questions with the SAP—questions of German and international politics, great world events, the Russian question, the question of bureaucratic centrism, etc.

Of greatest importance are the eleven points of the preconference theses. They have to be put before the SAP and we have to get them to express their opinions on these questions. If they demand that we enter the SAP, we can't motivate our refusal by saying, no, you're not a faction. This way of formulating the question is impossible.

Rather we have to put the question somewhat like this: "The measure of a party is its program. We can only unite when we are in agreement on the principled questions, only then can we enter the SAP. Do you agree with our eleven points?" We have to take each of these points as a point of departure for a critique.

**Otto:** It would be well to thoroughly discuss once again within the German Left Opposition itself the position and the role of the Opposition as a faction. The past weakness of the German Left Opposition with regard to the party is explained in part by the past history of the German Left Opposition. In the debates with Urbahns's Leninbund we placed the question of the "faction" in the foreground, counterposing it to Urbahns's efforts to build a new party.

**Trotsky:** I think that in the immediate future we will maintain
our position as a faction in Germany. Perhaps now is the very
time when we will harvest the positive fruits of our position. If a
process of great ferment begins in the party, the different
opinions will not immediately lead to the formation of individual
factions. Many will struggle for a change in the party. And we
will be able to approach them on this basis.

I am sure that if Hitler remains at the helm and the KPD goes
under, then we will have to build a new party. But the most
important part of the new party will be recruited out of the old
party. This question will then be more important for us than the
approach to the SAP. Hence at this point we cannot simply
concentrate on influencing, say, the SAP. Even if we have this
orientation toward the KPD, we need not demand the same
thing of the SAP. In this area we have to proceed in a political-
pedagogical fashion and approach the educational work from the
right direction. If we force them to accept our point of view and
the content of our platform, then the organizational consequences
will follow naturally, with our help, of course. Perhaps we will
build the new party together with them and sections of the KPD.

In relation to the SAP, it is extremely important to emphasize
those of our eleven points which separate the SAP people from
the Brandlerites, since the greatest danger for these people is that
they will return to Brandlerism, because politically they are only
a semifinished product.

Frank: The preconference theses have nothing on the question
of 1923. This question is crucial for Germany.

Trotsky: The year 1923 is very important, but for reasons of
expedience (which are admissible) I would not insist on this point
with the SAP, since this question sharply provokes their leader-
ship, which considers it “a matter of honor” not to recognize the
1923 question. This is only a matter of the sequence of discussion,
of how we should begin the discussion with the SAP. And I would
not begin with 1923.

The political resolution of the German leadership offers no
perspective. But that is just what needs to be worked out.

In any case it is important to note that, despite the energetic
tempo in the destruction of the workers’ organizations, this
destruction should not be accepted as an accomplished fact. The
counterrevolution (like the revolution) takes leaps forward, but
cannot always hold the positions it has captured. Hitler may yet
have his July days, although he is already in power. He has
already been obliged to retreat on the question of tactics toward
the Center Party. He may have the same experience in his
struggle against the Social Democracy. The SPD is so closely allied with the bourgeois parties and with the entrepreneurs that Hitler's fight against it will cut deep into the ranks of the bourgeoisie. In this regard he may be forced to retreat. His allies can force him to let up for a time, and it is not out of the question that the working class can catch its breath again during this lull. Of course this should not be interpreted to mean that we should perhaps neglect the building of an underground organization; quite the contrary. But we should keep a careful eye on the enemy, watching what is going on in his camp so that we can come out in the open. The question of a united front toward the Social Democracy has lost none of its importance; in particular, the trade union question has increased in importance. Whether Hitler dares to dissolve the trade unions will be of the greatest importance. He will hardly try to do this all at once. Under such conditions the trade unions are the natural organizational form for the communists. The RGO must enter the trade unions again, whatever the cost.

From Germany people are writing about putsch tendencies within the party. What do they mean by "putsch tendencies"? Not that the workers are learning to defend themselves, not that they are preparing caches of weapons, not that they are standing their ground in battles with the fascists—none of these things are putsch tendencies. A putsch is when a minority counterposed to the majority of the working class as an adversary goes into struggle.

We are for active self-defense—including armed self-defense. This active self-defense can be successful when it is supported and covered by the understanding and sympathy of the great mass of the workers, and the Social Democratic workers first of all. The task of the hour is to crush the theory of "social fascism" underfoot. In the course of the defensive struggle the Communists will naturally form shock brigades; these must be protected by the sympathy of the Social Democratic workers and must fight shoulder to shoulder with the young Social Democratic workers. Otherwise defense can degenerate into putschism, which would mean nothing less than the extermination of the youngest and most active revolutionary forces in the proletariat.

The Social Democratic slogan "stay at home" must be combated. But military defense must proceed on the political basis of a united front. Then it will not run the danger of degenerating into isolated putsch actions.

Every opportunity must be thoroughly utilized. It is as if you
were climbing a steep mountain, which looks like a sheer wall when you stand in front of it so that it seems impossible to climb. But if you take advantage of every crack, every natural step, every hole, to find a handhold or a foot support, the highest mountain can be climbed under the most difficult conditions. You must have the necessary courage, but also foresight and the broad view.

Providing that is the most important thing for the German resolution.

The question of the offensive and the defensive must be clearly worked out. We have absolutely no interest in appearing as the aggressor, as the KPD did until just recently. We declare ourselves before the public opinion of the working class to be the victims of aggression, which is in fact the case. Our present task is to place the defensive in a politically favorable position, to prepare it organizationally and technically, and to strengthen it. This must be said in the resolution. From the point of view of a goal-oriented strategy the defensive will, along with the course of the class struggle, be transformed into an offensive at a certain point. What is most important now, however, is not the strategic position of the offensive (which is also very important) but the tactical position of the defensive.

Naturally we cannot wait and hope for developments in the fascist camp. This is the tactic adopted by the Social Democracy. But if the working class remains quiet in the face of all attacks, these differences will not develop and come to a head. There would be no reason for them to. But if the working class actively defends itself, if the actions of the government and the fascists run into opposition, then the differences can break through and develop, differences over long-term perspectives on how to suppress the proletariat, over methods, tempo, etc.

All Catholic communists must now enter the Catholic trade unions, since these organizations may also develop in a leftward direction under pressure from the fascists, and this would provide us with important cover. Even if the Free Trade Unions continue to exist, some of the communists must enter the Christian trade unions; this is an even more natural step if the Free Unions are dissolved, which is improbable, but not impossible. Not a single inch of legal ground should be yielded through caution, let alone neglect. At the same time, of course, an underground organization must be established.

The Left Opposition must also take some practical organizational steps. It is important to establish a paper outside of the
country, which can be somewhat more theoretical if necessary.

In summary:

1. From the existing resolution material, work up two pages for the political resolution.
2. An outline of perspectives, also two to three pages.
3. The rest of the German leadership's resolution with the necessary changes indicated should be used as motivation and commentary.
4. On the SAP question—it is better to compose a letter to the SAP membership rather than a resolution. This letter should be based on the decisions of the preconference.

It is necessary to apply the preconference theses in the daily work of the organization, otherwise how can they be tested and improved? Without such field-testing we will never come up with an international program. It is too bad that these theses were never published in Germany. If possible, we should publish these theses as a two-page insert in a special number of Permanente Revolution. Publishing them in an internal bulletin is not sufficient. It is very important for us to hold an international conference now on the eve of great events.

Swabeck: In the German resolution it says that the prosperity in America is over and that the further expansion of American imperialism is very much dependent on the situation in other countries. That is correct, but it is necessary to motivate why this is so. America has to forge ahead in a declining economic situation and in addition it must help defend other countries against revolution.

It also seems now that the American conjuncture is worsening; take, for instance, the recent bank failures. Is this a sign of a further decline, or just a device for bringing about a change in the conjuncture?

Trotsky: To set a timetable for the phases of the conjuncture was something that even a Marx could not do. It is even less possible to make exact time predictions for the future. I haven't followed the American bank failures. The American financial structure is two-tiered. There are powerful modern banking institutions with ties to the most modern economy and industry and, on the other hand, there are countless completely local banks. These form the first tier and above them loom the powerful modern banks. I think it is inherent in the logic of the situation that it will be the small local banks that suffer most from the crisis, that even an improvement in the conjuncture will not save them, and that the big, powerful central banks are
consciously carrying out such a policy. If they are of a mind to bring a Ford to his knees, they certainly will make short shrift of the small banks. It is possible that a process of natural selection will take place. Many will fold at the beginning of the prosperity and this will be combined with the conscious policy of Wall Street to make life difficult for the provincial banks in order to eventually finish them off. Hence these bank crises in and of themselves do not at all speak against an improvement in the conjuncture. What has been said here is, of course, hypothetical. Theoretically it is unassailable, but the question is whether it applies in this case.

**Swabeck:** Is it not necessary now for the German Left Opposition to raise the demand for credits to the Soviet Union?

**Trotsky:** With the Hitler government in power now, and the rapprochement of the USSR to France, and the suppression of the only party in Germany that could fight for this demand, this slogan is less important.

The comrades in Maehrisch-Ostrau published a pamphlet on the Russian question and included in it my [1932] article in which I propagandized for a mobilization of the Red Army if Hitler should take power. I would now be opposed to publishing this article, since the situation in the Soviet Union is becoming continually worse. From the standpoint of the international policy of a revolutionary state and given a correct line for the party in Germany, it would, of course, be correct to have the Red Army play a role as an international revolutionary factor. But the situation in the Soviet Union is so very bad as a result of very bad policies that it would be impossible for the Soviet Union to undertake a military initiative at the present time. The living standard of the masses is indescribably low, and if we call for a mobilization now, people in Russia will not understand it, and the masses will regard it as a provocation. Because of these considerations I would not now repeat what I said then in the perspective.

**Swabeck:** At the preconference the major emphasis on the German question was placed on having the German Left Opposition differentiate itself more sharply from the party. It seems to me that this is not clearly enough expressed in the resolution either.

**Trotsky:** In considering what tone we take toward the party now, we must take into account that the KPD is at present a persecuted party.
A PERSONAL LETTER ON THE CLA

March 7, 1933

Dear Comrade Swabec:

After having a series of discussions with you and becoming acquainted with the [CLA] documents, I think—entirely apart from any assessment of the minority’s attitude—that in the organizational policy of the majority of the central committee there are elements of formal intransigence which may appear as bureaucratism and which in any case will injure rather than enhance the authority of the central committee and its influence.

1. After the June plenum, where all the decisions were approved unanimously, your group attempted to have recourse to cooptation in order to guarantee a majority for itself in the central committee, although nobody could understand in what respects the majority is different from the minority.

2. The proposal of the central committee to the New York branch concerning proletarianization was a mistake not in its general tendency but in its mechanical approach to the issue and the manifestly practical hopelessness of the proposal under the given conditions.

3. In consideration of the fact that the two groups have approximately the same weight it would be, it seems to me, reasonable for the majority to make a concession to the minority and after the designation of Comrade Cannon as permanent secretary to draw in also Comrade Abern as assistant secretary.

4. It appears to me absolutely impermissible to deprive Comrade Abern of his vote on the occasion of the departure of Comrade Swabec.

5. The elaboration, behind the backs of the minority, of a draft thesis on the prospects of American imperialism represents an obviously factional step, all the less justified as on this question no differences have appeared up until now. The situation became that much worse as the document was destined for discussion with foreign comrades who in that way learned about the draft
thesis before the minority members of the central committee of the American League.

6. The [majority] proposal to immediately transfer the [national] headquarters [from New York] to Chicago is practically equivalent to a split.

7. Not convincing, it seems to me, is the allegation that in spite of the hopes of any "optimists" the situation became even more acute after the League began to pass from the propaganda to the agitation stage. It is by passing from one stage into another that the malady usually comes to the surface. But serious successes in the field of mass work will inevitably produce a favorable influence upon internal relations and in every case provoke a radical regroupment by gradual isolation of demoralized elements.

A split now would have an a priori character, understandable to nobody but its initiators, and would destroy the authority of the Left Opposition in America for a long time to come. In the meantime it is particularly clear from the letters of Comrade Cannon that great perspectives are opening up for the American League.

I permit myself to establish the following axiom: The Oppositional minority has a certain right to manifest impatience but the majority leadership has no such right.

Fraternally,

DON'T FORGET WE HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

March 8, 1933

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

I have not written to you for a long time. A collection of many causes has made my response to your latest letters difficult. Even now I write you quite briefly. The situation in the [American] League now constitutes our greatest worry. You are heading toward a split, and that will mean catastrophe for the League. It is actually a matter of complete indifference which side in the fight is more wrong, for neither side will be in a position to
explain to the workers what caused the split. And that will completely compromise both groups. In one of your letters you gave expression to the hope that the next conference will settle the disputes. That is not my opinion at all. If your group gets 51 percent that would not change anything at all. The determined intervention of the International Secretariat is necessary. I am in correspondence with the Secretariat on the matter, and I hope that you will get word on this in the next period.

I would like to touch fleetingly on just one question. It seems to me that you were mistaken in undertaking the big protest campaign against delegating Comrade Swabeck [to see Trotsky and attend the preconference]. Had he come to Copenhagen at that time, it would have been most opportune. We badly needed a Danish-speaking comrade, and with his help we could certainly have built a good section. His participation in the Copenhagen consultations would have been of the greatest significance. Perhaps under this condition the internal struggles in the American League in the course of the last months would not have taken on the current unprecedentedly sharp character. The preconference took on a much greater significance than it seemed to have, on the evening before, to many of us, including me. Comrade Swabeck's participation was very useful. And his stay here is, for me and the other members of our local group, of great value. I also hope that Comrade Swabeck will not regret his stay here. Without contact with him the intervention of the International Secretariat would not come off so effectively.

I would really like to implore you, as well as your friends, not to be so nervous, so impatient, to adopt a longer-range perspective and not for a moment to forget that we have an international organization that is not at all inclined to adopt a one-sided view and in whose eyes the "aggressor," the instigator, has much more to lose than to win.

This is it for now. Thanks for sending the fishing line, which I received in good time.

With best greetings,

Yours,

L. Trotsky
IN THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

March 8, 1933

Dear Friend,

There is little news from you. Raymond [Molinier] is also complaining about your silence. We hope nothing unfortunate has befallen you. You probably have heard the news about Rakovsky’s end. Natalia Ivanova [Sedova] still retains a glimmer of hope that the news is false. Personally I’ve given up all hope. It is a terrible blow for us all and for me in particular.

Enclosed I am sending you for translation a call for help to the prisoners and deportees among our Russian friends, along with the translation into German which was made from the French. At the moment I can’t bring myself to undertake the corrections with Otto. Please take care of this yourself.

The call is not intended for the press. Rather, it should be published in the form of a circular-letter, and then, if possible, brought to particular addresses to be sent out over my lithographed signature. You will have to compile the list of addresses together with other friends. I think Pfemfert can be very helpful in this. The matter must be handled in agreement with the German section but kept completely separate organizationally, with independent addresses for the receipt of funds. Perhaps, under present circumstances it would be better to give the address in Vienna. Our friends in Berlin will be able to judge this better. The undertaking must, however, be set in motion as quickly as possible.

How are things going for you personally, your health, and also financially? I am very concerned about this. The difficult financial situation we have gotten into here makes it impossible for me to come to your aid directly. Do you have a little bit of time free for translation work? If so, I will send you the articles in question and that might perhaps establish a financial base for you. In the immediate future I will have to occupy myself more with articles for the daily and weekly press.

The overall plans of our German friends are a complete mystery to me. I think we must try to establish a new theoretical-political monthly as soon as possible. Don’t our friends think that
for such an undertaking a coalition can be formed with the more progressive elements of the KPO minority on the basis of a specifically defined internal constitution? In these uncertain times, when possibilities rapidly alternate with impossibilities, we must establish a firm base somewhere abroad, and this base can only be the periodical.

With best greetings and wishes.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF LABOUR COLLEGES

March 10, 1933

To the National Council of Labour Colleges
London, England

Dear Comrades:

You propose to me to express my views concerning the Karl Marx exhibition arranged by you and by which you intend to make a big "boost" for Marx and Marxism. It is not necessary to emphasize how near to me is every step which is capable of strengthening the influence of the ideas of Marxism in England where stand at the head of the working class movement reactionaries of the types of Henderson and Clynes, who to the crown of their heads are filled with bourgeois prejudices and ecclesiastical superstitions. But to my great sorrow I note that your prospectus, which you have been so kind to send to me, begins with a highbrow citation from H. de Man, an author who accomplished a retrograde evolution from the opportunist semi-Marxism to eclecticism and idealism and opened the doors wide to religious mystics. In the spheres of philosophy, sociology, and history H. de Man stands, in the best case, on the level of the "True Socialists" of the first half of the latter century. However, Marxism began its historical road with the ruthless chastisement of the moralizing philistinism. To put Marx under the shield of H. de Man is not much better than to put Darwin under the shield of
Advice for the CLA Minority

March 14, 1933

Dear Comrade Glotzer:

I haven't written to you for a very long time. The reason for this is not only that I have been involved in work that I could not put off, but also because I wished first to get a more or less clear picture of the situation of the American League. I now feel that I am clear on things to some extent. I have written very briefly to Shachtman on the matter and I can only give you the same advice: Do not in any case or under any circumstances exacerbate the situation in the League. The International Secretariat will, I hope, intervene in the American question within a few days. Any impatience on the part of your group would make a split very likely. And a split without a clear political character is the most dangerous kind of miscarriage, one which can kill both the mother and the child. It also seems to me that it is wrong to hope for a national convention that will "put everything right." Under present circumstances the convention could only bring about an unimportant shift in the relationship of forces. Whether your group has five and the other group four on the central committee, or the other way around, is rather unimportant since each group is dependent on the other if things are not to be driven to a split, i.e., a catastrophe. Patience, dear Glotzer, you must prepare yourself for long-term work.

You will say to me: "And the others, the Cannon group?" Of course this applies equally to both groups. You have mounted a stormy protest over Comrade Swabec's trip. Completely without reason. This trip was of great value for the leading European comrades, for us here, and for Comrade Swabec himself. I am sure that Comrade Swabec will, for his part, contribute to bringing the League back to normal footing.

There is one thing that you must be clear on: If it should come
to a split, the League would be reduced to two quite unimportant grouplets, which, in the best of cases, could belong to the International Left Opposition only as sympathizing groups, something like the arrangement in Czechoslovakia.

I await your answer with great interest.

With best greetings.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

THE GERMAN DECISION AGAINST A NEW PARTY

March 19, 1933

Dear Friends:

I have just received the report on our German friends' discussions and decisions. I find that, in the present given circumstances, the result achieved is absolutely satisfactory.

The conference decided against the slogan of a new party in Germany. It is easy to understand the position taken because our comrades live and work in an atmosphere where the official party is being persecuted, they are under the influence of our whole tradition on that point, and no discussion on this point preceded the conference.

I do not believe either that without imperious necessity (and this will hardly occur) we—the international organization—will be obliged to overrule the decision of the conference on this point. The initiative on it must absolutely come from the newly-elected German leadership, and I am sure that every new day will demonstrate the impossibility of the old position. That is why I propose to bring my article immediately to the attention of all sections as a discussion article. The discussion will take place on the basis of new developments; each new day has, precisely on this point, the greatest importance. The careful—one may say conservative—decision of the conference is, as was said earlier, easily explainable by the whole situation. But if we cling to it and lose time, we may very strongly jeopardize winning and even lose a lot of good elements to other groups. That is why we must not
lose one hour. I invite all those who are interested in this to start corresponding with each other and to pose this question as the most burning one of our international policy.

Communist greetings.

P.S.: During the conference, the fate of the German party and of the Comintern was strongly linked to that of the Soviet Union. That is correct from a historical point of view, but only from a historical one, not from the point of view of current politics. It is a fact that the Comintern in Germany has begun to decay and we must politically assimilate this fact. Furthermore, I explained this point in my letter to the IS.

A CONGRESS AGAINST FASCISM

March 23, 1933

To the Leaderships of the Sections

Dear Comrades:

On the international antifascist congress: If this congress planned by the Comintern actually takes place, it will give us a significant opportunity to assess and to denounce the politics of the Stalinists in public; the politics which handed the German proletariat over to the fascists. This time we have to be represented by at least thirty delegates and we have to try to draw with us those groups that more or less sympathize with us, like Sneevliet's and some groups in Germany, perhaps the Bordigists, etc., to strengthen the anticentrist delegation. The financial question is significant, but the rules of the congress facilitate submitting mandates. It is a question of immediately preparing these mandates in the name of various groups, the smaller committees included, local groups of the Opposition itself, newspapers, etc. In this regard, we think it best for every section to form a special commission of three members to deal with the preparation of our participation in the congress.

We hope that the International Secretariat—if it has not yet done so—will give detailed instructions on this in plenty of time.
Let us take the liberty of pointing out the extraordinary importance of an energetic preparation and a broad representation. We will not have a platform with such appeal again in the immediate future.

Gourov [Leon Trotsky]
COMPLAINTS TO THE IS

March 28, 1933

To the International Secretariat

Dear Comrades:

On March 7 I sent you a very pressing letter concerning the situation of the American League. I insisted on an immediate answer, which is dictated by the circumstances themselves. On March 13 I sent you a very pressing letter concerning two questions: (a) the new party in Germany; (b) the antifascist congress. On the 14th, I sent you a rather pressing article about the situation in Germany. My aim in sending this article to you was to reach an understanding with you before we could start a broader action. I must admit that I was expecting an immediate answer; positive, negative, or ambivalent, but immediate. I note that after three weeks, I have no answer concerning the three questions enumerated. The necessity to reach an understanding with you is obvious in each case; but the necessity to react in time to the great events is even more imperious. I very much regret the loss of a few weeks of precious time. I feel obliged to send the German article immediately, in my own name, naturally.

I received from Berlin, on this subject, a note which I find absolutely incorrect. Because of inertia, some want to keep the old position and consequently jeopardize our entire future.

For a certain period, many elements in the party will attempt to revive the party; there are already efforts at conspiratorial work. But this is nothing but the convulsion of a dying organism. The pogrom of the Hitlerites against the party has barely started. The cells exist and it is most natural that they should try to persist and continue. But these efforts are doomed to failure because they are taking place on the old basis of principle, method, and selection of personnel. After inevitable failure, which is not far off, a new crystallization, very slow and very painful, will begin.

More or less symmetrical or analogous processes will take place among the workers in the Social Democracy, the SAP, etc. The workers’ movement will enter into a period of turmoil and confusion. To present ourselves as the guardians of the coffin of
the Stalinist organization would be absolutely fatal in this situation. On the contrary, to proclaim in time that the Fourth of August has been reached means to prepare for our merger with the best elements in the party after the failure of their efforts to revive the party.

The Berlin comrades had a wrong attitude concerning Well and Hippe, and they continue to follow the same line on a much more important and decisive question.

As for the American situation, I shall wait until the end of the month, and on April 1, I will send my letter directly to the League.

The antifascist congress seems to be arranged for April 16. It is possible that it will be canceled; it is possible that it will not be held; but it is also possible that it will convene on April 16. Well, as far as I know, you have not taken any initiative up to now, and even worse, you have paralyzed the initiative on our part with your silence. All this is absolutely unexplainable.

Dear comrades, if you want a fruitful collaboration, the first condition for it is punctuality. With nonchalance, one does not make the revolution, nor even things much less important. As for me, I feel obliged to answer each one of your letters within forty-eight hours, with a yes, with a no, or with an “I do not know yet”: this is enough to come to a direct understanding.

P.S.: We have just received number 147 of La Verite with the “Tragedy” article. I understand this to mean that we agree on the essence about Germany, since without your authorization the article could not have been published in La Verite. I do not know if you have urged Unser Wort to reproduce the article; we are sending it from here today to America and Czechoslovakia.

But the American and congress questions still confront us, along with the question of “normalizing” our relations.
WE MUST HAVE A DISCUSSION ON GERMANY

April 3, 1933

Dear Friend:

Just received your letter about the Hamburg candidate, I will write to you tomorrow or the day after about the Hamburger. Right now I want to write about several political questions.

1. From Stoi's letter it follows that the Secretariat does not want to open discussion on the question of "the old or a new party in Germany." I consider this completely incorrect. Our official position on this question was formulated by the preconference: a faction, but not a party. The German conference expressed this same spirit. We (i.e., the Secretariat and myself) propose to change the official position of the International Left. If the present situation makes it inconvenient to open discussion, then publication of my article should be forbidden, for my article itself would open a discussion. Just how can one forbid the expression of things which defend the official position after having already given the floor to those who subject the official position to criticism? Here is a clear inconsistency. The German comrades, who have taken a most vital interest in this question, will be indignant, with complete justification, regarding such bureaucracy. The Secretariat itself, in questions of formal rights, must display the utmost caution and loyalty. Here, meanwhile, formal right is wholly on the side of opponents of our point of view.

What political motives prevent the opening of discussion? I do not see them. On the other hand, every situation demands discussion in our ranks. Our old position is known to everyone. Where did the new position come from? By order of the mufti? Only the ECCI [Executive Committee of the Communist International] acts like that. If we are open, in everyone's eyes, and debate the question in a comradely tone, our authority as an organization can only grow, our own cadre will be consolidated, and our internal regime will be given great stability. If we find ourselves in a direct struggle [with the bourgeoisie] it might still be possible to raise an objection against discussion. But it is clear
that we are entering into a period of slow preparatory tasks. It is best to begin such a period with serious discussion, examining the results of the previous period.

What is said above does not at all mean, to be sure, that I intend to compromise on the essence of the question. No, not in the least. Stoi's letter, in complete and full detail, confirms the necessity of a fundamental turn in our relations with the official party. If we do not make a decisive turn at this time we will destroy ourselves. But this turn should be made strictly democratically. That is my position.

I insist that the Secretariat itself call upon the comrades to open a discussion, as was done in Germany, except on an international scale. This will immediately improve the situation, and otherwise protests against the Secretariat are absolutely unavoidable. In such a case, I would have to give a public explanation, i.e., openly disagree with the Secretariat. A catastrophe would not follow from this, of course, but it is best to avoid it if possible.

2. The other day I wrote a rather strongly worded letter to the Secretariat regarding extreme carelessness in typing. I hope that Blasco and Witte take the letter as written, i.e., as a protest against the fact that their own inaccuracy still further increases our isolation at Prinkipo, and I hope that the letter will not worsen our friendly relations.

3. The question of Unser Wort should be decided as soon as possible. A letter from Held arrived yesterday. He complains that there is not one bit of news from Berlin, and that he had to put together an entire issue from my articles. This will not do, of course. First of all, one should provide the publication with good political correspondents, broad information, and on-the-spot exposes. Now, when in Germany itself freedom of the press has been stifled once and for all, an emigre newspaper can achieve great success, if only by giving many exposes (about persecutions and all kinds of outrages).

4. It is extremely important to maintain contact with the SAP. Perhaps now it is already possible to put together a theoretical journal with them. This would be extremely important for future relations. Strike the iron while it is hot. Right now all relations are still in an informal state. In a month or two a lot will crystallize and the emigre groupings will gather momentum. That is why it is now especially important to reach an understanding with the SAP.

5. Again the antifascist congress comes to mind. I am afraid
Tasks of the Coming Plenum

April 12, 1933

Dear Friend:

At last a letter has come from you (dated April 6). We were told you were ill. Malaria? What is the state of your health now? You say nothing of yourself personally.

The day before yesterday Otto left for Prague with the last documents for the Prague congress [against fascism]. Yesterday I received a letter from Skandera with news that the congress had been postponed and would be moved to a different location. Today a telegram came from Ray [Molinier]. Paris is invariably three days late at the minimum. Some eight or ten days ago a letter came from Witte, who reported that he proposed to raise the question of the congress for discussion at the next plenum. We were all the more astounded at this dilatory attitude because all of us here were busy night and day with the drafting, translating, mailing, etc., of the documents for the congress.

Concerning the work for the coming plenum, I cannot add anything to what I have written recently: (a) a statement of general character for the congress; (b) a statement on the trade union question; (c) a statement on the youth movement; (d) several minor resolutions; (e) a letter on the "new party"; (f) an article on the same subject; and (g) an article on Austria, not to mention earlier articles ("The Tragedy of the German Proletariat," "Alarm Signal!" etc.). I should also add the article "We Need an Honest Inner-Party Agreement," which strongly emphasizes the difference between our attitude toward the CPSU.
and that toward the German CP. For Germany we say, The Communist Party is dead. But for the USSR, we propose an agreement with the top circle of the party. That is the situation at the present moment!

I think that all this material is quite sufficient as material for the current tasks of the plenum. The necessary theses and resolutions should be worked out in Paris on the basis of this material. On some questions you can simply take the resolutions or formulations as they are, ready to hand. At any rate, I personally cannot provide anything more, because I must at last spend some time on my personal affairs, which have gotten into quite a severe condition (not only the economic depression but also the fascist reaction makes itself felt throughout the world: I have not succeeded in placing “On Lenin’s Testament” anywhere).291

The plan to get Erwin [Bauer] out of the country is undoubtedly correct. In the organizational sphere Erwin is incomparably less valuable than in the literary work. I wholeheartedly support your initiative. At first I had in mind asking Erwin to come out just for a month to pull himself together and cover up his tracks. But I think the plan to have him move for a longer time is more correct, i.e., I endorse your plan.*

I think it is absolutely wrong to send money to Germany from outside. Such small amounts can accomplish nothing; they should try to raise funds there themselves. Money raised abroad should be used entirely for a newspaper, to insure that it comes out in eight pages or, at least, regularly with six pages. This is now the central question. A newspaper will now become not only the political leader but also the organizer of the Left Opposition in Germany. The role of an emigre paper is absolutely unique: it would be a timely thing now to read over Lenin’s What Is to Be Done?—where he talks precisely about an emigre paper under conditions of illegal work inside a country.

The Secretariat should look over all the documents we have prepared for the Prague congress in order to officially approve them with corrections of one kind or another. Then the documents can be published—no longer just as drafts—in our international press, including in the Russian Biulleten.

On the Spanish question, the most important thing is not to

*Since it will be hard for Erwin to leave his dangerous post—because of his comrades—a direct order by the IS, requiring him to move, is necessary.
force a split. The Nin clique will hardly take the initiative of a split upon itself—that would be too disadvantageous for them. Its hope will be to maintain its "independence" (petty-bourgeois incompetence) through sabotage. We have no reason to hurry. Every passing month will help to break down the Nin clique and strengthen the influence of the Secretariat in Spain.

I call your attention to two Spanish comrades in Madrid, Arlen and M. Vela.\textsuperscript{295} I received two heated letters from them opposing the slogan for a new party in Germany. Their position is wrong on that question, but it is evident from their letters that they are serious comrades, sincerely interested in international questions and indignant at Nin's two-faced behavior and Lacroix's wild antics. I am writing these comrades again today, to restrain them from making a leap in the direction of the Stalinists. If I can succeed in teaching them something, linking their internal position in Spain (against Nin) to our position on Germany and the USSR, these two comrades would be very valuable, because they are more seriously committed to the Opposition than Lacroix, who can and must be used but through whom nothing can be built. Sending emissaries to Spain is not a good idea, because of insufficient funds, but it is necessary to establish closer ties with the two above-mentioned comrades, encouraging them to oppose Nin more actively and to make a bloc with Lacroix. Such a position is dictated by the entire situation. The plenum should in no case pass a definitive resolution signifying a split. It will be quite sufficient if the plenum passes a resolution of the following kind: All efforts to come to an agreement with the Nin group, now in the leadership, have come to nothing, because of the difference of views; there remains no other way than to appeal to all members of the Spanish section to study all the documents, etc., etc., and to make sure that the Spanish section is led on the basis of the principles of the International Left Opposition. A wait-and-see position organizationally combined with an offensive politically—that seems to me the correct formula in relation to Spain.

On the American question. You write about a plan to summon a representative of the minority from America. That is hardly practical because of the shortness of time and the lack of resources. Swabeck cannot wait for money for his return trip; we are also in a pinch here, as you know. Calling a new comrade from America would be a completely unbearable burden for the Opposition, and the political value of doing so would be minimal. On the substance of the American question I said everything I
have to say in my previous letters. The crucial question is the new central committee. I think that a new committee, not of nine but of fifteen members, is needed, including five “nonfaction” members, committed to maintaining unity (the name of the Greek comrade Pappas\textsuperscript{296} is mentioned as a “nonfactionalist,” etc.).

That the idea of an antifascist congress has not been greeted with rapture in the Stalinist ranks is quite understandable. They are in retreat and do not know what to do or what to say. But for just that reason we should make use of the congress as widely as possible, pressing German emigres who are close to our views to attend the congress, as many as possible. We should turn the congress into a platform for our ideas. All the documents have been worked up; our delegation will be well-armed. Our position is unassailable; our delegates have only to proclaim that position in a resolute way from this international platform. All the documents, after being approved by the Secretariat, should be printed in three or four languages. If we don’t succeed in having these documents read aloud, especially the draft resolutions, they can still be distributed in printed form.

Maslow and Ruth Fischer\textsuperscript{297} should be in Paris soon (if they haven’t arrived already). Recently they were in Prague, and getting ready to go to Paris. Maslow declared himself in full solidarity with us, but it seems he is preparing to do nothing, as before. It would be a very good thing to sound him out, and other emigres as well. This work should be undertaken very seriously.

Please write in more detail about yourself \textit{personally}.

Warmest greetings.

Yours,

L. Trotsky

N.I. [Sedova] sends you her warmest greetings.

P.S. In Czechoslovakia Skandera displays great energy and accuracy in his work. Neurath is also, apparently, doing everything he can under the circumstances. Little is heard of Friedmann.
ERRORS OF THE
SPANISH LEADERS298

April 12, 1933

Dear Comrades:

I received your letters concerning the collapse of the German CP. Since this is a question of general importance, I chose to answer you as well as the other comrades with an article whose French translation I attach. I would be extremely happy if you would translate it into Spanish so that all the members of the Spanish Opposition can participate in the discussion.

I understand perfectly the heated character of your observations. The question—faction or party—has played a definite role in the internal life of the Spanish Opposition. On this question Comrade Nin has committed every possible error while not adopting a principled position. That is usually Comrade Nin’s position: playing with ideas, maneuvering, jumping from one principle to another. At one moment Comrade Nin stated that the official CP generally no longer existed and that we should not take it into consideration; he rallied to the Catalan Federation not as a Left Oppositionist, but as Nin, “friend of Maurin”; after which he accepted the theory of the narrow faction which recruits members only for the official party. At the last conference, Nin spoke in favor of independent electoral candidates of the Left Communists. All these positions contradict each other, but all reveal an extreme indifference to the fate of the Comintern as well as to the experience of the International Left Opposition. I understand very well that such an inadmissible attitude toward fundamental political questions must have deeply disturbed you.

Now it seems to you that I hold a position on Germany that indirectly justifies Nin’s false position. You fear that elements even more distant from communism than the Stalinists will pick up the slogan for a “new party” and compromise the Left Opposition. I least of all would doubt that your arguments flow from serious political apprehension. Every political turn poses a certain element of danger. However it is much more dangerous to repeat old bypassed formulas in a new situation because of fear of such dangers.
I don’t know what position Comrade Nin’s group now holds on the question of the German CP. Even if Nin shares the IS’s position on this question, that wouldn’t seem to me to have much value in and of itself. Someone’s political line can only be evaluated on the basis of his *overall* work, his reaction to *all* the major events, in his own country as well as on the world arena. Comrade Nin has more than once verbally “accepted” the theoretical formulas and the political slogans of the Left Opposition. But such an acceptance never obligates him to anything; in practice, he is guided by his sympathies or antipathies, by his personal relations or preferences; that is, by the classical criteria of a radical petty bourgeois.

I would now like to add a few words on Comrade Lacroix and his group. On the questions of the Spanish revolution and above all of international politics, Comrade Lacroix commits very serious errors. With a detailed analysis we can see that if Nin has committed all of Lacroix’s errors, the latter hasn’t shared all of Nin’s. On the other hand, Comrade Lacroix has shown an anarchistic individualism absolutely inadmissible within a proletarian organization. While Nin resorted to diplomacy, to silence and equivocation, Lacroix preferred explosions of temperament. Instead of arguments, he insulted his opponents and did not hesitate to make the most arbitrary accusations against comrades and entire organizations. As long as Lacroix used these methods against the IS, the Russian Opposition, the French section, and the German section, he was energetically supported and even encouraged from behind the scenes by Nin’s group. But when Comrade Lacroix used these same methods against Nin’s group, the latter immediately tried to expel Lacroix from the Opposition and presented a series of morally compromising accusations against him.

Comrade Lacroix stated that his way of acting toward the International Opposition was incorrect. We have no reason to doubt his and his group’s sincerity. But it is completely natural that their previous conduct would have left many comrades apprehensive about the future. Many of us say: “It is obviously good that Comrade Lacroix has renounced his struggle against the International Left Opposition and that he is now committed to winning the Spanish Opposition to the positions of the Bolshevik-Leninists. And we would all be very happy to march arm-in-arm with a revolutionary militant like Lacroix. But if tomorrow he finds himself in disagreement on this or that question, won’t he begin once again to replace practical or
principled arguments with personal insinuations or simply insults?" The answer to this disturbing question will come from future experience.

Even though your letter severely criticizes my position on a very important question, dear comrades, it has nonetheless very favorably impressed me: it is the first genuine political document that I have received from leading Spanish comrades examining a question in its substance and maintaining a comradely tone in spite of the sharpness of its arguments. I especially appreciated your earnest attitude toward the internal life of other sections and toward international problems. The curse of Spanish politics is its age-old provincialism, which arose from its position outside of the great paths of history and from the disintegration of the power of the Spanish ruling classes. The Spanish bourgeoisie imposes its exasperated, offended, and poisonous provincialism on important layers of the Spanish proletariat via the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia. When Comrade Nin, from prison, accuses his partisan, Comrade Fersen, of paying too much attention to international questions, he once again shows that he does not want to free himself from the provincial tradition of Spanish politics.

The Spanish section of the Left Opposition obviously must root itself deeply in Spanish soil. But it will do that more successfully if it participates more actively in the work of the International Left Opposition and uses its experience. I would hope that along this path we will succeed in saving Comrade Nin for the proletarian revolution.

I have received the $150 for the Russian prisoners and deportees. It is with the greatest interest that I learn that a regroupment in favor of the Left Opposition is taking place in the ranks of the Marxist intellectuals. This process is more or less inevitable. There will be differences and discussions (for example, with Comrade Sidney Hook, I imagine). But we must show that we
can engage in serious discussion while studying these questions, amicably but without impairing the unity of our ranks in action. . . . At the present time a split [in the CLA] would mean an irreparable catastrophe. At the same time, even from this vantage point, one can see that by maintaining its unity in action the League can become a solid force in two or three years.

A MAGNIFICENT SCHOOL

April 14, 1933

Dear Friend:

The misunderstanding over Stoi's article I of course regard as completely cleared up. Your intention to publish a discussion issue of the international bulletin about the collapse of the Stalinist party in Germany I consider completely correct and I warmly welcome it. Within the past few days I sent you an article on this subject ("The Collapse of the KPD and the Tasks of the Opposition"). Since then I received another long letter from the Spanish comrades Arlen and Vela and, today, a letter from Erwin. I intend to answer the Spanish comrades again tomorrow or the day after. The question is in itself of exceptional importance, but in addition it will serve as a magnificent school for the entire International Opposition. A serious discussion on a burning question of immediate urgency will give us greater cohesion, I have no doubt of that.

As for Unser Wort, the discussion should be raised there, if the German comrades, especially the leadership, insist on it. But if they are willing to content themselves with the discussion in the international bulletin, there is of course no reason, on our part, for carrying the discussion into the pages of Unser Wort. I myself do not see anything wrong in doing that; on the contrary, I see serious advantages. But in order to have a public discussion, somebody from the other camp must write a discussion article.

The technical questions in regard to Germany are now the paramount political questions. All platforms, principles, theses will be left hanging helplessly in midair if the technical side of the matter is not provided for properly.
I think you are absolutely right in your idea of inviting those SAP members (and members of other organizations) who are close to us or sympathetic, or even not hostile, to express their views in Unser Wort. In the present circumstances such a step would be of exceptional importance and would help the German section break out of its old and narrow limits.

Incidentally, it seems from your words (or rather, from the words of [Fritz] Belleville [in Switzerland] which you pass along) that the Brandlerites not only have not proclaimed the necessity for building a new party, but have even refused to criticize the old party. I do not consider such a variant excluded. These gentlemen are capable of thinking that if the old executive committee is smashed, Stalin will invite them to serve, if they display exceptional “loyalty.” However, in my article “The Collapse of the KPD and the Tasks of the Opposition,” there is a reference to news that the Brandlerites had called for a new party. Either that passage should be deleted or a note should be attached, that the rumor to that effect has not been confirmed.

My insistent advice is that under no circumstances should Schwartz get involved in local work and should keep himself even farther away from Mill’s firm. He now has very important national tasks. In the recent past in the old quarters he put together some very valuable connections. The situation in his homeland at the present is such that the most attentive and intense work in the national sphere is required. I greatly fear that he will be drawn into local work or central work, to the detriment of national work.303 I urgently ask you to give me your assistance in this. It is a question of exceptional importance.

The Opposition press must devote at least a small article to the courageous conduct of Sneevliet.304 He showed himself to be a real revolutionary in this case, and the Stalinist press has said nothing about his trial, passively supporting the Dutch imperialists in this way. We should strike a very energetic note on this question.

Warmest regards.

Yours,

L.D.
Dear Jan:

First of all I want to say something about the German newspaper. In my opinion this question has decisive importance and I ask you to translate my thoughts on the subject for your colleagues.

Lenin's famous work *What Is to Be Done?* has been indiscriminately cited by the Stalinists hundreds of times, with Lenin's arguments on the role of the newspaper being applied to completely inappropriate circumstances. In fact, the apparatus of contributors, correspondents, and distributors of the paper becomes the most important component of an illegal party apparatus. Precisely today in Germany conditions have arisen in which the emigre revolutionary paper takes on the role of organizer. I strongly urge the leading German comrades to carefully reread the relevant pages of *What Is to Be Done?*

The newspaper must insure, above all, the continuity and uninterrupted development of the political thinking of the Left Opposition. It should, for that purpose, come out regularly regardless of the state of affairs regarding distribution. We began putting out the Russian *Biulleten* without having any communications with Russia. The ideas of the *Biulleten* penetrated into the country by various routes. Even now the situation in regard to the circulation of the *Biulleten* is very poor (this task requires a great deal of attention and great efforts). Nevertheless the *Biulleten* plays a very big role in the political life of the USSR. The same was true of *Iskra* in the old days. Many issues have piled up here outside the country owing to breakdowns in our distribution system. Nevertheless the paper has continued to come out punctually.

You cannot arrange distribution for an illegal paper. Only the illegal paper itself, by winning the interest of readers and gathering supporters, can ultimately create its own distribution system.

To this must be added the question of the emigres, of Austria, of
the Germans in Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, etc. The most important task of all at present, in my opinion, is putting out *Unser Wort* properly. Sending money to Germany makes no sense, because there it will be spent on trifles. Whereas a properly organized paper will become a source for raising money (in addition to everything else).

To go over to a monthly magazine now is premature. The situation has not yet fully defined itself. Everyone is waiting for clarification of the ongoing events. Of course if—by allying ourselves with other groups—we could create a monthly for theoretical discussion in addition to *Unser Wort*, that would be very good. But to abandon a fortnightly newspaper at this time would be impermissible.

What you report about Kurella is very interesting. This is a man who hated the Left Opposition viciously. How are things with the Hamburg comrades? Don’t forget that we are living here now without a “German” present, and that is much worse than not having a Britisher.

Write me about yourself. How are you living? How is your health?

Best regards.

Yours,

L.T.

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**THE DISCUSSION ON GERMANY**

April 21, 1933

Dear Friend:

I am sending you my objections to the documents of the German leadership. Please translate them into German and send them to Germany as soon as possible.

I see, from several indications, that the German comrades are not satisfied with the character of the discussion: it seems to them that there is a desire to impose a decision upon them and that I am taking part in that effort. But from the very beginning I have advocated the broadest and most comradely discussion
possible, without the slightest imposition of views from the top down. The German comrades' complaint that G.G. [Trotsky] has answered purely imaginary arguments is based on sheer misunderstanding. The letter by G.G. was written before any response whatsoever was received from Germany, and it was directed, not against any actual objections, but against possible ones, in order to remove certain misunderstandings a priori, so to speak.

At any rate this experience shows once again how necessary it is for the Secretariat to be cautious in questions involving international differences. I am very unhappy that my article "The Tragedy of the German Proletariat" was not printed with the note that it was intended as a discussion article. That method is much better and healthier for our internal regime.

Are the Stalinists really preparing to call a congress [against fascism] in Copenhagen, or are they simply postponing it to the Greek calends in order never to hold one again? In Paris you can orient yourself on this question more easily.

Best wishes.

Yours,
L.T.

A NUCLEUS OUTSIDE

April 27, 1933

Dear Jan:

I am enclosing an article on the SAP. The article is not intended for the press but for internal bulletins of any kind and for sending in to Germany.

We received two detailed letters from O. [Schuessler] in Prague. Your assumption that he was already in Germany thus proves to have been unfounded. My opinion is that he should not go to Germany until E. [Bauer] has come out. We should never for a minute lose sight of the fact that under the conditions of illegal work the nucleus of the political center must be in exile. If E. does not arrive in time for the plenum, obviously O. should substitute for him (or perhaps Anton [Frankel]?). Of course the German comrades themselves will decide this question. But we should
insist on one thing firmly—that a small but stable political nucleus should always remain outside the country.

Your malaria disturbs me very much. Have you consulted French specialists? If you do not fully regain your ability to work, the Secretariat will not be able to function properly, and that will inevitably undermine its authority. Complaints have come from Czechoslovakia as well as from Austria already about not receiving replies from the Secretariat.

Has an exact date been set for the plenum? Don't forget that Swabeck should be allowed time to leave [from Prinkipo] for Paris.

Today is already the 27th, and there is still no telegram about the arrival of the Hamburg comrade. I await him with great impatience because my German correspondence has begun to pile up.

Other than that, everything is going along at a more or less normal pace. Today the first little red flowers appeared, and in vast numbers.

Get well immediately! Warm regards.

Yours,

L.T.

P.S. The Hamburg comrade just arrived! Everything's in order.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE IS

April 29, 1933

Dear Jan:

This is in reply to your letter of April 23. Your malaria is a great misfortune. You must consult a good specialist no matter what.

1. You complain that the editors of Unser Wort do not answer letters. Otto writes, for his part, that the International Secretariat does not answer its letters. It's impossible to understand anything in this. I think you are giving unreliable addresses, where the letters lie around or get lost. Most countries write care of Raymond. Isn't it possible to find a more inoffensive address? It
is also possible that the complaints about the IS date from the time before you were in Paris.

2. If the plenum is not postponed, I cannot provide any documents for the plenum—much as I would like to.

On the question of the old party and the new party in Germany, the plenum should of course express its opinion but not in such a way that it seems to be giving a direct “order” to the German section. They must be given time to get the feel of the new situation and accustom themselves to the new perspective.

3. As for the technical questions having to do with Germany, they can be solved only on the condition that the newspaper is brought out properly. The situation in Germany is such that the paper must be paid for mainly from resources outside the country. Subscribers and distributors must be obtained for the paper in all German-language countries and wherever there are German emigres. I believe this is entirely possible.

4. The consideration you raise, that the Left Opposition should show more independence and initiative in every country, in particular toward the left Social Democrats, is absolutely correct. As the letter I received from Krieger310 in Austria shows, the Left Opposition inside the Austrian Social Democracy is growing rapidly, and sympathy toward us is increasing in their midst. We must watch for similar developments in other countries. This question must be raised as a special point on the plenum agenda. It must be obligatory for each section to follow closely what is going on inside the Social Democracy in its own country, to establish its own nuclei [inside the Social Democratic party], and to issue appeals, not of an abstract character but geared to the actual internal processes within the Social Democracy. This is a very important question now.

5. I just finished a big article for the Russian Biulleten and the foreign press, “Problems of the Soviet Regime: The Theory of Degeneration and the Degeneration of Theory.” It is being translated into French and German, and will be sent to you tomorrow or the day after.

6. In Germany, the provinces—all of them, not just Leipzig—complain about the leadership in Berlin. These complaints are not very serious. The leadership, under the present circumstances, cannot take very big initiatives; it does not have the people, the funds, or the technical resources. All these things can be built up only gradually on the basis of initiatives taken in the provinces. The local organizations often convert their own impotence into complaints addressed to the center. We must fight
Recommendations to the IS

against that, calling on the local organizations to take initiatives themselves.

7. On the SAP, I have written an article in letter form, which was sent to you in Russian. This piece has not been translated into German here.

I have been told about Thomas's possible trip here, but in extremely unclear form.

For links with the SAP, it seems to me the Secretariat should make use of Neurath, who knows all these people well and has a high degree of interest in attracting them to us.

8. It is good that Goldenberg has come back from the dead. I had gathered together all the material about him (his articles, dissertation, and letters to me) in order to write an obituary about him. It is a pleasure to drop that work. Pass on my greetings if you see him, and my hopes that he will energetically undertake to bring our organizations closer together.

9. What you report about the NOI I find extremely amazing. I have not received any documents about the expulsion of Blasco and the others. On what grounds was this done? From your letter one can draw the conclusion that a break is unavoidable and that the only question is what form it should take. I am astounded in the utmost. I have not heard of any differences in principle. Apparently the basis for the conflict lies in the relations between the NOI and the League. If that is so, we must make serious concessions to the NOI, i.e., allow it not to join the League but to carry on its work completely independently. It seems to me that mistaken statements were made and mistaken steps taken in relation to the NOI and these were bound to offend the sensibilities of the emigre circles especially deeply. These mistakes must be corrected, rather than being deepened and being carried to the point of a split.

10. The successes in South America are very gratifying, but we cannot forget that for the most part South America uses Spanish literature. We should especially direct the attention of all our South American sections to our differences with the Spanish section. It would be good to send them in Spanish my correspondence with Nin and my last two letters dealing with Spanish matters.

Greetings and best wishes.

Yours,

L.T.
A FRENCH VISA AND AN ESSAY ON HERRIOT

April 30, 1933

Dear Comrade Parijanine:

I received your cable with great astonishment. I certainly do not doubt that you had serious reasons to send it, but at the same time I can hardly imagine that the French government, especially the present one, which is seeking Stalin's friendship, would grant me the visa.

For the moment your cable has led me to postpone publishing my article about Mr. Herriot in America. I am sending you this article herewith. From its content, it won't be hard for you to guess the reasons I postpone its publication: if there is wavering about the visa—whether it is to be granted to me—in the leading circles in France, the appearance of this article would without any doubt give new arguments to those opposed to the visa.

On the other hand, I will not conceal from you that I regret the loss of time in writing this article. If according to your latest information the matter of the visa entered a disadvantageous phase or threatened to drag out interminably, I would rather publish my article. In that case I would also like to have it published in France. If you think you could find a place for it somewhere, I would gladly leave it in your care. We will easily come to terms about the translation fees, basing ourselves on the international rate.

I thank you heartily for your solicitude.

Comradely greetings,
A WARNING AND A CRITICISM

May 1, 1933

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

1. The question of the American conference disturbs all the leading European comrades, principally from the same standpoint as that which I attempted to formulate in my official letter. Some comrades are of the opinion that your fraction is a heterogeneous one, as seems usually to be the case with young opposition groups. You must not, dear friend, have any illusion on the score of the division of sympathies in Europe: your group will have the sympathy of the Spanish comrades and of the split-off groups. All our groups will be inclined, after the experiences of the past, to support the Cannon group. I am trying to every extent possible to remain unprejudiced. For that reason I have been already accused, even though unjustly, of indirectly supporting the Shachtman group. Do not have any illusions on this score. I repeat: at the present stage of the internal American struggle, that is, when preponderant political differences have not yet been crystallized, your group will in the eyes of all our sections bear responsibility for any eventual split as well as for the protracted internal struggle. Unintentionally you are burdened with a heavy heritage in Europe: since every group which we have had to combat here made use of your name and in this connection your name became symbolic for all sections. By this I do not at all want to say that this is right. If I were of this opinion I would not oppose with all my energies the sharpening of the struggle within the League and the perspective of a split, because I know that individual tendencies and groupings alter and change greatly.

2. Your position on the trade union question seems to me formalistic. We fought bitterly with Gourget in France not because he wanted to adapt himself to the trade union milieu but because he did not want to subordinate his own activity to the control of the League; and the kind of adaptation must be determined not individually but collectively. It is not a question of unfurling our "banner" in the trade unions once or twice and
precisely because of that disappearing from them, but of gradually winning points of support and thereby gaining the possibility of fully unfurling the banner. That you wanted to prevent the recent trip of Cannon to Illinois seems to me entirely false, even from the standpoint of the factional struggle.315

3. My opinion on the Negro question316 is of an entirely hypothetical nature. I know very little about it and am always ready to learn. I will read your manuscript with great interest.

4. I will try to answer your questions on the history of the Comintern as soon as possible. Unfortunately, I cannot do it right now as I am occupied with matters that absolutely cannot be postponed.

With heartiest greetings.

Yours,
L.D.

TACT, CAUTION, AND FLEXIBILITY317

May 8, 1933

Dear Friend:

Responding to your letter of May 2.

I am happy that we agree on the question of the German paper. This is a very important question. We can and must make the paper rise to the occasion. Circumstances are such that we must set ourselves the goal of converting it into a weekly paper. To be sure, the paper must be reinforced financially, by means of a correct organization of distribution.

It is not clear to me why you propose to change the size [of the pages] of the paper. Given conditions of illegal circulation, this is completely uncalled for. Iskra came out in approximately the same size as Unser Wort; portability depends on the weight of the newsprint and not on the size.

The circumstance that the German leadership, for the present, has spoken out against a new party is a small misfortune: events will work on our side and we will complement the events with criticism. Much worse is the fact that E. [Bauer] and others have
Tact, Caution, and Flexibility

become embittered with the Secretariat, and in general with the foreign sections. The accumulating misunderstanding should be dispersed at all costs. Here the Secretariat must, in my view, display the very greatest flexibility and complete freedom from personal ambition. This experience shows, by the way, how caution is needed in the very formulation of sharp questions: often all of the subsequent character of the discussion depends on how the question was posed from the start itself.

It will have to patiently explain, in a comradely manner, all of the misunderstandings of E., taking into account the exceptionally unnerving situation in which he has to work.

Your report on the slogans of the Stalinists (general strike with the perspective of armed insurrection [in Germany]) is extremely important. These gentlemen are again singing wedding songs at a funeral. For the Canton undertaking they do not have enough forces. But for Sofia, maybe enough. An attempt, in any case, is not excluded. Perhaps I'll have to write about this.

Rudolf [Klement] has already become entirely adjusted to the work. He translates rather well from the Russian. Still slowly for the present, it is true, but he will develop with each new week. In parallel with this, Jean [van Heijenoort] is improving in translations from the Russian to the French. In both these directions we will render still greater assistance from here to the Secretariat. Do you happen to know why the second volume of my History has not been published?

As regards the Copenhagen congress, no excessive expenditures are needed. It would be extremely important to ascertain whether we have anything in Copenhagen and to organize conveyance of mandates.

It is necessary to unfold a serious campaign on behalf of Chen Tu-hsiu. Must write in detail about this to Pierre.

I also believe that our press should devote attention to the trial of Sneevliet. We should maintain friendly relations with them, while there are no political obstacles to this of an immediate character.

Do you happen to know where Urbahns is? Have Maslow and Ruth Fischer arrived in Paris?

Best regards.

Yours,
L.T.

P.S. Just received your letter of May 5 with the enclosure of Italian documents. I have already sent my official proposal for the plenum on the Italian question. If the Secretariat wants to
have authority, then in general it must display the very greatest tact, and in those cases where members of the Secretariat are involved the Secretariat must be ten times more cautious and flexible. The decision which I proposed could create a delay, and the future would then show how serious the disagreements are.

**PARALYZED FINANCIALLY**

Spring 1933

Dear Friend:

I am sending you the letter from the couple that Well recommended to us for settling down in Prinkipo. You remember, I am sure. The man belongs to the scientific community. I’ll send you the most important new publications from here. Enclosed also is a copy of my answer. Of course, if the IS doesn’t agree with my suggestions, please inform those concerned immediately.

It is very clear that the Stalinists want to keep us away from the Copenhagen conference at any cost. Given the new situation, the matter must be considered anew. It is clear that we can send only anonymous, unknown delegates. We have to give up the plan of finding Danes for this. We need rock-solid people in this witch-hunt atmosphere, and in Copenhagen we can count on lukewarm sympathizers at best. What is the situation on this with the SAP, the Sneevliet people, etc.? The IS must consider the matter very carefully and from all sides so that we don’t compromise ourselves.

Could you get me the latest publications of the Brandlerites from Strasbourg and other places?

Best greetings.

Yours,

L.T.

P.S. You ask for a platform on the Russian question for the [projected international] conference. But there already is a platform on the Russian question. As far as I can recall, outside of the lately departed Well, no one has expressed an opinion on it. Thus the only problem is to assess the latest events. The most
essential things have been said in the article "Alarm Signal!" One event or another may yet occur before the conference, and therefore it is better to make the final formulations at the very last moment.

Have the Copenhagen addresses and contacts been found? It turns out that no steps have been taken by anyone thus far to strengthen these ties. That is a big mistake. Denmark can assume great importance for us because of its sea links with Hamburg. It is a very important route. It will be essential for Swabeck to visit Denmark on his way to the United States. He is waiting here for money. The financial crisis cuts into us from every side and paralyzes a goodly part of any undertaking.

But what can one do . . . ?

L.T.

PROBLEMS WITH A PUBLISHER

May 14, 1933

Dear Comrade H.M.:

I am writing to you on a personal matter. I must find a way to approach my German publisher: it seems to me the best way is through Paris. According to Mrs. Pfemfert [Alexandra Ramm], my translator, the publisher, S. Fischer, has owed me five thousand marks for several months. Liova [Leon Sedov]'s impression is quite different, but nevertheless Mrs. Pfemfert insists on the figure of five thousand marks with the utmost certainty: she had received this information from the lips of Dr. Fischer-Bermann himself (he is the old man's son-in-law and the real manager of the firm). You well understand how important this question has become for me. The Pfemferts have tried to make contact with the publisher by correspondence and through Mrs. Pfemfert's sister in Berlin, without success. Fischer has not replied and, it appears, he slipped away before Mrs. Pfemfert's sister could see him. It is not typical of him to evade payment; in this regard, these gentlemen are quite honest. But you can readily understand the great extent to which they are embarrassed by
links with an author whose books are ceremonially burned by the Nazi rabble; nor can relations with Pfemfert in exile increase the standing of a publisher who risks being expropriated of his not inconsiderable wealth.

Under the circumstances I see no other possibility than to send someone “neutral” from the point of view of race, nationality, and political leanings, to do two things: (a) to clarify the money question and bring me back the marks, if there are any, and (b) to smuggle my books out of the country, to be sold in countries where German is spoken. Comrade [Pierre] Frank proposes, and I agree completely, the intervention of Comrade Reiland, the bookseller in Luxembourg: you must know him, at least by name. I would be very happy if you could lend a hand in this matter after talking it over with Liova, who may have some additional information. I am enclosing with this letter two certificates, one in the name of Reiland and the other in blank, so you can insert the name of someone else, if the arrangement with Reiland does not work out. In the text of the certificate I do not mention Fischer’s name, in case the document accidentally falls into the hands of the Nazis. The bearer of the certificate should explain all this to Mr. Bermann or his assistant.

Reiland would also be the ideal person to rescue at least some of my books (the autobiography and especially the two volumes of the History). This question should of course be thought out carefully, and Reiland could even do good business as a bookseller who, in this case, would have a “monopoly” on these three books in the German language. I have not written directly to him, so as not to make it difficult for him to refuse, in the event that personal circumstances might not permit him to be involved in this matter.

Another question, not so serious, but one of some importance to me. It has to do with the steps taken by Parijanine concerning my visa. In recent months I have written two articles for the American press, one on Herriot, the other on Poincare. To be on the safe side, I sent the article on Herriot to Parijanine to ask whether my rather questionable elegy on French statesmen could hurt his efforts in my behalf. Parijanine replied that it would be a catastrophe. Now these two articles are worth several hundred dollars to me. How valuable are Parijanine’s prospects, I don’t really know. Nevertheless, today, with a heavy heart, I am sending a telegram to Eastman: do not publish my articles on Herriot and Poincare. What is your estimate of the efforts of Parijanine? Have you spoken with him? In my first reply to his
altogether friendly initiative I proposed that he conduct this matter in permanent cooperation with you.

I would be very happy to have some news of you and yours.

Warmest greetings,
L. Trotsky

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CONGRESS

May 26, 1933

Dear Jan:

And so the antifascist congress is being transferred to Paris. That is a big windfall. We here are hoping that you have mobilized all forces and that not one mandate will be lost.

I now consider the mobilization of every kind of sympathizing and semi-sympathizing organization most important. Apart from the delegates to the congress, delegations could be organized on special questions. I only fear that it is already too late. . . . Thus, for example, Sneevliet's organization could send a special delegation regarding Rakovsky, Victor Serge, and others, on the one hand, and Chen Tu-hsien, on the other. I fear that the International Secretariat will fail to adequately realize how important it is for us at such a congress not to speak out alone and appear isolated, but to have a certain backing to cover us, at least, on some specific questions. On the question of Victor Serge, at least a small group of French writers should be mobilized. Maybe Monatte, Chambelland, and Company would agree to speak up in one form or another on the question of Rakovsky and Victor Serge. Even without taking part in the work of the congress, they could send a delegation to the congress or, as a last resort, a letter, which could then be published in the press. I think that on the question of Rakovsky and Victor Serge it would be possible to also approach Rosmer and his friends with a proposal to display initiative. There is no need to do this officially. Schwartz [Sedov] or someone else could raise the question in private. Nothing must slip from view in such a critical situation; every additional voice, every contact, every document relating to Rakovsky will strength-
en our position at the congress and beyond the congress and could help ease Rakovsky's fate.

Let me call your attention to the following matter: some kind of hired scoundrels wrote in Rundschau\textsuperscript{324} that T. informed on Dimitrov\textsuperscript{325} as being a participant in the bombing of the Sofia cathedral (something in that vein). It's disgusting even to speak of it. I first wanted to write a polemical note, but aversion to this scum prevented me from writing it. Still, I think that the congress should be utilized in one form or another to brand this system of foul slanders which real informers can make use of.

I have written several times that terrorism and adventurism have come in the wake of the Stalinist bureaucracy's opportunism. The thought in itself is not new. It has long been said that anarchism is retribution for the sins of opportunism. The opportunist, passive politics in 1923 in Germany and Bulgaria alone led to revolutionary adventures in Bulgaria and Estonia in 1924. For political appraisal it makes absolutely no difference who directed the adventurist actions. Only desperate scoundrels could make this into a slanderous charge of informing and connect it with the arrest of Dimitrov in Berlin.

Wishing to hurt me, these people in fact harm Dimitrov. Both the German and Bulgarian prosecutors of course will seize the Stalinists' slander with both hands: look, they will say, T. admits in print that Dimitrov was involved with the bombing of the Sofia cathedral. True, nowhere and never did I or could I say such a thing, because Dimitrov had no relation whatsoever to this matter. But for the prosecutors there is no need to fish out such evidence from my articles; for them, what the Stalinists say about it is sufficient. It is quite likely that the foul slander of the Stalinists is precisely calculated to have such an effect: to whisper to the prosecutor and the White Guard press a reference to T. in the matter of the Sofia cathedral explosion. To be sure, not one White Guard, if he wants to make use of all this garbage, will say, "T., according to the Stalinists, admitted this-and-that and this-and-that." He will simply say, "T. admitted this-and-that," for this will appear much more convincing and useful.

If the Stalinists conduct themselves at all decently at the congress, then of course we have no need to raise so sharp a question at the congress. But it is entirely possible that this whole thing has been specially prepared for the congress. It is necessary to arm ourselves beforehand. Perhaps prepare a small leaflet, etc.

It turns out that until now my letter on the SAP has not been translated into the German. Maybe it was translated in Paris? In
that case, send it quickly to Otto and to Switzerland (for them the question is very important, in connection with Schaffhausen).\textsuperscript{126}

Sh[achtman] has been here for four days. Jean [van Heijenoort] has taken ill and Prof. Gass[in] suggested that he spend several days in the hospital to be diagnosed. Since yesterday afternoon Jean has been in the French hospital [in Istanbul].

Best regards.

Yours,  

L.T.

\textbf{WHAT I WOULD DO IN FRANCE}\textsuperscript{327}

\textit{May 31, 1933}

To Deputy Henri Guernut

Dear Sir:

Some of my friends took the initiative to obtain for me the right to live in France. They were supported by political and literary figures. I am told that you, Mr. Deputy, intervened with energy and authority in this matter. I thank you for it.

I do not think that the difficulty consists of the fact that I was expelled from France in 1917 for my activities during the war. What may disturb the French authorities is the future and not the past. So I want to say frankly: if I come to France, I will remain totally isolated from political activity; I will not intervene in the life of any organizations; I will hold neither conferences nor meetings; as I do here, in Prinkipo, I will regulate my life in a manner that could not give any anxiety to the authorities in charge of public order.

My intentions are quite simple: to get medical care for my wife and myself; to have the opportunity to use the treasures of the French libraries; to read the French and English newspapers, not four or five days after they appear, but the very same day; and to pursue my literary work.

My best regards,  

Leon Trotsky
Dear Friend:

Many thanks for your letter of June 23. Now in haste: Henri will be leaving soon.

I want to raise only one question: Don’t you think that Scholze is basically right, i.e., that under the present circumstances, the only possibility for political existence lies in fraction work in the Social Democracy, at least in the German Social Democracy? The facts you report, excerpts from letters, etc., speak eloquently for this conclusion. This question must be answered—without prejudice—on the basis of calm political consideration. It goes without saying that we need good cadres for this kind of maneuver. But cadres that are not sufficiently trained will leave us anyway when they come under fire. Isn’t it better to have a sympathizing opposition in the Social Democracy? Think it over, calmly and seriously.

Poor Lenorovics... Let’s hope that he’ll be on his feet again soon. Does he, perhaps, need some money? Give him my warmest greetings!

With a friendly embrace,
Your Old Man
INTERVIEW BY ALICE HUGHES

July 4, 1933

1. Hitler won a big victory over the German proletariat. Both leading workers' parties, the Social Democrats and the Communists, suffered destruction. But the proletariat of Germany, as before, remains the main factor in the economy and for progress. Hitler can neither defeat the workers nor annihilate them. Fascism does not eliminate social contradictions. By clamping down on them, it allows them to accumulate and thus prepares an explosion. While in words National Socialism undertakes the task of dissolving all classes, parties, and groups, in practice it is educating the popular masses in the spirit of ruthless civil war. Fascist reaction can prolong itself for several years, but the revenge of the working class is inescapable.

2. Today Hitler cannot make war: Germany is disarmed, and the Nazis are armed only for civil war. Hitler can arm Germany only with the aid of Italy and England. He hopes to earn his right to their aid by stepping forth in the capacity of a guardian of Europe against Bolshevism. In this sense Hitler's entire policy is oriented against the Soviet Union. Can one consider the danger of war imminent? That depends on the amount and on the timing of the aid which Hitler succeeds in enlisting from London.

3. In July 1914 the key to the situation was in the hands of England. If her government had categorically emphasized its neutrality or, on the other hand, had warned in advance that it would intervene on the side of France and Russia, the war would have been postponed, if not avoided. But during critical days the government of Great Britain preferred to say neither yes nor no, and thus pushed both sides toward war.

The key to the European situation is also held now, for the most part, in the hands of the London cabinet. Its refusal to assume the "firm" and decisive position of a potential combatant expresses this time too the urge to say neither yes nor no, and, in this way, to preserve in its hands the key to a future war.

4. It seems completely clear to me that the meaning of the policy of the United States for the immediate future of Europe
flows from these general conditions. The more open and categori­
cal a position Washington takes, the more greatly restricted is the
margin for London's ambiguous maneuvers and their disastrous
consequences. The immediate restoration of normal relations
between the United States and the Soviet Union would mean, in
addition, that the scales would be heavily tilted toward peace.

5. Questions about the Soviet economy are so complicated that
one could respond to them for the rest of the interview. A critique
of the economic policy of Stalin's faction is given in a series of
works of the Left Opposition, in part, in the outstanding articles
by my friend C.G. Rakovsky, the former president of the Soviet
of People's Commissars of the Ukraine, later Soviet ambassador
to London and Paris. Irrespective of the fact that Rakovsky's
articles were written by him in exile, where he still remains, and
were disseminated in single handwritten copies, they have more
than once shown influence on official policy.

The fundamental errors of the ruling faction (they are very
grave) flow from the fact that it is attempting, by means of the
bureaucratic apparatus, to replace the initiative, creativity and
critical thinking of the working masses. Collectivization is the
only means of rescue for the peasants, for agriculture, for the
country. But in the area of collectivization, as in all other areas,
only the conscious creativity of the masses themselves—and not
bureaucratic orders—can give firm conquests. The disagreements
between the Opposition and the ruling faction are very sharp and
have exceptional practical importance, but they concern those
foundations which were laid by the October Revolution and the
Soviet regime.

To turn Russia from a soviet regime backwards toward capital­
ism could happen only by way of a vast and bloody counterrevo­
lution, which, in turn, could not be accomplished without a
military intervention—to be sure, on the condition that the
intervention would prove to be victorious. An intervention would
mean a terrible blow for the economy and culture not only of the
Soviet Union, but of all of Europe, even the whole world. This
also explains the striving of the Soviet government to avoid war
in the West, as in the East. If, however, Hitler takes the
opportunity to carry out a trial intervention, then—personally I
do not doubt this for a minute—it would end in the ruin of
National Socialism.
Dear Jan:

It is very difficult to give advice in matters concerning the IS. In any case, I would advise very strongly against calling a new plenum without pressing political or organizational reasons. It costs time and money. And when such an undertaking achieves no practical results, it only creates dissatisfaction with the Secretariat. If it is desired to change the composition of the Secretariat, have the comrades in question in Paris come to an agreement and secure the assent of the comrades abroad in writing. There are representatives of four national sections in Paris. The Belgian representative is quite close by. Erwin [Bauer] is traveling abroad and will probably go to Paris (he'll be here the day after tomorrow). That is completely sufficient for restructuring the Secretariat if it proves to be necessary. Perhaps it would be best to leave everything as is until Erwin arrives in Paris.

I do not mean to say that the situation is satisfactory. Quite the opposite. As far as I can judge by the correspondence with the various sections, it seems to me that the situation is very much in need of reform. But premature, unprepared reforms often make the situation worse.

I can understand Raymond's concern about the printshop very well. But one could proceed very cautiously and vouchsafe the undertaking in advance through an agreement with our Bohemian friends and with the German comrades (printers) who are inclined to invest a certain sum in the undertaking. Let us hope that Erwin will be able to give us definite word about this.

Yesterday, a telegram arrived concerning the granting of a French visa. Van went to the French consulate today. The business seems to be on more solid ground than the Czech visa, although I don't consider it to be settled once and for all. The
journey will also involve considerable difficulties. But we hope these will be overcome in one way or another. So it is possible that we will see each other soon.

With cordial greetings.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

SOUTHERN FRANCE AND CORSICA

July 7, 1933

Dear Comrade H. M.:

I have received your two telegrams as well as Parijanine's. Your latest one gives details: temporary stay in southern France, and permanent stay in Corsica. Those important successes, like any success, create new problems.

To go from here to southern France for two or three months would mean roughing it without my archives, etc., and great moving expenses for the luggage, etc. To the extent that it can be anticipated, given our very placid and quiet life, it would naturally be more reasonable to go directly to the continent, if we could obtain the authorization to remain there, but we cannot be sure of that beforehand.

Another consideration: the French Stalinists will be very agitated when they hear about the liberal gesture of the French government. Stalin will force the French party to create some resounding scandal at any price. His aim would be clear: to prove to the French government the great disadvantage of having us in France; even if the French government were disposed to tolerate [the prolongation of] our stay in southern France, some scandalous demonstration could force them to cut it short.

All this seems to point to going directly to Corsica. Natalia, who needs immediate medical treatment, could go to the continent one or two weeks after our arrival. Maybe I could rejoin her one or two months later, if things went well. I would have the books and the most necessary materials in Corsica to continue my work, which is a necessary condition to insure our existence there.
I do not forget the advantages of the continent over Corsica: twelve hours away! If you think that we could set ourselves up in some part of southern France, remote enough to prevent the possibility of Stalinist (or White Russian) scandals, that our temporary stay could certainly be transformed into a permanent one, and that, consequently, we could also send the heavy luggage (books and archives) to the continent, this would naturally be the most favorable solution. But it seems to me rather questionable, and if I mention it, it is in order to present all the possibilities.

If we decide in favor of Corsica, we must prepare an itinerary. We know about the difficulties of going through Marseilles. Is it possible to go directly from Istanbul to Corsica? Through Italy? (Van states that it is very complicated and probably impossible.) Maybe we could make a deal with the French company for the ship to let us get off at Corsica in a motorboat. All this seems to me very complicated. On the other hand, going through Marseilles may turn out to be much less advantageous than it was seven months ago: the police are not obliged to give us their motorboats. They may very well apply their method: non-interference. What do you think about it?

And how to settle in Corsica? Should we rent an isolated country-house beforehand? Who will do it? And how? Or should we move into a hotel and begin looking?

I would like to send some money to Paris for the initial expenses. But now, unfortunately, with the new restrictions on exchange, we can only send some twenty-five lires from here. . . . I will try to send some money from London (Manchester Guardian) to Paris and I will also write to New York, but this last channel is rather slow.

All these questions and the difficulties they entail mean that our departure from here will be neither tomorrow, nor even the day after, even if we had received the visa. We will explain to the consulate that we will use the authorization only after all the necessary preparations have been made by our friends in France. For the moment, we still do not have the visa. Van came to terms with the consul, to request the answer by telegram; we will cover the expenses. Tomorrow, on his way from the consulate, Comrade Van will cable you.
DANGERS THREATENING THE CLA

July 10, 1933

[Trotsky expresses his thanks for a letter of June 27 and for efforts concerning his article. Mentions that he has sent Eastman a new article, “What Is National Socialism?” in Russian. Since Eastman lives outside the city, he is concerned about the handling of the article and in any case is sending along an English translation. He announces that he will be sending an article, “Japan Heads for Disaster,” in a few days.

[Reports on the unexpected granting of a French visa for medical treatment and for eventual residence in Corsica. He asks that the news not be made public.]

In any case this means a big change in our mode of existence. We hope that we will set out in a week. I believe it will be much easier to get an American visa once we are looked upon as “welcome” in France. . . .

Now on internal questions in the League. To begin with, I must tell you that for months I have warmly sympathized with the plan to move the headquarters to Chicago. As things now stand, the League is surely headed for extinction. We cannot mark time interminably and devote the greatest part of our energies to the internal struggle. Unless a really heroic turn is made, even a third group will not help. Despite its best intentions, it can become a new element of divisiveness. There are examples enough of this in the past. Of course the great leap Cannon is proposing involves risks. Great dangers cannot be circumvented without risk. The New York organization will after all remain in New York and it follows that it will have to exhaust all the great possibilities that New York has to offer. Even if Cannon is guided by factional considerations, that doesn’t change anything: his factional considerations are driving him in a progressive direction. And if his group recruits new miners in order to strengthen itself, so much the better. In New York the faction fight consists of each faction sabotaging the other. If the center is moved to Chicago, the struggle will be transformed into a contest. And this is a step forward.

[He continues on the important question of a mass paper and}
New Questions Will Produce New Alignments

*the preparations for such a paper.* But everything that is happening now is only a preparation for extinction.

Even if you have great reservations about the practical results of Cannon's initiative, in my opinion you cannot restrain him. In this situation I personally would say: The present situation is intolerable. Cannon wants to make an attempt in a new and progressive direction. We have reservations about the method of carrying out this initiative, but we want to make it easier to carry out, not more difficult.

NEW QUESTIONS WILL PRODUCE NEW ALIGNMENTS

July 12, 1933

Dear Comrade Glotzer:

I want to write you again about the very dangerous situation in the [American] League. The crisis is typical of the transition from one stage of development into another. But there have been examples in the history of human society when the crisis of transition became so acute, and absorbed so much strength, that society, instead of marching forward, collapsed. The same result has been observed, much more frequently, in the history of political organizations. I am afraid that a similar fate threatens the League.

Everybody accepted the resolution of the plenum of the International Secretariat. But nothing has changed. I do not contend that the blame for this rests with any one individual or with either of the two groups. The situation is such that without new factors or methods, the automatics of the internal struggle will paralyze the best will. Comrade Cannon proposes a radical change in the character of the work, beginning with transfer of the seat of the National Committee. Comrade Shachtman showed me your letter on this question and expressed some doubts on his own part to the proposition. It is naturally impossible to assert that the proposal is a panacea. Everything depends upon the material efforts in the new direction. But the proposals open up a perspective containing new possibilities, and can become salu-
tary under certain conditions, especially if they receive general support.

The very fact of the transfer of the center into a new milieu and into a new atmosphere will have a favorable effect. The most disturbing point of friction lies in the relations between the National Committee and the New York branch. The transfer of the center will signify that the New York branch will become, to a certain degree, more independent, but at the same time it will be charged with more responsibility. Its energy must be concentrated around revolutionary tasks in the great field of its activity. On the other hand, the National Committee will devote the greater part of its time and energy to directing the work among the miners and the working masses in general.

Even should the work—in New York as well as in Chicago—be actuated to a great degree by factional motives, it would nevertheless not have a disintegrating effect upon the League. Quite the contrary. By winning over new worker elements, it can change entirely the present complexion of the struggle, the internal atmosphere in the League. New tasks will engender new political questions, and new questions will produce new alignments. And that would be the real salvation.

Some comrades say, quite sincerely, that the League is not prepared for such a radical change in its activity (the transfer of the National Committee, the new popular paper, the mass clubs, etc.). But what is meant by “preparation?” On the existing basis, the continuous preparing of a change is only the preparing for death. There are situations in which a hazardous step is unavoidable. I do not deny that there is some danger in the radical change, but it is impossible to avoid a great danger without any danger.

All the other considerations (New York is the center of political life, of the party, the printing plant question, etc.) are of secondary importance. The League does not desert New York, for the New York branch continues to function there, and let us hope it will extend and deepen its activities. The latest experiences of the Comintern throughout the world show that we must turn our face more in the direction of the masses than of the party. The printing plant question is a technical one and must be subordinated to the political one.

I know from your letter that you personally agree with the idea of the transfer to Chicago and I am glad to learn this. But it is quite necessary that all your friends who take a position against the moving should understand that by such a purely negative
stand they will inevitably bar the road to the way out, and compromise their own group.

This letter is a purely personal one, but you may, if you find it advisable, show it to your friends. I have not consulted the International Secretariat about the questions involved, but I believe that my views move along the lines of the latest decision of the Secretariat.

My best greetings to you and the other friends.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

FULL-TIME STAFF

July 30, 1933

Dear Comrade E.B.:

I am eager to clarify a misunderstanding about the IS and its full-time staff. I must have misunderstood Comrade Jan [Frankel], because I was sure that his proposal concerning your candidacy as permanent secretary was a proposal already discussed and accepted by the members of the IS and, in general, by the most responsible comrades. I consequently agreed to it, without hesitation. But now I learn that the proposal comes completely on the personal initiative of Comrade Jan and that there is a great danger it might be taken as a repudiation of the present members of the IS. That would be fatal and would aggravate the situation instead of improving it, let alone your personal situation. The present full-time staff member is Comrade Blasco, who during recent weeks has made great efforts in activity (correspondence, etc.). Since there was always a struggle between the League and the IS over who would have Comrade Blasco (this conflict developed in Comrade Blasco as well), I thought that Blasco himself had definitely made up his mind in favor of the League, and that everyone agreed that your candidacy was the only chance of salvation. But I repeat that the situation presented itself here completely differently. The misunderstanding happened because of the feverish conditions of our
departure, at a time when we discussed political questions between two suitcases and two trips. I still have not seen a single one of the comrades from the IS. At any rate, it is obvious that we will not be able and must not undertake anything without being in full agreement with them. I do not doubt that you will share the same opinion: I remember very clearly our conversations before you left.

I hope to be able to see you shortly, after you have learned about the situation; we will then discuss the matter with full knowledge of the case. For the moment, I only wanted to eliminate any possible misunderstanding.

A DECISIVE TURN IS NECESSARY AND URGENT336

July 31, 1933

Dear Comrade Naville:

I have started to read your important work (draft theses) with the greatest interest. Since Raymond [Molinier] is leaving in a few hours and we still have to discuss with him and a few others, I will not be able to finish reading it, not to mention formulate my criticisms (if they are necessary). I only want to call your attention to one point: the faction and the party. You will receive my theses on this question through Raymond. I believe that a decisive turn is absolutely necessary and urgent. We have already lost a little time, myself included, because of the visa, the trip, etc. I would like to see my theses presented in opposition to yours at any price on this main point. The first two lines of your theses state: "The Communist League in France pursues the task of [building a] proletarian communist leadership." This is already the formulation of the party, at least more that of the party than that of the faction. Won't you find it possible, in the second part, which is not published yet, to raise the question openly as debatable or in need of revision: faction or party?

In my theses I spoke mostly of the Comintern as follows: we
must totally break from the corrupted and ignorant clique which identifies itself with the Communist International. I emphasize, at the same time, the necessity to adapt this new orientation to the different countries, according to national conditions. Those two points may very well constitute the bridge between your theses and mine, on the condition of course that we agree on the essence of the question itself: the necessity to break from the "Comintern" and to create new parties—through different procedures, at different paces, etc.

If the second part of your theses comes out with the above-outlined changes, my theses will appear as the introduction in the discussion already opened by yours, and the international conference could sanction the new fundamental orientation.

I hope to see you and to discuss all of the burning questions with you. My warmest greetings to Comrade Denise, to Gerard, to all our friends, and to you.

All the best,
L.T.

BARBUSSE'S CYNICISM

July 31, 1933

Dear Comrade Mougeot:

I have just received my mail from Constantinople, Marseilles, etc., and I find in this bundle your very amiable letter and your correspondence with Barbusse. One meets with a good many specimens of the political cynic in life, especially among intellectuals of the uppermost "elite," but really I cannot help being struck by the example of Barbusse. This man who has fraternized with Vandervelde, Renner and others in his Monde declares us to be "counterrevolutionary," and a rather intimate discussion—presumably an enjoyable one for him—with the State Publishing House of the USSR. But so much for that.

My son has informed me of your doubts and misgivings about the story of my relations with Rosmer. One is never impartial when dealing with a conflict to which one has been party, but I think Rosmer would be well advised to show our correspondence
to friends whom he wishes to inform about the true development of the conflict. It would give you a chance to form your own opinion as to how the blame is really shared.

Now that I am in France, I hope we will be able to meet; I would be very happy to see you.

My best regards.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

A PLENUM IS NEEDED TO DEAL WITH THE PARIS CONFERENCE

August 7, 1933

The entire worldwide workers’ movement has reached a critical stage. The old, powerful organizations of the proletariat have been destroyed. It is completely clear that this objective historic turn cannot fail to affect the policies of the Left Opposition. To be sure, it is not a question of our programmatic and strategic principles, which remain unshakeable, but of our tactics and organizational methods, and above all our attitude toward the Comintern.

Our situation as a “faction” expelled from the Comintern could not continue indefinitely. We have always been fully aware of this. Either a change in the policies and regime of the Comintern had to open up the possibility of our rejoining the ranks of its national sections; or, on the other hand, the further degeneration of the Comintern would confront us with the task of creating new parties and a new International.

We have always placed this question in the context of great historic events which would inevitably subject the Stalinist Comintern to a decisive test. Examples of such events have been alluded to more than once in our literature—a new international war, which would measure the vigor and combativity of the Comintern; an attempted counterrevolution in the USSR; an overt fascist attempt to seize power in Germany, etc. Of course, no one could predict which of these events would occur first, what
the dimensions of the bankruptcy of this or that section would be, or what influence that bankruptcy would exert upon other sections and upon the Comintern as a whole, etc., etc. That is why our prognosis could have only a conditional, provisional, and noncategorical character.

To be sure, no one can doubt that if the counterrevolution should succeed in overthrowing Soviet power, the Stalinist bureaucracy would disintegrate completely throughout the world within twenty-four hours. Fortunately, that is still a long way off. The resilience of the Soviet regime, despite the disastrous policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy, is very great. And today, as yesterday, it would be criminal to abandon in advance the hope that the Soviet regime will survive despite all difficulties until the advent of the proletarian revolution in the West. In any case, it is in this direction that we must, as before, bend all of our efforts.

As things turned out, the Comintern has been subjected to the decisive test not on the question of the Soviet Union or on the war question but on the question of its capacity to resist fascism. This test took place in Germany, the country with the largest proletariat and the strongest Communist Party. Before the event there could not be the slightest doubt that the result of this test would be of decisive importance—and moreover not only for the German Communist Party, but for the Comintern as a whole. In the first place, the German Communist Party acted under the immediate leadership of the Comintern; secondly, the fascist danger has an international character, and thus the fate of the other sections, as well as of the Comintern as a whole, depends in an immediate sense upon the conclusions they are capable of drawing from the German events.

At first, our German comrades opposed launching the call for a new party. But the situation inside the official party, its attitude toward the catastrophe, its political slogans, its internal regime, have already shown very rapidly that despite the revolutionary devotion of many of the lower echelon functionaries, the party is moving inevitably toward an utter catastrophe; because, as the example of Italy shows, the conditions of illegal work punish a false policy ruthlessly and quite rapidly.

Having recognized the necessity and the timeliness of the call for a new party in Germany, our German section, through Comrade Bauer, has posed first and foremost the question of revising our attitude toward the Comintern as a whole. In any case, Comrade Bauer’s voice was not an isolated one. Ever since the moment when the presidium of the Comintern responded to
the German catastrophe with the disgraceful resolution of April 5341 and with the masquerade congress [against fascism] of Muenzenberg-Barbusse, the comrades in many sections—if not in all—have begun, with redoubled urgency, to pose the question of the necessity of revising our attitude toward the Comintern as a whole. Naturally, the fate of the Stalinist parties in Austria and Bulgaria has removed from the agenda the question of “reforming” these parties. Certain Swiss comrades have predicted that the Swiss Communist Party will disappear from the scene along with the German Communist Party. The political bureau of our Greek section has posed the question of the need for calling for an independent party.

It can be said with certainty that the time for revising our attitude toward the Comintern is ripe not only objectively, but subjectively as well. Nevertheless, the stumbling block for many comrades remains the question of the USSR. Since we have closely linked the fate of the Comintern to the fate of the USSR in all of our previous propaganda, our adversaries could attempt to interpret our organizational break with the Comintern as a kind of break with the Soviet state. It has already been explained above why such an interpretation is completely false. The fact is that the Soviet state, despite all its bureaucratic perversions and its false economic policy, remains even today the state where land, industry, and factories are socialized, and where the peasant economy is collectivized. At the same time, the Comintern has lost all of its revolutionary strength and has revealed its complete inability to regenerate itself. It is not that the collapse of the Soviet state has pulled the Comintern down with it; on the contrary, the collapse of the Comintern threatens to drag the Soviet state down after it. Thus, the formation of new communist parties and of a new communist International becomes ever more pressing, not only from the point of view of the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat in the capitalist countries, but also from the point of view of the welfare, preservation, and regeneration of the USSR. This manner of posing the question is not a figment of the imagination. It flows from the actual course of events, which in reality never coincides and cannot coincide with theoretical prognostications.

The more rapidly our sections examine the question with all its implications, the more decisively they will proclaim the necessity for a break with the bureaucratic Comintern and the more fully will we be able to develop our work. The consequences of a great catastrophe unfold very quickly, raise new questions, and de-
mand a clear response. Above all, this applies to the development of the left Socialist organizations. They are also under the pressure both of the most recent events and of the masses, which impels them to seek the road toward political clarity. We can and must play an important part in this process and assist the left Socialist organizations in finding the truly Bolshevik path.

On August 27 in Paris there will be a conference of left Socialist organizations at which our voice too must make itself heard. It would be hopeless and reactionary sectarianism to demand of these organizations that they declare themselves a faction of the doomed Stalinist Comintern. Presenting the matter in that way would only give the most conservative leaders of these organizations the opportunity to compromise us in the eyes of their followers as hopeless sectarians. Our policy must have a totally different character. In complete conformity with the overall situation, we must state that the differences over the Comintern are now settled. The necessity for a new international organization is absolutely evident. We are fully prepared to collaborate in a comradely way and even to unite with all organizations and groups that really want to construct an International on the foundations laid by Marx and Lenin. By removing past differences in this manner, we shall be able to place the principles of the Left Opposition with all of their implications before the left Socialist organizations. This will undoubtedly permit us to take a great stride forward.

In view of the exceptional weight of the decisions that will have to be made, the Secretariat considers it imperative to convene the plenum with the least possible delay in order to elaborate detailed instructions for the direction of our delegation at the conference of left Socialist and Communist organizations. Obviously, the instructions of the plenum will have only a preliminary character in view of the fact that our entire international organization will not have had the opportunity to express itself in the short time remaining. The final decision on our new orientation will have to be made by our international conference.
August 8, 1933

Dear Comrades:

I want to address a few remarks to you on the first part of your theses for the coming national convention.

The theses assign the French League the task of "communist leadership of the proletariat," at the beginning of the first paragraph, and the last sentence of the last paragraph of the same part states that the League shoulders "heavy responsibilities in organizing the great party... of the proletariat." This is the road for the new party, but between these two very important and quite clear statements are to be found a certain number of repetitions of the reform formula. This means that on this essential point the theses are contradictory: while opening the way to a new stage of our development, they still contain a good quantity of reminiscence of the past. I think the latter ought to be eliminated, with the necessary explanations.

The question is posed in this way: given the lessons the French CP has drawn from the German debacle, is it capable of playing a revolutionary role against the threat of fascism in France? On the contrary, shouldn't we take it as already proven that the French Stalinist party will paralyze and demoralize the proletarian vanguard in France in an even more miserable way than the German section did in Germany?

The theses say (at the end of the second column) that it is necessary not to "jump over" the party, and this is correct, but what this means is that as long as the party exists and carries out a certain number of activities, we should always take it into account as well as orienting ourselves in practice in relation to this activity. This implies above all the application of the united front in every appropriate situation, but it in no way obliges us—after the German catastrophe and the reaction of the French party—to decide that the latter could be reformed.

And even if one could admit that the French CP could be regenerated, there remains the weighty question of the Communist International itself—and not as an arithmetical sum of its...
national sections. Do we have any right at all, after the German experience, to say that it is possible to regenerate this ossified apparatus with all its errors and crimes? This decisive question, because it is not concerned with national sections, is not answered in your theses.

As regards the national sections, your theses say that the question of the new party “is now posed in Germany,” in Austria, and in Bulgaria, but I think that it is posed, in varying forms and with varying sharpness, in all countries, and that “the nub of this question is the Hotel Lux in Moscow.”

Your theses condemn the idea of a new Communist party as presented by democrats, independents, etc., because these are only “left Social Democrats.” “Our only concern is the great party necessary for the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat,” as the theses quite correctly say; in them, you condemn—and I join you—the sterile projects of Souvarine and Company, not because of the slogan itself but because of the reformist content of their projects.

I do not think that we have differences of principle or method on this question. The underlying ideas you express are the same. You want to open the door to meet the same needs, but you make concessions to our past and to the inevitable conservatism of political thought, like that of all human thought. Such concessions, even if they are only of the purest kind, can become quite dangerous when we need to concentrate all our forces for a decisive turn.

The necessary changes which I am proposing follow from what is said above.
In February 1929 my wife and I arrived in Turkey. On July 17, 1933, we left Turkey for France. The newspapers wrote that the French visa was granted to me as a result of an appeal—by the Soviet government! It would be hard to dream up a more fantastic tale. The initiative in this friendly intervention was taken, in fact, not by Soviet diplomacy, but by the writer Maurice Parijane, translator of my books into French. With support coming from a number of writers and left political figures, including the deputy Guernut, the question of my visa this time was resolved favorably. During the three-and-a-half years of my third exile there was no shortage of attempts on my part and on that of my well-wishers to win access for myself to Western Europe. A fair-sized album could be compiled of the refusals we have received. Among the signatures that would show up on the pages of such an album are those of the Social Democrat Hermann Mueller, chancellor of the Weimar Republic; British prime minister MacDonald, who at that time was still a socialist and not yet a semi-Conservative; the republican and Socialist leaders of the Spanish revolution; and many, many others. There is not the slightest suggestion of rebuke in these words: they are simply a statement of fact.

The possibility of France arose after the recent [May 1932] elections, won by a bloc of Radicals and Socialists. The matter was complicated in advance, however, by the circumstance that in 1916, during the war, I was expelled from France “forever” by the minister of internal affairs, Malvy, allegedly for spreading “pacifist” propaganda, but in fact at the insistence of the czarist ambassador Izvolsky. Despite the fact that Malvy himself, about a year later, was expelled from France by the Clemenceau government—in his case, too, on charges of “pacifist activity”—the order for my permanent exclusion from the country remained in force. In 1922, Edouard Herriot, during his first visit to Soviet
Russia, and while saying goodbye to me after a courtesy visit to the Commissariat of War, asked me when I thought I might visit Paris. I reminded him jokingly of my expulsion from France. “But who would remember something like that now!” he replied with a laugh. However institutions have stronger memories than individuals. Landing in the port of Marseilles, after leaving the Italian steamship, I countersigned an official paper handed me by an inspector of the Surete General giving notice that the 1916 order had been rescinded. I must say that it has been a long time since I signed an official document with such a feeling of gratification.

If the basic course of a person’s life departs from the orbit of the average, then all episodes touching upon it, even the most banal, take on a touch of mystery. The newspapers have made many ingenious guesses about why my wife and I travel under the “pseudonym” Sedov. In fact, that is my wife’s name, not a pseudonym. Under Soviet law a passport may be issued, according to one’s wishes, to the name of either partner. Our Soviet passport was made out in 1929 in my wife’s name, as the one that would provide least cause for “sensation.”

In order to avoid any demonstrations or complications in disembarking at Marseilles, my French friends decided to come out by motorboat to meet the steamship at sea. Out of this simple plan new complications arose. The owner of the motorboat, the worthy Mr. Panchetti, who was not given prior notice of the purpose of the trip, could not sleep all night: he was wracking his brains over why two young men would want to take a boat out at dawn, without even any women. He had no experience of such a thing. Moreover, there was a trial going on in Toulon at that very time involving two bandits who had killed a boatman out at sea and taken his property. Even though he was obligated by the deposit he had accepted, Mr. Panchetti resolved not to make the dangerous trip: at the most critical moment he announced that the motor would not work. There was no chance of finding another boatman nearby at that hour. Only by the intervention of the inspector from the Surete, who gave assurances of the young men’s peaceful intentions, was the situation saved. The boatman repented of his suspicions and proceeded to bring the passengers from the steamship in to shore, far from the harbor. The two modest Fords awaiting us there were soon transformed by the press into “high-powered getaway cars.”

The same newspapers wrote that we were met in Marseilles and escorted through France by innumerable police. In fact, besides
the inspector—who calmed down the boatman, officially informed me of the rescinding of the ban on my presence in France, and then immediately withdrew—we did not encounter a single policeman. In order to convey what a delight it was for me to travel through the south of France in a car without any guard and free of surveillance, I should point out that since 1916, that is, for the past sixteen years—not to mention earlier periods of my life—I had not been able to go anywhere without being accompanied by a “guard,” sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile, but always a bodyguard.

But we have not said a word about the most important thing: the purpose of our trip to France. The purpose could not of course be medical care, or the richly stocked libraries, or the other benefits of French culture. No, there has to be some other, “real,” carefully hidden aim. The day after arriving we learned from the papers that our trip to France was undertaken in order to—meet Litvinov. I rubbed my eyes: Litvinov? From the same papers I learned for the first time that the people’s commissar of foreign affairs was at a French health resort. Furthermore, the most perceptive of the journalists do not want to leave us in the dark on why exactly this meeting was needed. It seems that recently I have been completely overwhelmed by a longing to die in Russia and be buried in my native soil. To tell the truth, I had thought, until now, that the question of where and how I would be buried was the least of my worries. Frederick Engels, whom I’ve always considered one of the most appealing of human personalities, asked in his will to be cremated and to have the urn with his ashes buried at sea. If anything about this request surprised me, it was not Engels’s indifference to his native soil of Wuppertal but the fact that he took the time to think at all about how his remains would be disposed of. Why precisely at sea? But the perspicacity of the press is unrelenting. Today again I read about my attempt to win readmission to the Soviet Union—through Litvinov and, now, Surits, the Soviet ambassador to Turkey, who also turns out to be at the Royat health resort. Both diplomats, however, absolutely refused to meet with me, and this was the “hardest blow of my life.” And well it might be!

Litvinov is surely no less astounded than I at the thought that I might try to negotiate my return to Russia precisely through him. Such questions are decided in Moscow, through party channels exclusively, and Litvinov has not played any role in the party apparatus since long before the October Revolution. Under the Soviet regime he has never gone beyond purely diplomatic work.
The reference to Surits in this context is even more painfully wide of the mark. This entire business—if the perspicacious journalists will pardon my saying so—is a model of pathetic claptrap. I was not in Royat and I did not try to see Litvinov. I had not the slightest reason to do so.

One might write an instructive study about the tortuous paths by which truth finds its way through the press. In modern warfare, in order to kill a single individual, quite a few tons of iron are needed. How many tons of metal type are needed to establish the truth of one or another fact? The press's error in the present case is that it sought mystery where there was none. My attitude toward the present Soviet government is no secret: since my deportation to Turkey I have commented every month in the *Biulleten Oppozitsii* (Berlin, Paris), as well as in the press of other languages, on questions of Soviet domestic and foreign policy. Along with my cothinkers I have often stated publicly in the press that each of us is ready as before to serve the Soviet state in any capacity. But our cooperation cannot be obtained on condition of our renouncing our ideas or the right to criticize. Nevertheless, for the ruling group, everything is reduced to that question. It has squandered all of its authority. Totally incapable of renewing its authority by a normal party congress, this clique requires ever newer and ever louder acknowledgments of its infallibility. But that is one thing they can never expect from us. Honest collaboration, yes! Covering up for their wrong policies in the face of Soviet and world public opinion, no! Given such clearly defined positions on both sides, there could be no reason to disturb the summer holiday of the people's commissar of foreign affairs.

Until recently our family thought of a fire as something remote that happened to other people, like a volcano erupting or a ship sinking at sea or the ups and downs of the stock market. But after the January 1931 fire in the villa we lived in on Prinkipo—in which everything was destroyed without a trace remaining, books, clock, clothing, linen, shoes—the concept of a fire became an intimate part of our lives. Just a few months later, one unhappy day our new quarters were suddenly filled with choking fumes of smoke, and everyone began to rush about the house looking for the source; finally we discovered a small bonfire blazing away in the cellar. The initiator of the enterprise turned out to be my six-year-old grandson, who had diligently gathered some sawdust, sticks, and old rags and had successfully ignited
this highly flammable material. Not without some difficulty and alarm, we succeeded in putting out the fire—to the chagrin of its builder.

Traveling through France by automobile, we noticed a big forest fire in the distance. "Too bad it's so far away," said one of our companions, "it would be a marvelous sight!" The others shook their heads in reproach: What would a farmer think of such an aesthetic attitude toward fire? We had not been in our new quarters more than a few hours when the July wind, already hot enough, became unbearable. The large vacant lot adjoining our villa was covered with smoke and flame. The dried grass was burning; so were the bushes. And driven by a steady breeze, a strip of fire some hundred meters wide was moving directly toward our cottage. The wooden picket fence strung with barbed wire caught fire. Flames penetrated into the yard around the house, burned the grass, burned the bushes, which flared up brightly, but then the fire broke in two and went around the house. A wooden summer house burst into flame violently. The villa was filled with smoke. Everyone rushed around to get things out of the house. The fire department of the nearby town was called, but they were slow in arriving. We abandoned the cottage, considering it doomed. But a miracle happened: the direction of the wind changed slightly; the fire hesitated along the gravel driveway, and began to move off to the side, away from the villa. By the time the firefighters arrived the fire was out. But even now as I write these lines the burnt odor still hangs in the air about the house. . . .

In any case, at least it was a French fire. The Turkish chapter of our life is now in the past. The island of Prinkipo has become a memory.
Dear Friend:

I believe that it is necessary to make a slight change in our plan concerning the [Paris] conference; of course, only in the purely technical side. To prepare a programmatic document for this conference, encompassing all the questions of our epoch, would amount to firing blank cartridges: the majority would take note of it without discussion and proceed to the next point on the agenda. You can hardly expect a general discussion of our fundamental tasks during those two days.

What can be done under these conditions? I believe that we must prepare three separate documents: first, a declaration on the meaning of our participation in the conference and on the general goals of this group of organizations. This declaration will be five or six typewritten pages and will be very useful in specifying our attitude toward the left Socialist organizations. Because the conference agenda includes the struggle against war and the struggle against fascism, we must prepare a resolution on each of these questions. There may well be a tendency to treat these two questions from a purely “practical” point of view. On the contrary, the draft I am preparing links the questions of fascism and war to the entire perspective of the struggle for the new International. In that form, no one can evade it.

The question of the antifascist boycott may also arise. It is a very thorny question. It is being raised now by the reformist trade unions; unfortunately, I have not followed this whole development. I do not have the necessary facts available and I am very reluctant to offer anything specific. I have written to Bauer about it, proposing that he study the matter and prepare summaries for us all. I should like to have these summaries several hours before the conference.

You raise once more the question of the Secretariat; I believe that the course we agreed on here is the best one. If the finance commission states—and we may well expect this to be their
decision—that the Secretariat cannot support any full-time staff, we can only yield to that misfortune. That will unfortunately mean that it will be impossible for the time being for Comrade W[itte] to remain abroad and participate in our work. I shall be very sorry, and I shall consider this situation, for my part, as entirely temporary, that is, to be changed as soon as we are a little better off, and I hope that day is not too distant. Perhaps we should include this thought in the plenum’s decision, in the event that the full-time staff is completely abolished.

TO JACOB WALCHER ON THE DECLARATION OF FOUR

August 21, 1933

Dear Friend:

Thank you for the information contained in your letter of August 20.

The changes you suggest in the text of our (Left Opposition) declaration have already been undertaken. It goes without saying that this applies only to the Left Opposition’s declaration. Our allies cannot, of course, be bound by the text of this declaration.

I am enclosing the draft of a short declaration for the general position of the revolutionary participants in the conference—one which, however, seems to me sufficient for the case at hand. Even if we launch this statement only in the name of the SAP, RSP, OSP, and Left Opposition, it will have a tremendous effect. If Kilborn and Mot Dag sign, the effect will be that much the greater. The signature of the PUPists could only lend the matter a ridiculous overtone.

Will the ILP in its present form and particularly with its present leadership sign our declaration? It is doubtful. If not, our new declaration would be an excellent document for continuing the struggle with the ILP. I am sure you are acquainted with the quotation from Inprecorr cited in the most recent issue of La Verite (August 18). The ILP is accused of bringing up Trotskyist arguments against joining the Comintern and also of being in
direct contact with expelled "Trotskyists." So much the better. Our comrades must actually enter the ILP and give full effort to building up the revolutionary element in this party. Discuss this with the members of the IS and with the English delegate of our section when he arrives. This is a question of pressing importance. In my opinion, it would be fatal to wait for the further development of the ILP—i.e., not to sign a document like the one indicated by the enclosed draft. The appearance of our declaration without the ILP can only accelerate its evolution in our direction.

Have you consulted with Bauer and other comrades about ways of carrying out joint work? We must, we must take a step forward now—or else we will accomplish nothing.

We have now received the RSP's (Sneevliet's) declaration of principles. A very good declaration. Comrade Rudolf\(^{349}\) will send it to you.

**REASSURING THE POLISH SECTION\(^{350}\)**

**August 22, 1933**

To the International Secretariat

Dear Comrades:

Perhaps our Polish friends have not been able to correctly assess the new possibilities opening up for us in connection with the revolutionary socialist organizations that are reaching their communist puberty, and those that in part have already done so. The fact that our Polish section was formed relatively late and has its own tempo of development plays an important role in this. There is, however, a secondary factor that could totally distort the picture of our new organizational connections in the eyes of the Polish comrades. You know that while the "International Labor Community" [IAG] was still under the leadership of Seydewitz-Rosenfeld there was also a small Polish socialist group, represented by Dr. Kruk,\(^{351}\) that participated in it. I am not familiar with this group. As far as Dr. Kruk's article and his speeches are concerned, they seem to me to smack of superficial-
ity and centrism. I cannot judge whether the man and his group have matured. I also do not know whether this group will participate in the Paris conference. It goes without saying that we will not enter into any sort of alliance or obligation with doubtful elements, especially not with a Polish group, without the knowledge and agreement of our Polish section. Perhaps it is necessary to repeat this to our Polish friends so that even temporary misunderstandings do not arise. This could complicate and have a highly unfavorable influence on our principled dispute with the Polish section over the question of the new International.

THE ILP AND THE BRITISH SECTION\textsuperscript{352}

August 22, 1933

Dear Comrade Cannon:

I wish to write to you today on English matters specially. Within the past period the Independent Labour Party has made an enormous shift toward a revolutionary position. The old layer of [the ILP] bureaucracy remained almost as a whole in the Labour Party. The ILP consists of the youth. In the leadership, however, there remain a few old men (Maxton, Brockway, Paton)\textsuperscript{353} who are by far not in accord among themselves. . . . For the rank and file of the ILP the problems of revolutionary strategy constitute entirely a new field. In this the Stalinists reveal the preponderance of their routine. We need not doubt that promises of financial assistance are also not lacking, and in its present social composition the ILP is very poor.

Our small British group has good connections with the ILP and exercises considerable influence there; the Inprecorr complains bitterly about it. But by systematic work to strengthen this party, to cleanse it from the heritage of centrism, to protect it from Stalinism and to transform it into a truly revolutionary party: all
this is absolutely possible now. Precisely in this is now needed the assistance of the American League. It seems to me that literary aid could be of decisive importance. First of all, it is necessary that The Militant carry an analysis of the situation in the ILP and in the British Communist Party, emphasizing our friendly attitude toward the ILP. A number of articles and correspondence on the basis of new material are needed. The corresponding issues of The Militant should be sent in a considerable number of copies to the ILP through our British section. Of course, the whole work should be carried on hand-in-hand with our British section.

The pamphlets and books published by Pioneer Publishers would be of great importance for the educational work in the ILP. The question of program should be now placed on the order of the day in the ILP and circles should be organized for a critical study of the program of the Comintern. The Criticism of the Program of the Comintern [The Third International After Lenin] published by you would be of value in this connection. Possibly a certain number of copies of this book as well as of others could be collected and sent to the British section (alas, they are not in a position to pay for it) specially for the work in the ILP. Other methods of assistance in the above-indicated work will of course also be found. The moment is a most responsible one! By making the necessary efforts we may be able to reap now what we have so patiently sown during the last years.

I shall be very glad to have you write me on this as well as on American matters.

With communist greetings.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

INFORMATION FOR THE U.S.354

August 22, 1933

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

I was greatly disappointed by your sudden departure, which deprived us of the possibility to see each other and to talk to each other for the last time on European as well as American
questions. In the next couple of days we are preparing to make a
great jump ahead. The Revolutionary Socialist Party of Holland
(Sneevliet) has already now officially joined our organization.
This means: 950 members and support in the form of a trade
union organization of 23,000 members. Sneevliet was by me
visited and we came to an agreement on all the points.

Of no less importance is the fact that the Independent Socialist
Party of Holland (over 7,000 members) has come nearer to us.
They are now carrying on negotiations with Sneevliet for united
work as a preliminary to complete fusion.

With Comrade Walcher of the SAP we have come to a complete
agreement on the fusion of their organization with our German
section. I hope that Walcher will be able to carry it through in the
near future.

According to Walcher and Sneevliet the party of Kilbom in
Sweden stands much nearer to us than to Brandler (15,000
members and 7,000 of the youth). At the conference which opens
up the 27th of this month in Paris the question of the direction of
the party of Kilbom will be subjected to a test as well as the
question of the Norwegian group Mot Dag.

A very important process is now going on in the British ILP. I
am writing about it to Comrade Cannon. I am enclosing herewith
a copy of my letter to him as well as a copy of my letter to you. It
is necessary to assist now our British section in protecting the
ILP from Stalinism and in gaining it for Marxism. This is
perfectly possible, and the American comrades can perform in
this direction an important part of the work.

You understand that I am fully preoccupied now with these
problems and therefore have not yet read your work on the Negro
question. But I shall return to it without fail.

Comradely yours,

L. Trotsky
1. The building of a new International presupposes joint work and ever closer organizational ties among the revolutionary political parties on the basis of a program meeting all the problems of our epoch.

2. A united front policy presupposes an agreement of labor organizations (political, trade union, etc.) to work together, regardless of their positions on questions of principle, for the sake of some particular practical aim—not permanent cooperation, but a coming to terms from instance to instance, for a period of time limited by the nature of the task itself.

3. No revolutionary proletarian party can carry out correct policies on the international arena if it does not make a sharp distinction between systematic work in building a new International and episodic, although also very important, agreements of a "united front" type.

4. A successful united front policy can be conducted on an international scale (the struggle against fascism, boycott of Hitler's Germany, the struggle against the danger of war in general and against intervention in the USSR in particular) only if there exists a firmly tempered international nucleus, that is, a union of several proletarian parties on a solid programmatic basis and with a clear political perspective. Only such a union or alliance, constituting the first stage of development of a new International, is able to mobilize more organizations with more massive followings in the name of this or that combat task.

5. The proposed composition of the Paris conference is unquestionably based on a confusion between two distinct tasks: that of building a new International and that of organizing a united front. To go further along this path with eyes closed would be to dissolve the revolutionary proletarian parties in a formless conglomeration of organizations which do not know clearly what they want. Such a course would be equally disastrous for the new International and for the tasks of the united front.

6. To bring some clarity into the nature of the interrelations of
the various organizations taking part in the Paris conference (or as yet proposed only to be invited) the nucleus of revolutionary organizations ought to immediately unite around a definite programmatic document that would formulate the principles they hold in common and would openly pose the task of building a new International. The draft of such a declaration (see the enclosed) should be discussed, revised, written up, and signed well before the opening of the conference. There is every reason to assume that at least four organizations (the SAP, RSP, OSP, and ILO) could unite around such a declaration.

7. There is no need for guesswork about whether such a declaration would be immediately supported by the Swedish [Independent] Communist Party (Kilborn), the Norwegian organization Mot Dag, or the British Independent Labour Party (ILP). Even if they do not adhere to it, the declaration would still become a powerful instrument for influencing them in the future. The declaration’s sphere of influence will grow together with the formation of the new International. After a short time, say, two months, the declaration would be replaced by a manifesto of the new International.

8. It is quite obvious that the Norwegian Labor Party (NAP) cannot in any case accept our declaration, which contradicts its politics entirely. But that does not at all mean we should reject any cooperation whatsoever with the NAP. It is simply that our relations with them must be based not on the program of the new International but on general united-front methods. Thus, for example, in fighting for the convening of a world congress of labor organizations the NAP could if it wished hold its own position.

9. If the ILP in Britain, the Swedish party of Kilbom, and others refuse now to adhere to our declaration, our relations with them at the present stage would be those of the united front, which of course would not exclude these organizations from joining the new International at a later stage.

10. The Leninbund, for example, could not adhere to our declaration in view of our irreconcilable differences on the nature of the Soviet state and on our obligations in this respect. To make concessions in this area to Comrade Urbahns’s theories concerning “state capitalism” would be to render our entire declaration valueless and to lay the basis for future internal explosions within the very heart of the new International.

11. It will not hurt at this point to skip over any evaluation of other organizations and groups attached to or drawn toward the
Paris conference. Some of them are of no interest whatsoever, either from the point of view of revolutionary cadres or of mass organizations. Thus the PUPists can only compromise any body that might endure them for any time within its ranks. But secondary questions like these solve themselves with no difficulty if the correct fundamental line has been adopted.

12. It is necessary to begin, then, with a declaration of four (or even three) organizations that are closest to one another already. It would be an error to try to come to an agreement on the text of the declaration from the very start with such organizations as the British ILP or Kilbom’s party. That approach would only lead to countless meetings, corrections, negotiations, vacillations—and the initiative of the more advanced organizations would be lost in the general confusion. The main rule of strategy and tactics to overcome the indecisiveness of the other organizations is that our own organization should show decisiveness. To overcome the vacillation of others, it is necessary to stop vacillating oneself. If the ILP or Kilbom’s party agrees with much but not all of our declaration, they can support it with stated reservations, additions, etc., over their own signatures. In that case, every advanced worker would have a clear picture of the political relations between us. We can ask for nothing more. Diplomacy and hide-and-seek are alien to us. The new International can only be built by an honest statement of what really is.

“AS IT IS” AND “AS IT SHOULD BE”

August 26, 1933

Dear Comrade Walcher:

As far as the NAP is concerned, I believe that you and especially many of your comrades are on a course that cannot lead to winning over the enemy or the opponents, but rather to losing many friends. This is quite often the case when one allows oneself to be guided by conjunctural moods and considerations of
a purely organizational nature rather than by fundamental facts and tendencies.

You always refer to the Norwegian party "as it is" and "as it should be." I recognize only the first. The second is only the result of a pious wish. The fact that the Norwegian workers are "more radical" than the party is not exceptional—with reformist parties that is the rule. The fact that the Norwegian party is the party of the class is just as true for the Austro-Marxist or the Belgian party. In my considerations, should I substitute the Austrian party "as it should be" for the Austrian party "as it is" and then form an alliance with the product of my wishful thinking?

The newest development has shown once again that parties with a definite past and an entrenched "apparatus" are very hard realities, and one must take them just "as they are" and not as one would like to have them.

Because of your totally ill-considered alliance with the NAP you are in the process of losing the Mot Dag group. Mot Dag is, however, the only group you have in Norway. This group is far from "intransigent." It has not succeeded, however, in influencing the NAP "as it is." One of the reasons for this, at least in my opinion, is the adherence of the NAP to the International Labor Community, which puts no obligations whatsoever on Tranmael and Company but gives them international cover and protection in the eyes of the Norwegian workers. Do you think that you can succeed in exercising the kind of influence on Tranmael from Paris that Falk so far has not succeeded in exercising from Oslo? No. It is just simpler to foster illusions about Oslo in Paris than it is in Oslo itself.

If one follows the Paris discussions of the Second International, one can see that different parties and factions are in the process of taking the road of the Two-and-a-Half International. The difference between the NAP and the Austrian or the American party is national and conjunctural, not fundamental. The less clarification this question gets now, the more brutal will be the break with the NAP later.

If one follows the Paris discussions of the Second International, one can see that different parties and factions are in the process of taking the road of the Two-and-a-Half International. The difference between the NAP and the Austrian or the American party is national and conjunctural, not fundamental. The less clarification this question gets now, the more brutal will be the break with the NAP later.

It is unwise, you write, to anticipate developments. Really? But it has always seemed to me that the task of the vanguard—and we should be nothing other than the vanguard—consists of anticipating developments.

This policy would have particularly dire consequences where the ILP is concerned. No one should have any illusions about this. The policy of waiting, feeling one's way, gaining time (i.e., wasting time) will spell the end for the ILP in the immediate
The crisis in the ILP is caused by the fact that the membership is starving for clear, solid, revolutionary answers, while the leadership vacillates between Manuilsky and Tranmael without making up its mind to take the independent road of Marxist politics (which now also means the road of the new International). Thus it is unavoidable that the right wing of the party went to the Labour Party while the left wing swings toward the Stalinists. A few more months of vacillation and there will be nothing left of the ILP but a memory. It is not a tactical question, but a principled one. The accusations many comrades raise against us in this connection are nothing but the worst aspects of the old "Trotskyism." More than once, I developed all of these arguments in both written and oral form against Lenin three decades ago. At that time, I too wished to make a distinction between Menshevik or its left wing "as it was" and "as it should be" according to my analysis, and I regarded Lenin's efforts at separation to be harmful. Moreover, Marx and Engels throughout their lives were looked upon as "disruptive elements" by other groups; Lenin too . . . until the victory, after which they began to praise his sense of expediency without having properly understood the long and difficult work of selection and education. The school of Marx-Engels-Lenin is good enough that we can all learn something from it.

With cordial greetings,

A DISCUSSION WITH PIERRE RIMBERT

September 2, 1933

Rimbert: The question of the new International affects my joining the [French] League. I am opposed to the slogan for a new party in Germany. The logical conclusion must be drawn from the outset. We can't stop here with this slogan. The slogan of the Fourth International is wrong: The [Communist] International was dead long before the events in Germany. We knew before those events that the centrist leadership could only bring about an international defeat. The degeneration began in 1924. As early
as 1926-27, the Comintern was revealed as no longer the political organization of the proletariat. From an organizational point of view, the Comintern disappeared several years earlier. The sections of the Comintern engaged only in sporadic activity (for example, the Italian party) because they have no living organizational base in the working class in most countries. The debacle therefore was already apparent even to the workers in general (who left the organizations of the Comintern).

There were differences over the question of faction discipline. Some comrades thought we should break discipline and act as an independent faction on the question of the [German] “red referendum,” for example, or on the question of elections. Another current wanted to follow centrist discipline even to the point of absurdity. Now the idea of a Fourth International and new parties comes forward. We, for our part, wish to maintain the position of an independent faction. Is it necessary to build new parties? Only events will decide. There is a deep demoralization in the working class, even among revolutionary activists—this is the source of the splits in the workers’ movement and in the Left Opposition itself. It is completely premature and bureaucratic to involve ourselves in the creation of new parties and an International during this period of retreat. If we embark on this course of action at the present time, we will score a big success numerically—just as Souvarine has had a certain amount of success. But Souvarine’s success is only quantitative. In the same fashion, the Left Opposition can swell its ranks with a large number of elements disillusioned with the SP, the PUP, and the CP. But these are not the best elements of the revolutionary class. This growth would only be a political disadvantage. The few opposition elements who have acquired revolutionary experience in the party or in the Left Opposition, the only ones capable of having a perspective, would run a strong risk of being submerged by this influx of new and politically uneducated (or even miseducated) people—syndicalists, left Social Democrats, ultraleftists.

Moreover, building an International because there are comrades who are convinced of the necessity for one does not guarantee success. The Communist parties are not corpses, because they are active in the working class, even though this activity is badly oriented and degenerated. Thus we must remain an independent faction of the party and its periphery—not subject to discipline and in opposition to the leadership. Only events will decide in which direction we will go. Of course we cannot straighten out the centrist bureaucrats, but we will be able
to win over cells, district and regional organizations. The essential task is not to swell our forces very quickly but to build ourselves up politically, to form new cadres from the youth, many of whom have come to us directly without going through the party, and to put pressure on the Communists to fight the leadership and drive it out of the party.

Trotsky: Since you are fundamentally opposed to our general political orientation, what sense is there in your criticizing the leadership of the League and the ILO? You are behind the times by six or eight months—that is, by an eternity . . . and yet you give an analysis of the leadership. That proves that you are not consistent. Otherwise, you would have to hope that the League will fall apart. You have a formalist conception of all of our activity, past and future. In contrast, our conception of the faction was completely realistic. For us it was a question of capturing and redirecting the party and the Communist International. You object to our new orientation on the ground that the Communist International has been dead for a long time. This could only be a criticism of the old orientation. Whether the Communist International has been dead for a long time or just for a short time, it is necessary to build a new International.

Now you say that we had illusions about the Comintern. Just because the leadership was centrist, was it excluded in advance that the party might amount to something? You discover a corpse, and in dissecting it, criticize the doctor. We were not farsighted enough to confidently predict the outcome of such an enormous class conflict. Moreover, is it in general possible to weigh a priori all the forces in conflict and the possibilities inherent in the struggle itself? If this had been so, it would have been sufficient to present a reckoning of the relationship of forces. Hitler himself hesitated greatly because he did not know the result or the possible scope of working class resistance in advance. Centrism is not a thing in itself. Under mass pressure, it can involve itself in struggle and, under the imperious pressure of events, even enter into a coalition with us.

Only after the German events were we convinced that the Comintern was completely ossified. Even if we were wrong (and you along with us, Comrade Rimbert), the fact remains that we should correct our “mistake.” The German CP no longer exists as a revolutionary force. You recognize this yourself. What other historical or metaphysical function could it have? Before the catastrophe, we thought that the party would be able to engage a good part of the working class in struggle, starting with the
unemployed. It wasn’t even able to mobilize part of its membership. You say that only future events will be able to determine whether a new International will be created. Thus you look to future developments, but pay no attention to things that have just occurred and have already determined the necessity for a new International (whose development will naturally depend on future events). The Comintern still exists, thanks to a certain tradition, a certain disorientation among the workers, and—what is not the least important factor—thanks to its coffers. The Second International was no more dead in the physical sense after 1914 than the Third is today. Nevertheless, it was dead as a progressive force, i.e., as a proletarian revolutionary force. That is what we said in the fall of 1914. Then, too, they treated us like adventurists, saying that only events. . . . But if we had tail-ended events, then developments like October would not have come about. The role of revolutionaries is to drag developments forward by the hair, “just a little bit.” Waiting for developments is a form of passive fatalism in the manner of Souvarine. But even Souvarine is now trying to build an organization. He will build nothing because he has no theory, no program, no perspective, no concept of strategy, and no ability for political orientation. If there is a movement of elements toward him—something I cannot verify—then it is merely a transitory phenomenon that defines very well the disorientation of the workers. It can only have an episodic character.

You give an abstract and metaphysical definition of the faction and the party, of what is dead and what is “living.” We must say openly to the workers that they can no longer place confidence in the Third International. What is to be done? Wait? Study? No, act. I repeat, it is not up to us to set fixed time schedules, that is, to set the tempo of the new party and the new International. But under present conditions, hesitation is the best way to sow trouble, disorientation, and pessimism.

Only events will decide, you say. This is not a Marxist way of speaking. Only events can set the tempo. But this does not absolve us from the responsibility of starting now to create the new party and the new International in embryo. We must prepare for developments. If we prepare our cadres to revitalize the corpse of the Third International, where will we forge the cadres of the Fourth? Your phraseology about remaining an “independent faction” of a party which is dead yet “living” may seem very wise and very profound in a small circle that uses conventionalized rhetoric, but the workers will not even understand you; whereas
everyone will understand our position even if they oppose us.

When we proclaimed the necessity for a new party in Germany, there was, you say, an untenable contradiction in our attitude? Yes and no. It was not a logical contradiction but a practical one. Formerly we were a faction. We said: "Only events will prove whether the Comintern can be reformed. After the collapse of the German CP there still remained a possibility—a very problematic one, it is true—that other sections [of the Comintern] roused by the thunder of the catastrophe would be able to correct their line and declare a new policy (as the French Socialist Party did in 1919). If the Comintern is not dead, it will demand a congress, a discussion that we will be able to intervene in, using Germany." This was the reprieve that history granted to the Stalinist bureaucracy. But we discovered that, quite the contrary, everything grew worse and collapsed in complete decadence in all countries. So we declared: "The International is finished." The delay was also necessary for our sections to assimilate the new orientation, and we succeeded in doing this without internal upheavals—which is no small thing.

Rimbert confronts us with the large number of existing groupings. There will be even more if we are confused and indecisive. Our hesitancy would prolong and deepen the confusion.

It seems that we will inherit the "disillusioned," a very large influx of unschooled workers. But the task of the International is precisely to carry out selection. We will have a mass influx of fresh forces and we will educate them.

Doesn't the Comintern carry on activity, even if at a very reduced level? But so does the Second International. If the Comintern no longer exists as a progressive factor, how will we be able to have an effect on the far bigger Socialist parties and the trade unions if we remain a faction of the Comintern? While we were active as a faction of the Comintern a left wing formed in the Socialist parties. It is not ripe, but it is a far richer field of recruitment for us than the ossified Comintern. We have already made progress in this direction (the SAP, OSP, RSP, and to a certain extent the ILP, Kilbom, etc.). This shows that these elements, having arrived at communism, did not wish to bend to the bureaucratic exigencies of the Comintern, under the yoke of the Stalinists. We cannot tell them to wait until Comrade Rimbert's group has determined whether the Third International is dead or still breathing. The Declaration of Four at the Paris conference has at least as much historic importance as Zimmerwald-Kienthal, which was likewise viewed in the
workers' movement as an insignificant adventure.

The most important thing is to tell the workers the truth. This is what we have accomplished. This was what past events demanded. Only future developments will determine the tempo.

Rimbert: In effect, under present conditions, the question of the leadership can no longer be posed. The political differences are too broad for us to reintegrate ourselves into the League. The differences are fundamental. Moreover, it was not at all my intention to assume the leadership first and then to pose the political questions later. We will try to see if we can be won to this position, while making a contribution to day-to-day activity.

On the question of the Fourth International, you once wrote that the construction of a new International would have the revolution in the USSR as its logical consequence.

Trotsky: That was a reply to people like Urbahns, who held that the USSR was not a workers' state and as a result it was necessary to have a new International. Things are turning out differently than we had expected. We outlined this perspective, which seemed the most likely one to us: "If the USSR falls, it will take the whole Comintern with it." What we foresaw as decisive was that the fall of the dictatorship in the USSR would take the Comintern with it. But events decided differently: the workers' state, although degenerated, bureaucratized, and deformed, still exists. But because of the German events, the Comintern has suffered a complete and irreparable collapse. Fortunately the USSR continues to survive. But without the International the USSR is also doomed. In order to save it, a new International is necessary. Contrary to Urbahns, who talks about "state capitalism in the USSR, the United States and Germany," we say that the workers' state still exists. If we become an important force, we will offer a united front for the defense of the USSR to the Stalinist bureaucracy. And this action will encourage the Soviet vanguard, aid it in launching a new Bolshevik party in the USSR. From now on, the Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition is the embryo of this new party. After February 1917, when we extolled the necessity of a new revolution, many activists among the Mensheviks and even among the Bolsheviks objected that this was adventurism because the workers in the West were not moving. Lenin said: "We can make the revolution in Russia. We must act here and pull along in our wake the Western proletariat, which, moreover, is beginning to move behind Liebknecht." Now the situation is reversed. The vanguard has much better opportunities to move in the capitalist world, while our comrades
in the USSR are being wiped out by the Stalinist repression.

We had a formula that served us for ten years: a faction and reform. The greatest danger that a revolutionary organization faces is in allowing itself to become hypnotized by its own formulas. The world situation has changed since the German catastrophe. Not only the Weimar republic but also the two Internationals have crumbled to dust. The vanguard of the vanguard needs a clear orientation and long endurance. Equivo­cation is impermissible. The answer is a new International.

AFTER TALKS WITH FRITZ STERNBERG

September 4, 1933

Dear Comrade Sternberg:

I would like to quickly summarize in outline form the results of our rather comprehensive discussions.

1. The most important result is the beginning of work on the programmatic manifesto of the Fourth International. I will send your draft, which I consider to be very important, to all those comrades who can take part in working out the economic portion of the program.

2. I wish to remind you of your promise to send a second draft on the reasons for the defeat of the SPD and the KPD very soon.

3. As far as our real or seeming theoretical differences of opinion are concerned, I am happy to say the following:

a. I consider the sharp contrast you draw between rising and declining capitalism seen from the point of view of real wages to be extremely important and in general unassailable. The sharp emphasis placed on this contrast in the program seems politically appropriate.

b. The theory of accumulation does not at all enter into consideration in this connection.

c. In my opinion the role of the labor aristocracy and the labor bureaucracy is not lessened by the rising curve of real wages in prewar capitalism, rather its social roots go deeper. I think your polemic against Lenin on this question is one-sided, but I am sure
that we will arrive at a mutually acceptable theoretical formulation for the program without great difficulty.

d. I freely admit that the concept imperialism, like the concept monopoly capitalism, is used in various different ways in modern Marxist literature. From the standpoint of the program, terminological preciseness in this question is of great importance. I believe that even if a scientific work can allow itself the luxury of presenting its own particular terminology in order to develop its ideas in sharper contrast, a program must—with all necessary precision—depart as little as possible from common usage since it is a question of the impression made on the masses. But this question will hardly present any serious difficulties.

4. I hope that your friends will apply themselves to working out the program as diligently as you have. We have to wait for suggestions from Comrade Walcher primarily for the section on trade unions (but, of course, not just on this section). Naturally the same is true for the comrades of the Left Opposition, SAP, RSP, and OSP who are familiar with this area of work.

5. The second most important result of our discussions can be formulated as follows: we must not lose another moment, that is, we must take the Declaration of Four as the point of departure for large-scale political actions. As I have expressed it verbally, the Declaration of Four, despite its modest appearance, is in no way less important than the Zimmerwald and Kienthal documents. Viewed from within, the Zimmerwald and Kienthal documents also appeared extremely modest. Bolshevism then had ten years behind it as a faction and two years as an independent party, and in terms of numbers and cadres, during the war it was hardly stronger than the Left Opposition of the Soviet Union. The majority of the other participants stood on about the same level of confusion as the majority of the participants in the Paris conference. Numerically, however, they were far weaker. As far as the left wing was concerned, it was incomparably weaker than our Bloc of Four. We don’t have Lenin with us, it is true, but we have had a great deal of experience since Zimmerwald—and that counts for much.

6. It is very important to win over the Swedish party, the ILP, etc. Every effort must be made to do this. It would, however, be fatal to delay our—the Bloc of Four’s—advance until the others have been won over. We would win no one over through such a course of action, rather we would lose each other. The vacillators will come over to us when they are convinced that we ourselves are not vacillating, i.e., when they are convinced of the great
mission that the march of events has assigned to us.

7. A good German-language weekly would be a weapon of incomparable effectiveness under the present circumstances. We could establish one through cooperative effort.

I am sending a copy of this letter to our IS and to the Dutch comrades.

With best regards,

Yours,

L.T.

ROOSEVELT'S EXPERIMENT
AND WORKERS' CONTROL

September 6, 1933

The question of the political orientation of the League [CLA] is of the greatest importance in the present situation of the USA. Unfortunately, I am very busy now with European affairs and have not even the possibility of following the development of Roosevelt's experiment and the discussions in the League. From afar it seems that an important shift must occur in the workers' movement and, in general, in the political relation of classes in the USA. Roosevelt's experiment translates the lessons of the crisis into the language of politics. What should be our answer?

Insofar as the state wants to control private economy, we place ourselves on the basis of government control from the point of view of the proletariat. We demand, first of all, the complete abolition of commercial secrets: bookkeeping and accounting of each enterprise should be an open [book] for society and consequently, first of all, for the workers of the given enterprise. Social control over production is a fiction without the participation of the workers in this control. In the shops the control should be exercised by shop committees. On the basis of shop committees workers' committees of the trust should be formed. And so on. The formation of such committees, if circumstances permit, should be begun immediately, without awaiting, it is clear, the legalization of workers' control by the government. Insofar as the planned government control, on one side, and the workers'
control, on the other, will encounter at every step the ill will of the owners, the slogans of expropriation and nationalization should flow naturally from the development of the struggle. The bare slogan of nationalization would be insufficient, but in conjunction with the slogan of workers’ control it may acquire a revolutionary character. The whole problem hinges around the question of how vital, that is, how efficacious the slogan of workers’ control can become already in the nearest future. . . .

PLANNED ECONOMY IN THE USSR: SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

September 7, 1933

I. Achievements and Difficulties of the Soviet Economy

Has the economic work of the Soviet government brought success? Or has it, on the contrary, ended in failure? Behind this question another is hidden: Are the economic methods used by the Soviet state valid in general? The reader would normally expect a monosyllabic answer: yes or no. We refuse to provide such an answer. The building of a new society is not a matter of solving an isolated statistical or technical problem. What is involved is the planful adaptation of all the branches of the economy to one another, and of all of them together to human needs. What needs to be reconciled are not statistical but dynamic quantities. For this kind of task, no single booklet, no single human brain—not even a “brain trust”—can serve for ready-made formulas. Creative fantasy alone, even if armed with the best technical estimates of the specialists, is inadequate to this task. What is involved is the life of society as a whole, its most deep-rooted functions and elementary needs. To achieve harmony in the state—even on the basis of collective ownership and planned management encompassing all facets of the economy—is only possible as a result of an indefinitely prolonged period of efforts, experiments, errors, crises, reforms, and reorganizations.

How should the living forces of labor within the nation be
distributed among the branches of the economy? What unit of measurement should be used for human needs? What share of the national income should be assigned to consumption and what to expanding production? How should the consumption fund be divided up between town and country, or between the various categories of industrial labor and administration? These basic questions give only a bare hint of the enormous difficulties involved in the system of planning, which in its ideal culmination ought to constitute a vast conveyor involving all the productive functions of society in the infinite complexity of inner relations among them.

In reviewing the tasks of planning one cannot leave aside a question which in the final analysis has decisive importance: the world distribution of labor. To the extent that planning is a job done by government agencies, it is of necessity limited, at least at the present stage, by state boundaries. But the productive forces of humankind long since outgrew the national framework. Within the bounds of a single state it is impossible to plan exports and imports. Raising the economic level of the USSR will not weaken but, on the contrary, will strengthen its ties with the world market. Here the planning system runs up against a choice between two alternatives: autarchy, or an extension of the scope of planning to other states, to the entire planet. The idea of autarchy in all its varieties, including that of a closed-in socialism in a single country, constitutes a reactionary utopia. Humanity will not deny itself the worldwide distribution of labor. There is nothing left, then, but to extend planning beyond the limits of national borders by reconciling and coordinating national plans. A problem of exceptional difficulty and duration!

It would be totally wrong to take our words as an expression of skepticism regarding the principle of planning. No, we see it as the only creative principle in our epoch. But we emphatically reject any dilettantish or light-minded attitude toward the question of organizing socialist economy. This task cannot be carried out in a short time, specified at will: here what is needed is the labor of generations. If there is an element of skepticism in this evaluation, it is directed not against the possibilities and capabilities of humankind, but against the excessive pretensions of bureaucracy.

What we have said thus far should delineate to some degree what our attitude is toward the results of the first five-year plan and the prospects for the second. It is hard to say who violates reality more—those who proclaim the unqualifiedly successful
fulfillment of the plan, or those who screech about its total failure. The truth is, there can be no question of the first five-year plan—still an extremely primitive hypothesis for planning the economy for a five-year period, an equation with an enormous number of unknowns—having been “fulfilled” in the literal sense. The real percentage of fulfillment will never be known as a consequence of the total alteration of the plan during the course of its fulfillment and because of the absence of a stable monetary unit as a measure of the value of the results achieved. Partly under the impact of malevolent criticism by our enemies, and partly through the influence of domestic political needs, the Soviet authorities have made it a matter of prestige to claim that the plan was fulfilled virtually 100 percent. But why, our innumerable enemies retort with glee—and unfortunately, not without justification—why do the living standards of the masses lag so far below the norms specified by the plan? What is the reason for the severe difficulties in food and other areas?

If one approaches the first five-year plan from the point of view of its technical-industrial achievements—new factories, power plants, etc.—the material results, even aside from statistical indices, can really stagger the imagination. In effect humanity has seen for the first time what enormous possibilities are lodged in modern technology, even for an extremely backward country, if the labor force is utilized in a planned and centralized way. However, if one approaches the matter from the point of view of the everyday needs of the population, it is not hard to reach pessimistic conclusions. This contrast testifies to the profound disproportions within the economy, partly inherited from the past, and partly the result of an incorrect distribution of forces and resources. One cannot forget for a moment that the planned direction of the economy is a two-edged sword: it can overcome disproportions or it can cause them to mount up. Having concentrated all the levers of economic management in its hands, the state may at one extreme achieve mind-spinning results, while, at the other extreme, leaving the most essential needs unsatisfied. This is no argument against the principle of planning. But it is an argument in favor of a critical attitude toward planning.

The degree of success attained by the first five-year plan can be decided in part by the extent to which it laid the groundwork for the next plan. On that score an especially large number of illusions have been sown. The second five-year plan was originally geared to an absolutely fantastic annual rate of increase in national income (30 to 40 percent)! The author of these lines,
beginning in 1929, warned publicly in the press that the forced pace of the first five-year plan was sure to build up disproportions that would have to be paid for by sharply reduced growth in the second five-year plan. In 1932 we suggested that the start of the second five-year plan be postponed and that 1933 be devoted to general overall repair of the Soviet economy, that is, making up for omissions, smoothing out disproportions, surmounting contradictions. The proposal was not formally acknowledged by Moscow. But in fact the second five-year plan was not put into effect—it hardly exists today, even on paper! The pace of economic growth has been reduced in the extreme. Serious reforms in the economy and in the methods of planning themselves are needed to make possible a further stable growth at high rates. Only a very superficial or deliberately biased critic could find in these ebbs and flows of the economic process, or in the erroneous calculations of the Soviet bureaucracy, proof of the “bankruptcy” of planned economy. The formation of a new social system cannot be judged as though it were a performance record in sports.

II. The USSR and the USA

The most realistic assessment of the results of the five-year plan, and of the Soviet economy in general, would in our opinion be as follows: the very fact that the first experience of state planning in a backward and isolated country did not end in disaster but, rather, opened up new possibilities, unquestionably represents a historic victory. The significance in principle of this victory will be less subject to dispute, the less we exaggerate the extent of the concrete economic achievements.

Above all it is necessary to remember that the Soviet Union, heir to poverty and barbarism, was forced to struggle by the techniques of planning to achieve the material level that the advanced capitalist countries surpassed as long ago as the period when free competition still prevailed. And even today the Soviets lag far behind the advanced countries, especially the United States, in terms of average national income per capita. There is no need to explain the extent to which economic and cultural backwardness hinders and retards the application of the principle of planning.

The greatest difficulties have proved to be, of course, in the agricultural sphere. Here too the greatest mistakes were made.
The widely dispersed and primitive nature of peasant production left vast scope for administrative experiments and caprice. This phase is far from over even now. The percentage of collectivized peasant farms exceeds the original target figure (20 percent) by at least a factor of three. But no one feels obliged to mention any rise in the extremely low productivity of agricultural labor, in spite of the far-reaching mechanization.

Also remaining unresolved is the question of the distribution of income, which has decisive importance for production in general and for agriculture in particular: it is precisely the distribution of finished products that can provide the stimulus for increasing the productivity of labor. Collectivization as a whole has not yet passed the stage of initial experimentation. One can only regret that far too vast a scale was chosen for this experimenting from the outset.

Consequently, one may say as a general rule that the successes of planning are most apparent in those fields where the decisive role is played by the centralized initiative of the state, supported by the most advanced sections of the working class. The five-year plan has produced the poorest economic results in those fields where the participation of great masses of people is required, especially of peasant masses, and where a systematic raising of the cultural and technical levels is a prerequisite. The contradiction between town and country is the most burdensome part of the heritage from czarism, in whose economy nomadic barbarism stood side by side with the most modern technology. The growth of Soviet industry created the first preconditions for reorganization of agriculture and for improving relations between town and country in the future. But these very successes in industry have been gained at the expense of a strain on relations between town and country in the present. Here it will be necessary to pay not only for the historical past but also for the recent crimes of the Soviet bureaucracy, which too hastily replaced cultural and economic factors with purely administrative ones.

This is the issue over which, during the last few years, deep differences have appeared between the so-called Opposition, to which the author belongs, and the present ruling faction.

It is our firm conviction that the new social system cannot be built by following the ready-made blueprints of the bureaucracy. The plan is only a working hypothesis. The fulfillment of the plan inevitably means its radical alteration by the masses whose vital interests are reflected in the plan. The uncontrolled bureaucracy inevitably creates disproportions and contradictions and
allows them to build up. Only the organized working population, actively participating in the elaboration and implementation of the plan, can give the necessary signals in time if there are shortcomings, and can see to it that they are corrected. The planning mechanism, without a really active and flexible Soviet democracy, in town and country, bears within itself the greatest dangers of administrative adventurism. The severe difficulties with food and other things should be seen as the direct result of the bureaucratization of the Soviet regime that has taken place over the past few years. But that is a big subject in which economics is intimately bound up with politics, and falls outside the immediate range of the present article.

To expect economic harmony to be established in the coming months and years within the territory of former czarist Russia would be the most naive utopianism. To assert that “socialism has been achieved” in the USSR is to make a mockery of the facts, and of ideas. The main work still lies ahead. Contradictions and crises are still inevitable. In order not to lose heart and fall into despondency, one must analyze the successes and failures of planned production in the long-term historical perspective, gauging oneself not by years but by multiple decades.

Liberal capitalism, during its rise and at its height, solved the problem of economic proportion through the free play of supply and demand and of periodic conjunctural cycles. Modern monopoly capitalism, with all its mighty technical resources, stands helpless before the problem of proportions, which confronts it in the form of the problem of “sales.” The nationalization of the means of production and exchange created the preconditions in the USSR for a planned solution to the problem of proportions. The automatic play of supply and demand is replaced by calculation, statistical foresight, and administrative direction. Material and psychological difficulties did not thereby disappear but were translated into the language of planned management. If capitalism took shape and grew over the course of centuries, the new planned economy requires at least several decades to work out and test its basic methods and to train the necessary managerial and executive cadres. This is a totally solvable problem—the only thing is not to proclaim that it has already been solved.

Least of all can the problem be considered solved when one realizes that in spite of the nationalization of the means of production and the monopoly on foreign trade, the Soviet Union is not separated from the rest of the world by any impenetrable
The course of economic construction in the USSR depends to a great extent on what happens in the next few decades to the economy of Europe and that of the whole world, which at present is thrashing about, in the convulsions of a terrible crisis. Here we come directly to the question of the possible economic relations between the Soviet Union and the United States.

With all the fundamental differences between their social systems, the American and Soviet economies have two features in common: vast scale, and high concentration of the means of production, at least in industry. With daring and perspicacity on both sides, economic cooperation on these foundations could assume proportions unprecedented in history.

The new economic methods being applied in the United States today are based on the concept of government planning with private ownership being maintained in the means of production. This is not the place to go into an evaluation of these methods. Experience will provide the test. One thing is clear, however, that even with the most favorable results in practice, domestic planning runs up against the problem of foreign trade. Can it be brought under the control of reason? the [international economic] conference in London [June 1933] has given an eloquent answer on that score. For the United States to abandon exports would be to abandon economic advancement altogether. Meanwhile, on the map of world trade there is a sector that is already amenable to planning. That is trade with the USSR. It is possible to take pencil in hand and sketch an outline of the relations between the two giant states, a hypothetical plan of exchange that would develop in an upward spiral.

Despite all its deficiencies and contradictions, the Soviet economy allows one to see ahead much better than, say, the thoroughly sick economy of Germany does. With the establishment of normal diplomatic relations, the American government, which by the nature of things has now come to stand much closer to economic questions than any transoceanic republic's government ever did, would have ample opportunity to get fully and systematically acquainted with all the processes of the Soviet economy, and consequently, to ascertain the "element of risk" involved in Soviet-American economic relations. If upon our planet, shaken with disorders, in an atmosphere of new threats of war and of bloody convulsions, there still remains an economic experiment worth carrying through all the way, it is the experiment of Soviet-American cooperation.
National Committee,  
Communist League of America

Dear Comrades:

You have doubtless received the declaration signed by four organizations at the Paris conference. One of the conclusions of this declaration imposes upon us the duty to elaborate during the next two or three months a programmatic manifesto of the new International. My opinion on the declaration is given in my last letters.

Comrade F. Sternberg, a well-known writer on economic subjects and member of the SAP, proposes a certain conception of the economic part of the manifesto, a draft of which is attached hereto. It is not necessary to emphasize the importance of the work as a whole. The American comrades must, naturally, participate in the elaboration of the manifesto, especially in the part concerning the United States, its relation to other countries, to South America and British colonies, to Japan and China. For the present my initiative is of private nature, but in the next days or weeks the four organizations will surely create a technical secretariat. I hope that you will invite all the American comrades qualified for this work to present their drafts, suggestions and ideas as soon as possible.

Comradely yours,

L. Trotsky
TROUBLE IN THE FRENCH SECTION

September 11, 1933

Dear Comrade H.M.:

You should have no qualms on account of your absence here. Naturally, we would be very happy to see you again and to go over with you all the general and personal questions (and there are enough of them). But in view of your precarious situation, it would be truly unreasonable to exert yourself physically for such a long trip and such a short stay. In about four weeks we will have to change our residence and I hope that then we will have the possibility of seeing you.

We are very worried by the situation in the [French] League. I fear only one thing: the rotten indulgence toward the elements who for at least two years have been dividing and poisoning the organization. I entertain no doubt that behind the back of the Jewish Group there are Stalinist agents and others who are preparing some explosion like Roman Well's. It must not be forgotten that since our visit to France and the Paris conference, not just the apparatus of the French party, but the [Stalinist] apparatus as a whole is paying ten times more attention to us than before. Caution and even a suspicious attitude are more necessary than ever. As for the Jewish Group, we must ruthlessly put a stop to it. They are enemies who stay with us because there is nothing for them elsewhere. They are angered when we have some successes, and joyful when misfortune befalls us. We must put an end to this. The current opportunities are much too great to be compromised by the link with these elements, who represent only the remains of the past.

I hope your whole family is in good health, and send best wishes for your own.

All the best,

L. Trotsky
IN DEFENSE OF THE IS

September 18, 1933

To the Plenum of the International Secretariat

Dear Comrades:

The work of the International Secretariat has now acquired an absolutely exceptional importance. In addition to the old tasks of uniting the numerous sections and directing their revolutionary work, the Secretariat (plenum) has now become the representative of the entire Left Opposition within the Bloc of Four, which holds aloft the banner of the new International. Beginning right now, the Secretariat must carefully follow the activity of its allies, exchange experiences and criticisms with them, participate in elaborating the program of the new International, organize conferences with sympathizing organizations, etc., etc. . . . The Secretariat can accomplish these historic tasks only if it has real internal cohesion as well as support on all sides from all the sections.

All serious Bolshevik-Leninists reject with indignation unprincipled insinuations addressed to the Secretariat, attacks on its authority, and direct violations of its decisions. Strong leadership centers do not fall from the sky. They are formed through experience in accordance with the development and maturity of the organizations themselves. The elementary condition for the formation of a strong center is a Marxist approach to the principle of centralism, the authority of the leadership, and discipline.

The plenum (Secretariat) has taken the responsibility for our new political course; and through the intermediary of a special delegation, it has participated in the work of the Paris conference. It is enough to reflect seriously on the significance of this fact and the perspectives it opens to understand the gigantic importance of the leading international body of the Bolshevik-Leninists under the present conditions! Any attempt to weaken the IS and undermine its authority must be all the more mercilessly denounced since this is tantamount to disarming the Bolshevik-
Leninists, with respect to our allies as well as our enemies.

You have recognized that the work of one of the members of the IS, directed toward discrediting the International Secretariat and overtly violating its decisions, is incompatible with membership in the International Secretariat. Not one serious revolutionary will contest the justice and necessity of your decision. Leadership can only be exercised by those who can exercise self-control. The members of the International Secretariat must set an example of discipline, and not take the initiative in criminally violating it.

The International Secretariat was elected by a legal assembly of representatives of the sections. The leaderships of the sections were elected democratically. No one has the slightest right to deny that the plenum (International Secretariat) expresses the real will of our international organization.

In case of doubt about the competence of the Secretariat and its majority, the Secretariat has a simple method of resolving the question: open the situation, as it stands, to all sections and ask their opinion. *There cannot be the slightest doubt that the overwhelming majority of the sections will support the majority of the International Secretariat* and call the disrupters to order. If even this method were found to be wanting, still another road would remain: call together the representatives of all sections to examine the questions in dispute and make decisions. This would make it impossible in the future for isolated groups and individuals to sabotage the central and most important work.

If one group or another that hangs around the fringes of our organization prefers an anarchist federation to a democratic-centralist organization, even this will not hinder our growth, development, and progress. All the groups that split from the Bolshevik-Leninists are dragging out a pitiable existence, without hope or perspective. Let this be a warning to those who take the problem of discipline in the organization too lightly.

I want you to know that my support is entirely and completely assured to the International Secretariat—that is, to its legal majority.

Communist greetings,

G. Gourov [L. Trotsky]
To the American Section

Dear Comrades:

The question of work in the trade unions continues to be of unusual importance in all countries. In the U.S. it arises on a wide scale for the first time at a moment when the entire national economic and political life is upset and when government policy is giving an impulse to the trade union movement. It is not at all likely that the [Roosevelt] administration’s liberalism with respect to the unions—not to speak of the present policy of planning in general—will continue for long. In any case one may certainly say that the liberalism of the administration with respect to the trade unions will not at once transform itself into liberalism on the part of the union bureaucracy with respect to Communists. On the contrary, not only the reactionary gang of Green and Company but also the bureaucracy of the “progressive” trade unions will redouble their onslaughts against the revolutionary wing in order to show the White House that they fully merit its confidence and backing. There exists the great danger that in the present period of deep mass ferment and trade union development the Communists will again let themselves be isolated from the workers’ organizations. The trade union bureaucrats can achieve this aim the more easily because the Stalinist bureaucracy has gravely compromised communism in the workers’ eyes by its policy of ultimatism, commands and impotence. This compromising will inevitably affect us too.

Wherever they are expelling Communists from trade unions, or may begin to do so tomorrow, it is not only permissible but even obligatory not to unfurl the banner of communism prematurely but to conduct “anonymous” revolutionary work. It may be objected that such a method of work contains certain dangers within itself: by hiding its banner, the organization can, without noticing it, become unused to its own banner. Adaptation to the
enemy and to the prejudices of the masses contains the danger of degeneration into opportunism. All this is quite true. The party as a whole must act with its banner unfurled and call things by their right names. But in the given case we do not speak of the party (League), but of certain of its detachments working inside hostile trade unions. This is not at all the same thing. Communists working in trade unions of course cannot in any case disavow their party, that is, make statements contradicting its program and its decisions. But the Communist in the trade union is certainly not compelled to say everything that the party as a whole says. The Communist working in a trade union is not obliged to call himself a Communist at the top of his voice. The party (League) can and should say fully in its press, in its mass meetings, in strike meetings and general meetings of trade unionists, the things that Communists inside the unions may not be able to say at any given moment. It is necessary to make a wise division of labor, by which the various parts of the political organization supplement one another.

Of course, this does not mean that Communists working inside trade unions can decide at their own pleasure the party's policy for work in the unions: the whole political organization must decide what forms of adaptation to the trade union situation are permissible and suitable. The more difficult revolutionary work in the trade unions becomes, the more strictly systematic should be party control of its members in the trade unions. But this control can, and in the majority of cases should, be strictly secret under present conditions.

It is true that even when there is such control, "anonymous" work in the trade unions can lead to a contraction of the horizon and a lowering of the revolutionary level. There is only one means of guarding against this: Communists must not be simply trade unionists, but must at the same time do party work outside the unions, even if secretly in order not to compromise themselves with the trade unions.

In many cases the Stalinists declared that they would agree to work in the trade unions but only on condition that they be granted in advance the right to have Communist fractions. Such "conditions" are grotesque: to demand from the trade union bureaucracy, which is hunting for Communists, that the latter be benevolently installed to work with the necessary comfort, threatening the bureaucrats that, if they refuse, the Communists will "strike," that is, refuse to do revolutionary work—to demand that is manifest nonsense. We must know how to work in the
unions without comfort, and without the authorization of the bureaucracy.

It is clear that Communists must be united in a fraction, but that fraction, while working on the basis of strict internal discipline, must in no case appear openly as a fraction should the conditions be unfavorable for that (and in the majority of cases this is just the situation).

The party (League) clearly must have a platform for trade union work over any given period. It is necessary to know how to translate this platform into the language of the trade unionists, in order to lead the masses forward more surely. The danger of what we call "tail-endism" (a real and serious danger) will be all the better avoided if the party as a whole will decisively supplement the work of its trade union fractions.

It is absolutely clear, on the other hand, that such careful work in the unions should continue until the Communists have succeeded in proving to the workers that they are not Stalinist bureaucrats or obtuse ultimatists, but serious and capable fighters who can be relied on and who consequently are worthy of trust. The more the influence of the Communist fractions grows in the unions, the more boldly and openly will it unfurl the banner of its party.

We sincerely hope that these basic considerations will be entirely approved by you.

ATTEMPTS TO REVIVE THE CONTROL COMMISSION'S CORPSE

September 27, 1933

The Executive Committee at one time appointed an ad hoc control commission, for the sole purpose of investigating slanders against some comrades that were being spread by opponents of the League and had appeared even inside the League. Three comrades who were very familiar with the dishonest character of the insinuations were chosen to sit on the commission. Comrade Witte was designated as the head of the commission. He not only
did not censure the actions of the slandered comrades but officially assumed responsibility for these actions as a member of the plenum.

This control commission, however, proved to be incapable of working. Over a period of several months it did not meet a single time. It did not conduct any investigation whatsoever into the slanders and insinuations.

In view of the obvious deficiency of the temporary control commission, the plenum, the highest body of the Bolshevik-Leninists, issued a definitive resolution on the subject of the slanders. By that action the control commission, which in actuality no longer existed, was dissolved formally as well.

However, when it became clear that the members of the commission, and Comrade Witte in particular, were drawn into an unprincipled struggle against the League and against the plenum (IS), they made an attempt to revive the control commission, which had already been abolished, in order to use its name to legitimize the unsavory slanders against their current political adversaries which they themselves had previously denounced.

The Executive Committee condemns this inadmissible conduct with indignation and revulsion and serves notice that it will purge its ranks of all such corrupt petty-bourgeois and lumpen-proletarian morality with a red-hot iron.

PROPOSED STATUTES FOR THE PLENUM OF THE IS

September 27, 1933

1. The plenum receives its mandate from the enlarged plenum or from the international conference and bases itself on their general directives.

2. All questions at the plenum are decided by majority vote and are binding on all organizations under [its authority] and especially for the members of the plenum itself.

3. Members of the plenum who are in a minority have the right to make their personal opinion known to the leaderships of all
sections. Obviously, decisions that have been made take force immediately, and, moreover, the members of the minority are bound to give an example of firm discipline.

4. On questions of exceptional importance, members of the plenum who are in a minority can demand the convocation of an enlarged plenum. If the majority finds that a convocation of the enlarged plenum is inconvenient or impossible due to material circumstances, the minority can demand a poll of the leaderships of all the sections. The decisions of the majority of the section leaderships are binding.

Addendum: Since the representative of the Belgian section resides in another city, it has become necessary to regularize relations in order, on the one hand, to facilitate the participation of the representative of the Belgian section in resolving the most important questions, and, on the other hand, to avoid delaying current work and the most important decisions through correspondence. In view of this the plenum resolves that:

a. All documents on pending questions should be transmitted to the representative of the Belgian section in good time.

b. Sessions should be held with the participation of the Belgian delegate once (twice?) a month, in which the most important fundamental questions are submitted for decision.

c. In the intervals between these sessions, the vote of the Belgian representative will be taken into account on those important questions that do not need immediate decision.

5. All current work will be carried out by the members of the plenum in Paris.

6. On all questions demanding an immediate decision, regardless of their importance, the members of the plenum in Paris can make the decision on their own authority.
COMRADE WITTE'S VIOLATIONS
OF BOLSHEVIK ORGANIZATIONAL
PRINCIPLES

September 28, 1933

(After a precise listing of all the illegitimate acts of Comrade Witte)

It seems absolutely unbelievable that Comrade Witte invokes democracy for his actions. Let us leave aside the character of the "democracy" in his own section. In any case, one of the basic principles of democracy is to submit to the decisions of the majority. The IS, for better or for worse, is elected by the representatives of the major sections and as a result reflects the point of view of the majority of our international organization. Being in a minority at the plenum, Witte had the right to bring his point of view to the attention of the leaderships of all the sections, to prepare for a change in the composition or policies of the IS at a future international conference or at another enlarged plenum. Such an approach would have been totally compatible with the principles of democratic centralism. Instead, Witte has called on the [French] League not to carry out the decisions of the democratically elected center. Acting in such a way is a blow against democracy and at the same time a mark of contempt for centralism. In other words, Comrade Witte's conduct is absolutely incompatible with Bolshevik principles of organization.

At the plenum, Witte simply said: "The Greek section will leave. I am the Greek section." These words alone adequately characterize Witte's political and organizational methods, and the regime he has established in the Greek section. But Witte obviously overestimates his potential and his strength, not looking objectively at the situation. Even if he could succeed on the basis of the principle, "I am the Greek section"—a Bonapartist, non-Marxist principle—in breaking the Greek section away temporarily, such an action can only lead to deep ferment inside the section. The workers will want to examine why and how they were separated from the International Opposition, which up until now has given
them their basic ideas and political direction. In previous years, splits in the Greek section did not turn out badly. However, it is perfectly clear that one of the major causes of these splits was the principle, “I am the section.” We can hardly doubt that Marxist-Leninist ideas, counterposed to Witte’s methods, will produce new differences within the Greek section. Witte will retain a narrow, purely national sect in the style of the sect of Landau and Company, which will lead a hopeless existence with respect to the great prospects that are now opening before us.

In analyzing the history of Witte’s conflict with our international organization, we can establish the following state of affairs: Witte is obviously accustomed to ordering his national section around and reducing the democratic elements to a minimum. That was his custom when he was called into the central [IS] leadership. Circumstances rapidly made it clear that his national experience is absolutely insufficient for the tasks of an independent international leadership. In itself, this is not an irreparable misfortune. The IS as a whole is composed mainly of young militants, who are compelled to learn from experience. Such an apprenticeship has the quality of a friendly collective effort. But Comrade Witte brought with him a readymade principle: “I am the IS.” When he ran up against natural resistance, he took upon himself the task of dominating the entire IS by means of organizational measures behind the scenes. So systematically and with a plan, behind the backs of the IS and of the Executive Committee of the League, he began to fan all sorts of grievances, to compromise the IS, not even stopping at deliberately false statements, etc.

In this effort, Witte allied himself with the most unprincipled and undisciplined elements, who at heart had nothing in common with Bolshevik-Leninist ideas and who are still in our midst only because their disruptive, and for the most part demoralizing, work has gone unpunished too long. Even during his short trip to London, Witte tried to bring the British section into opposition to our international organization and its leadership. For that purpose, he specifically told the English comrades that the proposal to enter the ILP had come from isolated individuals and not from the plenum. However, the plenum, with Witte’s active participation, had unanimously adopted a resolution on this question (enclosed is the relevant excerpt from the minutes). Comrade Witte could hardly have failed to recall that decision, because he had taken on himself the task of carrying it out, that is, of defending it before the English comrades. This example, with
those cited above, gives us a sufficient sample of the methods Comrade Witte resorts to.

For what purpose? He declares that no political difference separates him from the Left Opposition. We have heard the same statement dozens of times from the lips of Rosmer, Landau, Frey, Mill, etc. They all agreed to accept the “ideas” of the Left Opposition, provided that that did not bind them to the logical consequences of policy or practice, to sincere collective effort, or to revolutionary discipline. This sort of attitude toward the ideas of the Left Opposition is characteristic not of a Bolshevik-Leninist, but of a petty-bourgeois fellow-traveler. The presence of such elements in our organization is unavoidable for a certain period of time. The best of them will gradually be trained in the proletarian milieu, and the worst will be thrown out; but it is absolutely evident that petty-bourgeois fellow-travelers, thoroughly imbued with the thought, “I am the organization,” have no place in the leading body of our international organization. Comrade Witte agitates strongly against the IS plenum, accusing it of being incapable of working, etc. . . . We are not at all inclined to close our eyes to the defects and shortcomings of our work. We are prepared to take every step to improve the work of the IS in every area. But we demand that comrades not forget that in the plenum there was not a single activist assigned to devote all his time to the affairs of the IS. We don’t even have anyone to handle the technical work of copying and duplicating documents.

However, despite the great shortcomings of our work, Comrade Witte has less right than anyone else to reproach us. Up until the month of September, Comrade Witte was the full-time secretary for [ ] months. All the comrades recognize that precisely during that period, the IS was almost completely nonexistent. Letters went unanswered, and most of the sections complained of the lack of any directives. The fact that Comrade Witte was devoting all his time to stirring up trouble behind the scenes does not, in our opinion, speak well in his behalf.

Several times, the plenum of the IS addressed itself to Comrade Witte, reminding him of his obligations and suggesting that he carry on his opposition through legitimate channels. Witte replied to these appeals and reminders from the comrades by intensifying his disruptive activity. Such a situation can no longer be tolerated. The plenum cannot allow one of its members to systematically and deliberately break discipline and to urge lower bodies to break it.
The plenum decrees: we find further collaboration with Witte impermissible; we charge Comrade Witte with the responsibility for this situation; we call on our Greek section to replace Witte with a comrade who is really guided by the organizational principles of Bolshevism.

P.S. It would be good to insert in the text a phrase of this sort: Comrade Witte is fairly new in the Left Opposition. He has hardly participated in the work of our organization. He has scarcely had a chance to show that he has actually mastered Bolshevik ideas and methods. We believe that he still has much to learn in that regard. That is why we find the fact that Comrade Witte poses as an implacable judge of everything and everyone, and even aspires to personally split our organization, totally out of place.

LOZOVSKY, STRATEGIST OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Published October 1933

In November 1917 a struggle was raging in the higher circles of the Bolshevik Party around the question of coalition with the conciliators, the structure of the Soviet government, and the general direction of the government’s policies. Lozovsky, having joined the party not long before, submitted a “statement” to the Bolshevik faction of the [Soviet] Central Executive Committee on November 5, 1917. In spite of the proletarian victory that had been won, Lozovsky wrote the following on the refusal of the Bolshevik Central Committee to capitulate to the petty-bourgeois democracy:

“I don’t consider it possible in the name of party discipline to remain silent when I recognize, when I feel with all the fibers of my soul (!!), that the Central Committee’s tactic is leading to the isolation of the vanguard of the proletariat, to a civil war among the working people, and to the defeat of the great revolution.”

The Bolshevik Central Committee agreed to include in the
government some Mensheviks and SRs in the same proportion that they were represented in the [Second] Congress of Soviets. But they, being worthless Mensheviks, demanded for themselves a majority in the government. Lozovskiy wrote in connection with this:

"I cannot in the name of party discipline be silent when Marxists, ignoring both reason and nature, do not want to face the objective conditions that absolutely compel us, under threat of complete ruin, to make an agreement with all the socialist parties."

The conciliators demanded the removal from the Soviet government of Lenin and Trotsky "as the culprits directly responsible for the October Revolution." The Bolshevik Central Committee decisively voted down this proposal. Lozovskiy wrote on this score:

"I cannot in the name of party discipline give in to the personality cult; establish political agreement with all the political parties and secure our basic demands simply according to the term of office of some individual or other in the ministry; and cause a delay because of this, although there may be bloodshed at any moment."

In conclusion Lozovskiy demanded:

"... a party congress be called very soon for the resolution of the following question: will the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (Bolshevik) remain a Marxist party of the working class or will it definitively enter on the path that has nothing in common with revolutionary Marxism?"

Not having elicited the right response, Lozovskiy left the party within one-and-a-half or two years. Now, relying on Clausewitz, he is elaborating a theory of "strikes as wars conducted by other means." This is just the task for him!
ON THE PROJECTED YOUTH CONFERENCE

October 6, 1933

To all sections and all Bolshevik-Leninist youth organizations

Dear Comrades:

We enclose herewith a copy of the circular-letter sent by the Socialist Youth League (SJV), the youth group of our friends, the OSP. It concerns the call in two months' time for an international conference of revolutionary socialist and communist youth. We attach exceptional importance to this initiative. The collapse of the two Internationals is most seriously reflected in the youth movement, which is the weakest link in the proletarian army. The regeneration of the international workers' movement and the creation of a new International are inconceivable without the awakening, assembling, international unification, and education of the proletarian youth in revolutionary theory and struggle. The Amsterdam conference can and must become an important step along this road.

It appears from the attached circular-letter that organizations and groups of revolutionary youth quite different in their political physiognomy will be taking part in the conference. We think that a composition of this kind at the present stage is not only inevitable, but also politically correct. It is not as if they were organized parties, with an entrenched bureaucracy. All the youth organizations listed in the circular, or at least the overwhelming majority, are in the process of formation, evolving towards communism, and seeking only to define their theory and politics. At a youth conference of this kind, the young Bolshevik-Leninists can do work of tremendous importance.

Two months is very short notice. So it is necessary now to undertake an intervention into the conference worthy of our sections. To this end the International Secretariat has established a special Central Commission, presided over by a member of the Secretariat, with the participation of representatives of the communist youth of three national sections: in the hands of this
commission will be concentrated all the preparatory work, under the general direction of the IS.

We recommend that the national leaderships create National Commissions of this type in their countries, and that they start work immediately.

The first task is to work seriously on the agenda proposed by the Dutch comrades, to prepare draft resolutions, to complete the agenda with new questions, to work out political and organizational theses, etc. Any draft theses of this kind, no matter how small, should be sent immediately to the Central Commission at the address given below. At the same time it is hoped, in view of the shortage of time, that each section will send its draft theses to the other sections, which of course will not remove from the commission the task of sending out the necessary materials.

It is to be hoped that the greatest possible number of our sections and groups will send their own representatives to the conference. However, we want to forewarn each section that it must cover its own travel expenses. Some sections may join their forces to send a common delegate. It is absolutely permissible, obviously, to mandate [as a delegate] a comrade living in another country, if he is closely familiar with the life of the section in question and can express its point of view.

In a case where material difficulties prevent sending a delegate, it is necessary for the section to prepare its own greetings to the conference, along with a brief report on youth work and a brief explanation of its general principled positions.

We do not doubt that in several countries youth organizations, groups, and fractions exist that have not yet been placed on the Dutch comrades' list, but that could successfully be invited to participate in the conference. We propose that you search them out immediately in your country, and advise the Dutch organization, in order to have them officially invited, and at the same time that you immediately begin preliminary negotiations on their participation in the conference.

When the first preparatory steps have been taken and the Central Commission has enough information, it would be very desirable, wherever possible, to hold public meetings of the revolutionary youth on the topic, "The Amsterdam Conference of Revolutionary Youth." At such meetings it would be desirable to hold a vote on short resolutions that express the necessity of organizing the proletarian youth on the basis of revolutionary Marxism.

The most important point on the agenda is the fourth: "Fundamental..."
mental principles and forms of international collaboration." On this question we must elaborate a programmatic declaration that must in its later development become the charter of the new youth International. We invite all sections, without exception, to submit any proposals on this question. For our part, we think it is absolutely necessary to submit a special resolution on the following question: "The Revolutionary Youth and Marxist Theory." The most important task of Bolshevik-Leninists in the present primitive stage of regeneration of the international youth movement will be to pose in all its sharpness the proposition that the Fourth International must be constructed upon the granite foundations of Marxist theory if it is to be equal to the tasks of our epoch. It is precisely the youth who must be inoculated with the understanding of the inestimable importance of Marxist theory as a weapon of revolutionary practice. In response to the underestimation of the importance of theory, and even more to the disdain for theory in the ranks of the youth (such sentiments are very characteristic of the organizations of the Two-and-a-Half International), we must offer a resistance that is friendly in form, but fundamentally intransigent.

The question of the struggle against fascism and war will necessarily have an important place in the work of the conference. Here we must be especially precise in putting forward the Leninist principles of revolutionary strategy, in opposition to the spirit of reformist and Austro-Marxist capitulation, to centrist indecision of all kinds, and to the masquerade "politics" of Barbusse-Muenzenberg, who, because of their lies and their deceit, because of their outward appearance and inner emptiness, are particularly deadly for the revolutionary youth movement.

These are the most important considerations and suggestions that we can give you at present. We are relying firmly on your initiative and firmness in the preparatory work. It is a matter—we may say without exaggeration—of historic importance! The Bolshevik-Leninists can and therefore must play a great role in the creation of a new youth International.

We hope that within three days of receiving this letter you will send us a brief communication on your plans, your opportunities, and the practical steps you have already taken to prepare for the conference.
Dear Comrade Sch.:

From your letter of October 20 I can see once again how differently we approach political questions. You want to convince me that it is possible to have discussions with the Brandlerites too. I would also do this if the political situation obliged me to undertake this disagreeable task, just as I would have discussions with the Social Democrats and the Stalinists. The question is, however, whether we can form a common journal with the Brandlerites. I consider this possibility to be excluded. You comfort me with the thought that the Brandlerites would as a matter of course refuse to take up our proposal. In this way you show that you have a certain amount of respect for the Brandlerites' political logic. Why should I not have respect for my political logic? It is not clear to me how one can win over revolutionary elements by displaying lack of character in the face of the bitterest opponents.

A journal must have a platform. For me this platform is the Declaration of Four. Do you wish to propose another platform? I will study it with the greatest attention. I would consider entering into the creation of a journal without a platform to be literary adventurism and not revolutionary politics.
MAN’S FATE IS A TRUE WORK OF ART

November 9, 1933

Mr. Clifton Fadiman
Simon and Schuster, Inc.
New York, N.Y., USA

Dear Mr. Fadiman:

You have asked me which books I think are worth publishing in America. I would say, more than any other, the novel by the young French author, Andre Malraux, *La Condition Humaine* [Man’s Fate], published by Librairie Gallimard, 43 Rue de Beaune, Paris.

This novel does not seek to be only a literary work of art. It deals with the great problems of human destiny. In the context of the social and cultural crisis that is engulfing the entire world, the questions that have always stirred mankind and inspired great artists—life and death, love and heroism, the individual and society—are posed with a new sharpness for the creative mind. Only from this source can contemporary art, which has spent itself in the search for purely formal conquests, rejuvenate itself.

In the last analysis, Malraux is an individualist and a pessimist. To feel this way about the world and about life is to me psychologically alien, not to say repugnant. But in Malraux’s pessimism, which reaches the level of despair, there is an element of heroism. Malraux draws his international heroes from the stage of revolution. The setting for his personal dramas is Shanghai in 1927. The author is well acquainted with the Chinese revolution from his own experience. But this novel is neither ethnography nor history. It is a novel of human destiny and personal passions to which the revolution imparts the utmost tension. The individualist and pessimist for the most part rises above individualism and pessimism. Only a purpose greater than the individual, a purpose for which man is ready to give up his life, imparts meaning to human existence. That is the ultimate
significance of this novel, which is alien to philosophical didacticism, and which from beginning to end is a true work of art.

Precisely in the United States, where the terrible crisis in the conditions of everyday life relentlessly undermines any purely empirical approach to life, Malraux's novel, it seems to me, should have many readers.

Sincerely,
L. Trotsky

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
FROM NEW YORK

November 13, 1933

What is necessary for a successful struggle against Hitlerism? First of all it has to be understood that this is a serious and difficult problem which cannot be solved simply by a commercial boycott. The question will be settled inside Germany. The internal contradictions of the Hitler regime are immense, but they can lead to two different outcomes: war or revolution.

In case of a war, which Hitler is stubbornly and systematically preparing, the fate of the regime will be linked to that of the war. But it is now clear to any thinking person that a new war could destroy not only fascism, but European civilization. And this would be too high a price!

Only the revolutionary overthrow of the Nazi regime can avert war, and it is in this sense that I say the question of Hitler will be decided within Germany. Unlike the light-minded bureaucrats of the Comintern, I do not expect an imminent revolution in Germany. The catastrophe that has befallen the German proletariat is too far-reaching. Not only their organizations but their political hopes have been shattered. After such terrible defeats the masses of the people need a considerable length of time to gather their forces anew.

At the same time, the creation of a new proletarian party will begin. You ask, is it not possible that the Social Democracy and Communist Party might hold on to their historic roles in the
movement? No, they cannot. The working class will excuse many mistakes on the part of its leaders, but it cannot and will not excuse the monstrous crimes of the Social Democracy or the shameful bankruptcy of the so-called Communist Party. All of history attests to the fact that a revolutionary party which has proven itself wanting in a great historic test will pass from the scene, or at least forfeit any leading role. The German proletariat will muster its ranks under a new banner. It will build a new party and take part in the construction of a new International.

I do not at all mean by this that all the previous work of the Social Democracy and Communist Party is simply to be expunged from history. Millions upon millions of Social Democratic and Communist workers are now painfully reflecting on all that has happened and, guided by their previous knowledge, are devising for themselves a new way of thinking. This invisible, underground activity goes on in the plants, in the prisons, and in the concentration camps. It is not at all by chance that three million votes answered Hitler yesterday with a No! And this under a political terror unprecedented in world history. These numbers will grow. Revolutionary fighters will gain strength and become tempered. Germany is heading, not as quickly as we would like but with iron necessity, toward its greatest revolution.

How, you ask, can the American workers help the struggle of the German proletariat against fascism? The greatest help can and should be to fight fascism in America itself. Germans constitute a significant part of the U.S. population. Hitler would like to convert them into a yeast for American fascism. The working masses of America should follow this process with the greatest attention. Every American worker should say to himself: We won't let the fascists raise their heads! And saying it is not enough—it has to be acted on. Every seat of fascist infection should be surrounded by a ring of defensive combat organizations. Every attempt by the fascists to take over the streets, destroy a newspaper, or break up a meeting should be mercilessly nipped in the bud.

National Socialism is inseparably linked to anti-Semitism and its pogroms. For the Jewish part of the population in the United States the question of the growth of fascism in America is thus of vital importance. To rely on the American "constitution" as a guarantee in itself against fascism would be pure childishness. The example of Italy, and especially Germany, should certainly teach something to mature people! Only a mass struggle against
fascism is capable of checking its growth. In this sense the Jewish working population of America can hope for an effective defense only from a mighty growth of the workers’ movement in the United States.

COMMENTS ON THE ACTIVE-SOCIALIST FRONT

November 13, 1933

1. It is altogether unclear what is intended by the initiators of the Active-Socialist Front: a permanent bloc of the existing workers’ parties or a new party? Evidently it is not quite clear to the initiators themselves. If it is a matter of a new party, then what is its program, what are its strategic and tactical principles? If it is a matter of an agreement among existing parties, then which ones exactly and for what concrete tasks? From several passages in the statement, one may draw the conclusion that it is a matter of a permanent agreement of all existing workers’ organizations for the resolution of all tasks of the class struggle. But such a permanent bloc, inevitably depriving all participants of independence, essentially differs in no way from a party, even if it is “above all parties.” Again, the question arises: where is the program?

2. The statement sees the reason for the defeat of the German proletariat in worthless leadership. This in itself is undeniable, but the statement reduces worthlessness to insufficient “activity.” Every tendency is also defined by its direction. Of this, there is not a word in the statement. Activity—along what line, toward what end, with what methods?

The mass and apparatus—says the statement—were excellent in Germany, only the leadership proved to be bankrupt. This is an incorrect and thoroughly mechanical formulation of the question. An apparatus is a grouping of people on the basis of definite ideas and methods (program and tactics). How can an apparatus be “excellent” if the ideas and methods of the leadership have proved to be worthless? Between the mass and the
apparatus, between the apparatus and the leadership, there is not a mechanical but a dialectical relationship: they influence each other and educate each other. With a worthless leadership an apparatus cannot be excellent; with a bad apparatus the mass cannot be prepared for revolutionary struggle.

3. The statement speaks of an "ill-fated split" in the workers' movement. Here again, a lack of understanding of the importance of the program and tactics of the party is displayed. A split is the product of the irreconcilability of programs. Can there be any question of our unity with fascist workers' organizations? The authors of the statement recognize, we hope, that there cannot. But the difference between Marxist and reformist politics is no less irreconcilable, although it exists on a different plane. All policies of the Social Democracy as a party are directed toward preserving, strengthening, treating, and curing the capitalist state. The policies of the revolutionary party are directed toward the overthrow of the capitalist state. How can these two parties unite?

Opposition between programs, however, does not exclude the possibility of a temporary united front, where it is a matter of defense against a common enemy directly threatening both parties. The tasks and methods of common actions must be completely, clearly, and precisely defined.

4. It is absolutely impossible to agree with the statement in regard to the decisive role assigned to psycho-technique, which is in essence substituted for politics. Russia has given us the sole example of a successful conquest of power by the proletariat. But the Bolshevik Party was guided, not by psycho-technique, but by Marxist political principles. The statement speaks much of courage, enthusiasm, and self-sacrifice, contrasting them to the economic interests of the proletariat. This contrast is completely unscientific. The enthusiasm of the masses is aroused not by psycho-technical devices, but by a clear formulation of revolutionary objectives. Where the correct policies exist, the technical methods and forms of agitation have, of course, their own importance. But even in regard to psycho-techniques, the statement gives no serious, new, or valuable instructions. Ultimately, everything is reduced to a few symbols. This is not enough for victories.

It is very curious that the statement proposes that the common front use the "three arrows" and the slogan "Freedom." But you see, this Social Democratic symbolism did not prevent either the party or the Iron Front from revealing its complete internal
rottenness. The three arrows are now a sign of political bankruptcy. It would be naive to think that the revolution will gather its battalions under these signs.

5. Instead of a political program of action, the statement proposes a “psychological truce” in the working class. Whoever breaks the truce, whoever indulges in insulting expressions toward other “socialists,” will be declared traitors. A remarkable solution to the problem! From now on, the only people who can be declared traitors are those who express themselves impolitely; if Hilferding serves as a capitalist minister of finance or Grzezinsky384 shoots workers down, they must be called, not traitors, but respected comrades.

6. The authors attempt to base their psycho-technique on the reflexology of Pavlov.385 That Pavlov is a brilliant psychophysiolat is completely undeniable. But the attempt of Pavlov himself to mechanically transfer his conclusions to the field of politics lent itself to nothing but reactionary muddleheadedness. To replace the laws of mass struggle with the laws of individual reflexes and to put Pavlov in Marx’s place will not do at all. (Permit me to cite my polemic against Pavlov on this very question.)

7. It is the greatest mistake to think that the Social Democracy and the Communist Party will survive and remain at the head of the proletariat. Historical experience and the observations of the greatest teachers of the proletariat (Marx, Engels, Lenin) equally testify that a political catastrophe, the responsibility for which lies with a revolutionary party, kills the given party and forever removes it from the scene. No injections of psycho-technique can save the Social Democracy. What is needed is a new party based on the principles of Marx and Lenin, taking into account all the international experience of the last decade. What is needed is a new, Fourth International!
British Section

Dear Comrades:

The municipal elections in England are extremely important in that they are symptomatic of the colossal growth of the Labour Party, and the decline at least in their relative influence of both the ILP and the Communist Party. In a situation that is exceptionally favorable for its revolutionary wing, the Comintern is not growing stronger, but weaker. This is not a national but an international phenomenon. The elections in Norway and Switzerland indicate the same tendency. These facts fully confirm the diagnosis we made following the victory of fascism in Germany. The Comintern is going to ruin far more swiftly than the parties of the Second International, and this is quite understandable, considering how the directly revolutionary way out of the situation in Germany has been called into question. The Social Democracy is temporarily experiencing yet another influx of recruits. In the end, these fresh masses will explode the Social Democracy from within and lay the foundation for the construction of a genuinely revolutionary party. But for this to happen the left wing, starting with the Bolshevik-Leninists, will have to have a correct policy.

The so-called British Communist Party is a corpse to which anything tying itself will be doomed to rot. As far as we are able to determine, the ILP is increasingly threatened by this danger. Instead of turning toward the Labour Party it has turned toward the Comintern.

True, one can object that the ILP just recently broke away from the Labour Party, and that we evaluated this as a step forward. That is absolutely correct! And of course we are by no means suggesting now that the ILP go back into the Labour Party and submit to its discipline.

Such a policy would be a complete betrayal of the revolutionary
tasks facing the British proletariat. But it is perfectly obvious that the ILP will be able to do serious revolutionary work only if it becomes a lever of revolutionary influence upon the masses inside the Labour Party and the trade unions.

It should be clearly understood that a liaison between the ILP and Communist Party under the present conditions will not save the latter, but will bring about the certain destruction of the former. The leadership of the Comintern has completely failed to understand, and is incapable of understanding, the lesson of the recent great events. The Stalinist bureaucracy essentially no longer even pays any attention to the great historic tasks, which require the winning over of the proletarian majority. These bureaucrats, fighting for their posts and their salaries, are only concerned about somehow shoring up their livelihood, by snatching away a hundred or a thousand workers from the ILP. The immediate duty of the Bolshevik-Leninists is to turn the ILP away from the Comintern and toward the Labour Party. This cannot be done, however, without our taking a clear and distinct position ourselves on the question of the Communist Party. For this reason, we are looking forward to hearing from you what conclusions your organization has drawn for its own activity from the recent municipal elections.

MINUTES OF THE ICL PLENUM

November 18-19, 1933

Present: G. [Trotsky], Sneevliet, Vereecken, Souzo [Leonetti], Schwarz [Leon Sedov], Bauer, Fischer [Schuessler], at the third and last session, Frank.

Presiding: G. Secretary: Steen [Klement].

Agenda:
- Holland
- Conference of Four
- SAP
- International Communist League
- Belgium
- Activity of the IS
First Session

1. Holland: Report by Comrade Sneevliet on the state of negotiations for the fusion of the RSP of Holland with the OSP:

After the Paris conference the RSP took the initiative for unification. A united front between the two parties, the NAS, etc., was made, and a series of joint conferences was held between the leaders of both parties to discuss the differences and the possibilities of unification. The RSP declared that it recognizes—and not just beginning with today—the necessity for working in the unions. It was decided that both parties would call a congress during Christmas 1933, the agenda of which would be preparations for unification. Later the OSP proposed a more accelerated tempo: the Christmas congress should already bring about a fusion. In short: an ideological discussion is nothing but a waste of time, their members would accept the program without difficulties just as they had accepted without difficulties the Declaration of Four. It is necessary only to come to an agreement on technical and organizational questions of unification. In this sense they propose the 14 points, which do not constitute a fusion but the annexation of the RSP to the OSP. The RSP declared that it is against all changes proposed and holds that a broad discussion among the membership and in the press is necessary. Only after that could the 14 points be discussed. To the sessions held in common by the representatives of the two organizations representatives of the SAP and the ICL should be invited. This almost led to a break. The OSP complained vociferously against the methods of the International Communist League, the RSP refused to adopt the international practices of the Second International. The OSP gave in. At the following session Held (ICL) took part. A program commission was formed to which both parties submitted drafts for a party platform. At first the OSP was against the mention of soviets in the program, then it gave in. Agreement was reached on a document which would serve as a basis for open discussion (see De Baanbreker, number 29). Then the trade union theses of the RSP were adopted. A technical commission would analyze the 14 points of the OSP and the counterpropositions of the RSP, which demanded equal rights. The RSP expounded before the joint leaderships the international policy of the OSP, and its connections with the London Bureau and with the Bloc of Four. The OSP declared that the London Bureau will certainly be dissolved by December. A separation before the fusion does not enter into the question. They will remain there in
order to be able to influence the development of the ILP. The OSP speaker completely liquidated the question of the NAP. For unification the following regulations are adopted: the name of the party—RSAP; name of the paper—*De Rode Vaan*; the Central Committee consists of nine representatives of the OSP and six representatives of the RSP. President—Schmidt; secretary—de Kadt.\textsuperscript{391} Treasurer—OSP. Permanent functionaries: president, secretary, and the parliamentary representative. A financial committee must determine the financial status of both parties. The unification congress: February 17-18, 1934. Comrades Sneevliet and de Kadt must find an appropriate formula to guarantee the conditions of unification. The OSP states that the prestige of the united front will diminish if the unification does not take place as soon as possible. Sneevliet remarked that unification without a broad discussion in the working class would be artificial and would produce splits soon after the fusion, and that the OSP as a whole took an overbearing attitude and lots of energy is lost in the struggle with it. What changes the OSP is capable of are shown in the introduction to the trade union theses in *De Fakkel*, in the article on the Reichstag fire, or by the defense of people who declare that the Russian Left Opposition should have made a coup d'etat in 1923 and that would have saved us the further developments. The OSP wants the Fourth International without the ultimatism of Trotsky. A rapid fusion would also mean a break with the ICL. We must avoid it. In the interest of the developments in Holland as well as that of the Bloc of Four and the new International it is necessary to gain time and slow down the rhythm of unification.

**Trotsky:** For the OSP the differences are not of a political nature. With their quitting the Social Democratic party it seems to them that everything has already been done. They have signed the Declaration of Four. But this in itself is insufficient; it is only a general demarcation from the spirit of adventurism and opportunism. Their break with the Social Democracy completely appeases their conscience. They are not yet awakened to revolutionary Marxian thought. But this will inevitably come. In *De Werker*, Saltaz speaks with irony of "learned" Marxism. De Kadt "does not like" to talk theory. They are ready to accept all platforms. We could accept a formal break with our Dutch section if by its fusion with the OSP the latter would not at the same time become an ally of Tranmael, Paul Louis,\textsuperscript{392} etc. We are, so to say, already compromised by the fact that two of our allies belong at the same time to the Bloc of Seven, so that talk of a Two-and-One-
Half [International] is thus partly justified. The OSP speaks of our ultimatism and forgets that it learned this word from us without understanding it. To pose ultimatums to the working class is a crime, but to present an ultimatum to our enemies, or to the allies of our enemies, is possible and necessary. We must present the OSP with an ultimatum: choose either the NAP or us. They must choose us, since Tranmael has need of them, but they have need of us. In an abridged form we are reliving the experience of the Anglo-Russian Committee. No fusion on this ambiguous basis. It is the same with the SAP. De Baanbreker must publish the theses of our German comrades on the NAP. It comes down to this—once the internal struggle among the centrists breaks out, all the insufficiencies of empiricism will be demonstrated. They will reply with demagogy. That is why we must not give them any pretext such as, for example, if we exercised any privileges, or two-year guarantees, etc. And why, after all, a president? The Social Democracy has two of them, the Bolsheviks had none. The Central Committee is responsible to the party. Against a president, for democracy! The Declaration of Four signed by the OSP is sufficient basis for opening up a discussion.

Leonetti: As to Holland we must differentiate. The OSP hurries because it is pushed by its rank and file. To hold back without explaining the reasons is to arm the OSP. We must propose a common newspaper column in both papers, to meet the eventuality of the RSP’s withdrawal from the ICL.

Sneevliet: The OSP has already declared that the adherence of the RSP to the ICL is a brake on the development toward a Fourth International.

Leonetti: But the most important thing is not the withdrawal but a discussion and first of all on a national scale.

Sneevliet: After the fusion the adherence of the RSP to the ICL will no longer be possible since there will be no RSP. We must hold on for a certain time yet to a united front. The present united front is not a normal united front. In internal policy there is no possibility of slowing up the rhythm. For example the representative of the OSP does not write at all for the theoretical organ. They have brought three new subscriptions. Schmidt has absolutely nothing to say and already disillusions the workers. The OSP is already forced to make an appeal to the personal loyalty of the young members for the leadership. The parliamentary work of Sneevliet does not give him the possibility of influencing in a decisive manner the new party as a whole. That
is why the young people of the OSP, not at all educated, must be educated in the discussion. The leadership of the OSP is against a discussion. They do not want by a radical phrase in their program to lose their precious members. Sneevliet is in agreement against the [institution of] president.

Trotsky: The OSP itself has not broached the problems of our epoch; that is why the German and Belgian comrades must write for the Dutch papers articles on the boycott, theory and revolution, the NAP, the theses submitted, the Declaration of Four. At the Bloc of Four's conference we must drag the SAP and the OSP "by the hair."

Decided: Bauer will write for De Baanbreker an article on the NAP by Monday. Sneevliet will write for the International Bulletin in a week. Leonetti will write for De Fakkel, etc., an article on Saltaz. All the articles must be short.

Vereecken: Expresses doubt once again about the RSP withdrawing eventually from the ICL [after merging with the OSP]. After the unification won't the RSP become a fraction [in the merged Dutch party]?

Trotsky: Since we propose to our English section that they enter the ILP it is clear that by this they will break the connection with us. We have everything to gain, and in the face of all this the withdrawal is a secondary question. The unified party will be more of a federation than a party. A fraction always forms wherever a revolutionary minority distrusts the opportunists and the centrists of the majority. Afterwards; naturally, it is necessary to bring about a healthy fusion and not give the right of fraction. (Comrade Trotsky explains the action plan and a draft agenda for the conference of the Bloc of Four.)

Second Session

2. SAP: Report by Comrade Bauer on the relations between the Internationalist Communists of Germany (IKD) and the SAP:

As the comrades of the SAP refuse a unification platform, look for pretexts, and make the solution of various questions a preliminary condition for unification, it is now a question of just maintaining relatively good relations. The discussion turns around two questions: (1) the NAP and (2) a joint theoretical journal. The SAP is afraid of being swallowed up by us since it does not possess the positions that we have: no journal, no firm international relations; they also seem to be a little less rich in
numbers. After a discussion with the SAP our German group in Paris prepared a document on the NAP. The SAP made a rejoinder to it. Circumspection would prompt them to withdraw their theory of the reactionary epoch but they remain on their former positions theoretically and practically. The SAP also says that the London Bureau will die but they do not quit it and even press us to enter it. The Declaration of Four is for them history, not a reality. The too great influence of Trotsky [they say] hampers the IKD. Among other things they revive our old disagreements with them on the [1932] presidential elections. Their practical proposal: maintain the status quo and discussions. Unification will be possible only after the problems are exhausted to the very end. This already lasts three months. Either we unite on a platform, or the SAP has to be treated as any other organization. The right-wingers in the SAP do not want any organized party but a large organization of the masses. They have relations with Souvarine, also with Seydewitz, Fuchs and other Social Democrats in Switzerland who group around the pamphlet *Neu Beginnen*. Their head seems to be Thomas. Thomas at one time passed as the “Trotskyist” in the SAP and was for unification with the Left Opposition, the first against Walcher. . . . The SAP always reflected the great events, today the defeat leads to a liquidationist tendency of its right-wingers. We must be most cautious. We cannot afford to lose our Dutch comrades or the ICL will have to be strengthened.

*Trotsky* reads for information a letter from Comrade Ost, an ardent proponent of unification, [who] . . . calling attention to the SAP’s social patriotic position (Munich: defense of democratic imperialism against fascist imperialism), favors a more protracted development, with first a discussion of definite theses on the war question.)

*Schuessler*: According to the SAP, we are sectarians and have no contact with the masses: they could never become a mass party except by disregarding our advice. No one knows what would have become of the SAP if Hitler had not finished it energetically. We will get nowhere with them except through negotiations and discussions. They hide behind each other, and the emigres behind the Berlin members.

*Trotsky*: Behind the hesitations of the SAP there is not a little of Machiavellianism. They would like to destroy us as they did with Seydewitz. The SAP has not yet completed its development. It is only raw material from which we have to make the finished product. The SAP was supposed to have 50,000 members; today
Walcher does not speak of more than 20,000, but as an actual figure they give 14,000, that is, one-fourth. Their slogans they take from Brandler and from Trotsky. What did they do or achieve? Walcher imagines he has done everything himself with his organizational ability. To the official historiography of the SAP we must counterpose real historiography. The SAP demands a discussion. We were the first to propose it to the SAP and they refused it under the pretext that there were no disagreements. On this basis we proposed a merger. All of a sudden differences are discovered but on secondary matters: our attitude during the Paris conference and the question of a common journal. Now the demand for discussion acts as a brake. We do not impose any arguments upon the SAP. That is why our international press and particularly *Unser Wort* must again take up this question. And it is better now to strike at the SAP than at the OSP; a few indirect blows will fall on the latter because we have less to gain and less to lose in the case of the SAP than of the OSP and, what is more, in the SAP we have to deal with more stubborn material.

**Sneevliet:** The Declaration of Four is ever more a brake on the development of the ICL. The SAP and the OSP did not consider the declaration as a political maneuver; for them it had more of the character of a horsedeal: you, Walcher, will sign the Declaration of Seven and I, Schmidt, will on the other hand sign the Declaration of Four. A declaration more concrete would possibly have been of more value. In the SAP and the OSP, especially in the former, is a Two-and-One-Half International tendency. Side by side with discussion it is necessary to develop an entirely new activity, transform the papers into workers' papers, not give too heavy articles, participate more in the life of the proletariat, utilize better such cases as that of Reese. Good examples: *La Voix Communiste, l’Etincelle du Nord,* *The Militant,* a bad example is *La Verite.*

**Leonetti:** We must not become victims of our allies. At one time we regarded the Declaration of Four as a step forward and our allies as progressive forces. Now we bend backwards, regarding the Declaration of Four as a “brake” or “an episode.” It depends on our work whether we extract from it advantages or not. The Declaration of Four is the best weapon—

**Sneevliet:** In free hands.

**Leonetti:** It does not tie our hands. The Fourth International will develop along the road of the Declaration of Four. If the fusion does not realize itself (ICL, SAP, RSP, OSP) we will create fractions in these organizations. Let them call it the methods of
the Comintern, if they wish—not all of them were false. A theoretical question now concerns the workers most directly: the creation of a Fourth International. We still have not got a theoretical organ, therefore this aspect of our papers.

**Schuessler:** We have, before the SAP and the OSP, our own international organization. We have to prove that they are not just a combination of national sects. We must therefore concentrate on the international conference. It will be an important step toward the Fourth International. What is more, all our adversaries are nationally limited opportunists.

**Vereecken:** The tempo should be slowed up. The preliminary condition for fusion must be the adherence of the new organization to the ICL. If for instance we had fused with Hennaut\(^397\), he would have become without any ado a member of the ICL.

**Trotsky:** The Fourth International—will it develop along the line of the Bloc of Four or of the International Communist League? Those who have principles will come to us since we are the only detachment that has a clear understanding of the situation and perspectives. If we had had a section in Holland the RSP would not have found its road to us so quickly: the fractions could not end with the entrance to the new road. The numerous groups in Austria, for example, have compromised us before the Social Democrats and blocked their road to us. The Bloc of Four is an episode of magnitude but we are a permanent organization. The Bloc of Four would become a brake if we made concessions. It represents a purgatory through the door of which some organizations will pass. In the beginning we have gathered many worthless elements and could reject them only with some harm to ourselves: personal anarchists if not political. This purgatory could not but be of good. It is our task to make a finished product out of the raw material. What we are going through today with the SAP and OSP will repeat itself tomorrow with the ILP and Kilborn. We influence the OSP more easily than the SAP because this is an organization of workers and its apparatus, despite de Kadt and Schmidt, does not have the same weight as that of the SAP. That is why it is necessary to strike the SAP first—an international conference is necessary. The conference of the Bloc of Four represents an important step in this sense.

**Leonetti:** Criticism of our papers is correct. We must create an international theoretical organ which will aid the papers. But the workers’ page in *La Verite* is excellent. The youth make progress. R.M. [Raymond Molinier] went to Lille. They are already beginning to make the turn toward the masses.
3. Belgium: Report by Comrade Vereecken on the situation in the Belgian section, negotiations with Hennant, and relations with the group at Anvers:

Comrades Leonetti and Trotsky participate in the discussion.

YOUTH CONFERENCE PLANS

November 21, 1933

Dear Comrade Glotzer:

Just received your letter on the youth conference. Hasten to reply to it in view of the extreme importance of the matter.

1. The conference is postponed. The exact date is unknown to me. January was considered. But it is possible that it will take place later. I am giving you below the address of Comrade Held in Amsterdam through whom you may get in touch directly with the initiators of the conference. Held belongs to the Left Opposition, not to the OSP.

2. The initiator is the OSP. This fact has its positive as well as its negative sides. The OSP is a left centrist party which will still give us not a little trouble. Its advantage lies in the fact that it is composed entirely of young workers. The firm OSP is more convenient for the convocation of the conference as it does not repel the vacillating. On the other hand, you are entirely right that the conference could produce serious results only on the condition that our delegation comes united and well prepared.

The direction of the preparatory work was assigned by the International Secretariat to Comrade Souzo. To aid him a subcommission was organized in Brussels for Latin countries and in Amsterdam for Germanic countries. It is decided to have a third commission in the States and it was considered that you would carry on the main work.

All the three subcommissions have to send their proposals to Comrade Souzo.

I quote the decisions by memory. You will, of course, receive more definite official information.
ON CALLING FOR SOVIETS IN CUBA

November 21, 1933

Dear Comrade Vanzler:

Thank you very much for your marvelous translations. I am only troubled by the fact that you refuse payment for the work: you know you could dispose of the money as you see fit. I gave the fee for the first two translations to the pay desk of the Russian Biulleten, where it will be entered under your name.

In your article about Cuba, it is correct, of course, that we cannot set ourselves the conquest of power as an immediate task if the majority of the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie does not follow us. This can be achieved only by a direct and open struggle against the “national” bourgeoisie and the opportunist leaders of the petty bourgeoisie. I do not understand, however, why you declare yourself against the creation of soviets or organs very similar to soviets. Soviets are the organs of the conquest of power only in the final analysis. In general, soviets in revolutionary conditions constitute the basic form of fighting organization of the proletariat and the layers that are joining it. To reject the creation of soviets is possible only in the event that insuperable external conditions prevent it. But there are not and cannot be tactical considerations that would demand that revolutionary socialists reject the slogan of soviets in conditions when their creation is wholly possible.

With warm regards.

Yours,

L.T.
To the International Secretariat

Dear Comrades:

I am sending you the draft of a letter to all parties and workers' organizations on a united front against fascism. I avoid using the term "united front" as being too compromised by different interpretations. First of all, we should come to an agreement among ourselves and with our allies. It should be done without any publicity. When a preliminary agreement is reached, a letter should be released from some "neutral" organization, perhaps best of all from the NAS. If such an initiative were taken, it would be possible to gather a certain number of trade union signatures in France. After that, parties and other organizations could begin to join in.

If you agree with this plan, send the proposal to Sneevliet, to find out first of all if we can hope to obtain the signature of the NAS.

The importance of this matter needs no explanation. In such a way, we will put the ILP in England, the Swedes, the Schaffhausen organization, etc., to a new test. It is necessary only that the matter not officially originate with us. We will appear on the scene at the next stage.

* * *

On a Fighting Agreement of Proletarian Organizations Against Fascism

The undersigned organizations appeal to all workers' parties, trade unions, sports, educational, and other organizations of the working class with the following proposal:

The experience of Germany has shown what kind of fate the further development of fascism has in store for the European and world working class. However, no changes whatsoever have
occurred in the policies of the workers’ organizations since the crushing defeat of the German proletariat. Identical causes inevitably give rise to identical effects. If the workers’ organizations do not draw the necessary practical conclusions from the experience of the German catastrophe, the next years will be years of the final crushing defeat of the world proletariat.

We are far from the thought of proposing the merger of all proletarian parties, the renunciation of internal struggle in the working class, etc. Such proposals are obviously utopian. In the presence of deep differences of principle, splits and internal struggle in the ranks of the proletariat are absolutely inevitable. In practice, the only thing that can be attempted is an agreement of the different organizations against the common enemy. Without giving up either their independence or the right of mutual criticism, the workers’ organizations must enter into a fighting agreement with each other against fascism. First of all, it is a matter of defense of the basic instrument of the proletariat: its organizations. This task is equally obvious to, and close to the heart of, every organized worker regardless of the overall political direction of his organization.

Not to allow the fascists to penetrate the plants and factories; not to let them take over the streets for preparatory maneuvers; to nip in the bud every attempt on their part to break up workers’ meetings, to raid workers’ papers, clubs, etc.—such is the most simple and at the same time the most imperative program for an agreement among working class organizations.

A fighting agreement assumes, it goes without saying, the observance of military discipline on the part of all participants; but this would be discipline only with respect to definite practical actions within limits which every one of the organizations would consent to beforehand.

The organizational forms, like the practical methods of the fighting agreement, would inevitably be highly diverse, depending on national and local conditions. But even the formation of a common information bureau as a first step could produce considerable gains. In the struggle against fascism, as is generally true in all struggles, it is extremely important to know in time the actual forces, resources, and plans of the enemy. Only in such a way will the workers not find themselves taken by surprise. Only in such a way will it be possible to train combat staffs capable of mobilizing the masses for the defensive and, later on, for the offensive as well. There can be no doubt whatsoever that a broad fighting formation supported by parties and trade unions of
different orientations will attract the confidence and sympathy of
the unorganized industrial workers, and of working people in
general; and if nothing else, it will hamper the spread of the
fascist poison into the ranks of the oppressed classes.

We call upon every workers' organization, local, national, and
international, that agrees in principle with the basic idea of the
present letter, to sign it, accompanying such signature, if desired,
with criticisms, corrections, or additional suggestions. Thus a poll
will be taken among the workers' organizations, which in itself
will have great importance for arriving at a common orientation.
On the basis of the data from such a poll, it will be possible to
take the necessary next steps.

Address for correspondence:

BAD NEWS ABOUT THE CLA

November 25, 1933

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

I am at fault before you but deserve leniency. Sara [Weber]
must have written you that I was ill, spent a whole month away
from everything, etc. But even now I am greatly perplexed by the
political questions put to me.

When you and Swabeck were in Europe and at Prinkipo there
was yet a possibility to get a definite idea of the situation in the
[American] League and of the way out through detailed conversa-
tions. A number of months have passed since. At first it seems
that the situation had improved. Now, as I can see from your
letter, a change for the worse has set in. What are the causes?

The plan which half a year ago gained the support of European
comrades, myself among them, consisted in the following: the
[League's national] conference is postponed, as in itself it cannot
be a way out of the situation; all forces are directed toward mass
work under the banner of the new orientation; the central
committee is transferred to Chicago to a fresh atmosphere so as
to free its own hands and the hands of the New York branch. The
Intervening in the SP

November 26, 1933

Dear Friend:

Best thanks for your letter, which was excellent in every respect. If we had a monthly magazine, it could be published with few changes as a dispatch. Hopefully we’ll get to that stage yet. . . . Even after reading the letter over most carefully, I could not observe one line with which I would not be in agreement. That goes for the transitional stages toward fascism as well as for the necessity of a much more concrete, more lively intervention in and around the [French] Socialist Party.

That the party apparatus will now attempt to proceed against every nucleus forming in the party is absolutely clear. Whether
that will be successful in the long run is doubtful. The contradictions in the party and surrounding the party are too strong, and with the first split they will still not be resolved by a long shot. The fact that the Frossard\textsuperscript{403} grouping remains within the party supplies sufficient yeast for fermentation. Consequently, I think that the policy of fraction-building has some prospect for success, especially if one proceeds very carefully in the first stage, i.e., not taking a step forward without first testing out the ground well.

The defense against the real or alleged attacks on the part of the Patriotic Youth, etc., still appears to me to be a promising matter. Only this work, too, must be formulated quite concretely and must be adapted to the psychology of the young workers. It seems to me local staffs should be organized whose purpose first and foremost is observation of the opponent organizations. This task should keep the young workers engaged in active work alongside of their ideological education. An oath should perhaps also be devised, expressing the idea that we revolutionary workers will not allow the fascists, royalists, etc., to raise their heads, repress the workers' organizations, etc.

You complain about those comrades who immediately began with the slogan for the Fourth International among the youth. Naturally, that was not correct. I have been told that Craipeau\textsuperscript{404} also made this error. On the other hand he appears to possess a genuine active revolutionary temperament, and the ability to influence and inspire young workers and intellectuals. Since it is excluded that you—at least in the next period—play an active role within the Socialist Party, perhaps you could share the work more closely with Craipeau. But the practical and personal possibilities are much clearer to you than to me.

I will wait with the greatest interest for the continuation of your letter. Hopefully, the second part will not be so long in coming as was the first.

It would be very important to stenograph Walcher's talk to the Socialist Party, at least the most characteristic points. You will certainly be aware that the SAP has gradually slipped into a principled discussion with us. We must carry out this discussion as thoroughly as possible. And since these people are far more careful in dealing with us (and especially in what they write) than with the Social Democrats, it is very important to "take them at their word."

With warmest greetings.

Yours,

Onken [Leon Trotsky]
Preface

This work was written in exile on the island of Prinkipo near Constantinople four years ago. It is presented here for the attention of our readers in a new, considerably abridged edition. The author expresses the hope that the work has suffered but little from the condensation and that, in any case, the process has made it accessible to the broad circles of readers for whom it was intended from the beginning.

Postscript

It is now about four years since this book was written. Since then, there has been much water under the bridge. It is necessary to devote at least a few lines to the most recent period in my life.

Four and a half years of my third exile, up until very recently when I settled in France, were spent in Turkey on the island of Prinkipo. These were years of theoretical and literary work, principally on the history of the Russian Revolution. My connections with friends in my native country were, of course, broken off, but not at all to the degree desired or hoped for by the leaders of the ruling faction. They stopped at nothing in order to completely isolate me in Turkey. Blumkin, who assassinated the German ambassador Count Mirbach in 1918 and later became one of the members of my military secretariat, visited me clandestinely in Constantinople with the object of setting up regular delivery into the USSR of the Russian *Biulleten Oppozit-sii*, which I edited. On returning to Moscow he was imprudent or unfortunate enough to confide in someone who betrayed him. Blumkin was executed. He was not the only victim.

On January 11, 1933, I sent a letter from Turkey to the Central Committee of the party. I will quote several lines from it here: “I deem it necessary to inform you how and why my daughter committed suicide.”
"At the close of 1930 at my request you authorized my tubercular daughter, Zinaida Volkova, to come to Turkey temporarily, for treatment. . . . I did not suspect that behind this liberalism of Stalin lurked an ulterior motive. My daughter arrived here in January 1931 with pneumothorax of both lungs. After a ten-month sojourn in Turkey we finally obtained—despite the constant resistance of the Soviet foreign representatives—permission for her to go to Germany for treatment. . . . The invalid began to recover and dreamed only of returning with her child to Russia where her daughter and her husband, who is a Bolshevik-Leninist kept in exile by Stalin, remained.

"On February 20, 1932, you published a decree by which not only my wife, my son, and I, but also my daughter Zinaida were deprived of Soviet citizenship. In the foreign country where you gave her permission to go with a Soviet passport my daughter occupied herself only with her treatment. She did not and because of her health could not take any part in political life. . . . Depriving her of her citizenship was only a wretched and stupid act of vengeance against me. For her, this act of personal vengeance meant a break with her little daughter, her husband, her work, and all her customary life. Her mental condition, already disturbed by the death of her younger sister and by her own illness, was dealt a fresh blow, all the more atrocious as it was quite surprising and not provoked in any way by her. The psychiatrists unanimously declared that only a return to her normal environment, with her family, and her work could save her. But your decree of February 20 removed precisely this possibility of saving her. . . .

"The new blow was more than this sick person could bear. On January 5, she asphyxiated herself with gas. She was thirty-two years old.

"In 1928 my younger daughter Nina [Nevelson], whose husband has been locked up in solitary prison by Stalin for the past five years, was bedridden and then hospitalized for a short time after my exile to Alma Ata. The diagnosis was galloping consumption. A purely personal letter addressed to me, without the least relation to politics, was held up by you for sixty-three days so that my answer did not find her alive. She died at the age of twenty-six. . . .

"I limit myself to this information without drawing conclusions. The time will come for this. . . ."

Despite all the advantages offered by Turkey as a place of exile, the attempt to isolate me, in the broader sense of the term, was
still unsuccessful. Russian friends who were exiled and imprisoned were replaced by foreign friends who were no less loyal. Young comrades from various countries arrived in Prinkipo ready to spend several months and at times a year or more with our family. Among them were French, Germans, Czechoslovakians, English, Americans, Chinese, and Hindus. The new connections and personal friendships that enlivened our existence on the little island were a particular expression of a new political regroupment in the workers' movement. The Russian Left Opposition gradually took on an international character. Dozens of national sections and publications sprang up. A vast literature was created in all the languages of civilized humanity. At the moment these lines are being written, the Left Opposition movement has definitively broken its ties with the Communist International and has advanced the goal of creating a new International, the Fourth.

Here a skeptic will no doubt interrupt:

"How many years did you belong to the Second International?"

"From 1897 to 1914, hence more than seventeen years."

"And then?"

"And then—a break with the Second International right at the beginning of the war, and about five years of struggle for the new International, which was founded in 1919."

"And so you belonged to the Third International for fourteen years?"

"Just about."

"And now you are preparing to build a Fourth International? Isn't this rather like the gyrations of a squirrel in its cage?"

"No, it is not the same. The whole development of humanity unfolds along a complex rather than a direct line because the route is not laid out by a compass and ruler but by the struggle of living forces which pull in different directions. The historical course of the working class is no exception. For every great achievement, the proletariat, the only progressive class in modern-day human society, pays the price of new defeats, disillusionments, and retreats. In its time, the Second International accomplished a great educational task. But it lost its way due to a spirit limited by nationalism and reformism. When capitalism passed from the epoch of its rise to the epoch of stagnation, the ground began to disappear under the politics of reformism. Moreover, national boundaries became too constricting for economic development: social patriotism took on a profoundly reactionary character. The Second International was
replaced by the Third. The October Revolution was its historical baptism. But revolution too is a profoundly contradictory process, whose various stages are conditioned by circumstances of time and place. From the revolution issued a new ruling stratum that defends and at the same time distorts the social system created by the revolution by instituting measures determined by the most myopic, limited, and conservative bureaucratism. And using the authority of the October Revolution, the Soviet bureaucracy subordinated the Communist International to itself, purged it, and rendered it powerless. In the last few years it has brought the proletariat nothing more than a stifling police regime, fatal errors, and crushing defeats. As a result, whatever its intention, it has contributed to a temporary rebirth of the Social Democratic parties, which were condemned by history. Battling against them furiously in words, but ceding them territory in actual fact, it has opened the doors to a reaction of historically unprecedented proportions. The victory of German fascism was made possible by the combined capitulations of the Second and Third Internationals.

Such crimes cannot be pardoned. The parties that bear the guilt for the greatest of political catastrophes are condemned to be thrown on the rubbish heap. Sooner or later the proletariat will emerge from the present terrible reaction and once again enter on the revolutionary path. But it will regroup its ranks under a new flag. This is the historical meaning of the preparation of a Fourth International. Let the skeptics sneer and scoff! History is not made by skeptics. In any case, it is not for the skeptics that this book is written.
MINUTES, THE CONFERENCE OF FOUR OF DECEMBER 30, 1933

Present: from the ICL—Bauer, Crux [Trotsky], Feroci [Leonetti], Frank, Naville, Schwarz [Leon Sedov].
from the RSP—Sneevliet.
from the OSP—de Kadt.
from the SAP—Schwab [Walcher], Goldenberg.

Presiding: Bauer. Secretary: Steen [Klement].

Agenda: Preparation and perspectives on the Fourth International
The youth conference in Holland

1. The ICL delegation’s proposals to create a permanent commission and a [joint discussion] bulletin and to help the youth conference were read.

2. Report on preparatory work.

The work for the Fourth International has so far been of a propagandist nature and without important organizational results. The joint resolution of the Paris conference in August was printed by all participating organizations in their newspapers, partly also in leaflets, magazines, and pamphlets. After the Paris conference everything was concentrated on attempts at unification within the Bloc of Four. The RSP joined the ICL. The fusion of both Dutch organizations has proved unrealizable until now because of differences of opinion as to its tempo and prerequisites; the two parties continue to work in a united front with the organizations close to them. Also the fusion of the SAP with the German section of the ICL has until now proved fruitless because of theoretical and practical differences on the questions of revolutionary tactics. The orientation of building new communist parties and a new International, as well as the IS’s attitude to the Paris conference, where it could speak only in its own name, have been approved by the majority of the ICL sections (information about their attitudes is lacking from some because of the great distances involved).

In Holland a new opposition has evolved inside and around the
Communist Party which will soon publish *De Nieuw Tribune* and intends to join the united Dutch party. After the capitulation of the "League" there is no longer an organized left wing in the Social Democratic Party of Holland.

In *Sweden* a member of the SAP spoke at the congress of the Independent Communist Youth. After the expulsion of the Independent Communist Party of Sweden from the Brandlerite International, it is subject to great vacillations on its further international orientation. The sympathies for the new International are extremely vague. Attempts to work with the NAP meet with no sympathetic response since the NAP is looking to join the Scandinavian Social Democracy.

In *Norway* the Mot Dag group is in full agreement with the SAP except on the question of the possibilities of winning the NAP, which it affirms. The SAP however approves the Mot Dag's plan to enter into the NAP on certain conditions (retaining Mot Dag as a group and continuing its publishing operation, including its paper).

In *Belgium* the ICL carried on unity negotiations with the Hennaut group, which were broken off because of differences in appraising the experience of the last ten years.

In *Switzerland* the Schaffhausen KPO finds itself as heretofore in opposition to the Brandler leadership and shows strong sympathies for the Bloc of Four.

In *England* the ILP continues its hesitations and is decaying (according to last information, allegedly only 4,000 members at the moment). To turn it into a revolutionary party and to win it for the Fourth International, the IS of the ICL proposed that the British section enter the ILP.

In *Austria* after the capitulation of the left wing of the Social Democracy there are only a few weak opposition groups.

The deteriorating Communist Party in Czechoslovakia does not show any evidence of a move in the direction of new tendencies; on the other hand, this is occurring with the dissatisfied German Social Democrats in Czechoslovakia.

In *Spain* the Socialist Youth declared themselves for the Fourth International.

The extreme left of the Social Democracy of *France* around Marceau Pivert has established connections with the SAP. The August conference evoked a loud echo amongst the youth, especially the PUP youth.

The *Italian* Maximalists, the last remnants of the Italian Social Democracy, which seemed to lean to the NAP at the Paris
conference, have nevertheless partly reprinted the Declaration of Four and commented on it.

In Poland one of the Bund organizations has strong sympathies for the orientation of the Four.

In the United States, the Gitlow group and the Muste (Lore) group are carrying on negotiations with the SAP.

All participants are in accord that these results are very modest, partly because of insufficient efforts resulting from attempts at fusion. The international connections of all the groups were more or less alike. On the London Bureau neither of the two parties belonging to it [SAP and OSP] could give any report since the bureau has limited itself to circulating information material and the first meeting after the Paris conference is scheduled for January 1934.

3. Perspectives of further work.

Goldenberg declares that he is against a premature setting up of the Fourth International, but in favor of propaganda for it, which in form and essence must correspond to the development of the workers.

Bauer: We must place at the center of our attention the left socialists and especially the youth. In the Social Democracy as well as in the Comintern conciliatory tendencies are trying to contain the opposition. In the struggle with them we must pose the question of the possibility of reforming the treacherous party in the foreground. Side by side with it, naturally, a sharp struggle against the strengthening right-wing tendencies is needed. In addition, a clear position on national and international organizations outside the two Internationals (the London Bureau, NAP, etc.) is needed. On this we first of all must be clear ourselves. Two points of view are counterposed. Break with them or join them.

Trotsky: The pamphlet by Miles, "Neu Beginnen," steals the entire criticism that Marxists have made of the Second International and at the same time demands that the left wing be disciplined, that is, give a free hand to Wels. To these people we can speak only with the whip; the least concession to them would be a crime.

For the new orientation of the world labor movement there are two centers, one that is being prepared and does not yet exist (ours) and one that exists but is based totally on illusions (the London Bureau). We can come out of this dilemma only through permanently maintaining our ties with each other and breaking openly with the London center. The Swedish party wants to lean on the NAP, the NAP on the Social Democracy, but the Social
Democracy has been leaning for a long time on bourgeois society, so now we should lean on the Swedish party? This chain is of tremendous social and political importance.

Comrade Brandt of the SAP appropriately calls Tranmael the Louis Blanc\textsuperscript{411} of 1933 and evaluates the NAP admirably but draws from it very hazy conclusions: to break with them internationally but not nationally. This alliance harmed the ILP because it did not place the ILP before the alternative; nationally it demands the creation of a left NAP wing; in short for Sweden and England clarity is essential, but for the Norwegians only confusion. Tranmael is looking for a time and a pretext to get rid of the allies who have now become burdensome. That practically no left wing exists in the NAP is first of all due to the clever maneuvers of Tranmael, and secondly to his guardian angels, the SAP and the OSP. When the Norwegian workers see their Tranmael internationally in the company of honest people they do not think of going over into opposition to him.

A speech by Schwab is listened to by a hundred workers but the Schwab-Tranmael alliance is decisive. If the Norwegian workers are to learn the real reason for the split, the initiative for it should not be left to Tranmael. Like the English reformists in the Anglo-Russian Committee, he will choose for it an occasion and a time which are advantageous to him. A break is necessary precisely for the building of a left wing. The Labor Community [IAG] hinders it, however, and has therefore become a reactionary factor.

The bankruptcy of the CP is decisive in the defeat of Germany since the way out could only be a revolutionary one. Against victorious fascism the advantages of democracy stand out in full relief. Because of this the working masses who are now in motion find their way predominantly to the Social Democracy and only in very small part to us. But the catastrophic character of this movement will soon place the Social Democracy before new splits. To help the Mileses and Louis Blancs to play hide-and-seek means to retard this process.

In times of crisis the working class is always permeated by moods against splits and for unity. At the Bolshevik conference of [April] 1917 Lenin received only one vote for the Third International, his own. We must persistently continue to convince the workers of the necessity of the new International, and in the first place the most advanced workers. To say that the Fourth International is premature is to say that the class struggle is premature. Between these moods and the facts there is an open
gap. We ask our allies for a razor cut [with the London Bureau], but of course make no ultimatum of this.

The joint theoretical journal has unfortunately been sabotaged by the SAP.

Schwab: After the political turn by the Left Opposition, the SAP waited in vain for a turn in their tactics. In this it was disappointed. At the Paris conference the Left Opposition comrades, by the same well-known, barren, and sectarian methods, hindered a united closed-ranks appearance of the four organizations, which would have been possible if we had abstained from voting on the Brussels resolution of the majority. Had the SAP followed the advice of the Left Opposition we would not have the signature of the OSP today.

The inter-party character of the proposed journal was long since recognized by all. But for the Left Opposition the idea of an inter-party journal as well as that of the Brussels resolution in August suddenly became reactionary. We must also call on the KPO [Brandlerites] to work in it [the journal] because behind the leaders stand thousands of excellent comrades. Certainly they will decline but as a result the rank and file will just as certainly come into conflict with their leaders[hip]. But when Comrade Trotsky alone held to his stubborn point of view, even the publisher [of the proposed journal] withdrew.

We cannot recognize the question: either the London Bureau or the Bloc of Four. The razor cut will help only those who are interested in hindering the revolutionization of the NAP. The international working alliance with Tranmael plays no role in Norway but a break would find the greatest echo. According to the rules, the KPO minority never should have entered into the SAP [in 1932]. In this are reflected only the abnormal conditions. In the London Bureau we must make the maximum influence felt. But one must have the courage to disregard seemingly justified protests as we had to in coming into the SAP. Experience showed that we were right. As such, reformist parties are not impregnable; see the example of the USPD. This will certainly not be the case with the NAP, but if we do not aim at winning it over, we will find no echo.

De Kadt: More important than what was discussed until now is the basic outlook of the future International. The Left Opposition wants to make its principles internationally accepted and regards the Fourth International as an extension of the ICL. The OSP and the SAP do not stand between the ideas of the new International and the London Bureau but unequivocally behind the first.
We do not at all want to remain unconditionally in the London Bureau. Concrete facts will lead to a break. The election victory telegram to the NAP was more of a threat than a congratulation. We must not attack the left reformists in such a way that even trained workers do not understand it. The Declaration of Four must be extended to include tactical principles.

The outstanding article by Trotsky, "Our Present Tasks," stands in contradiction to the Left Opposition's attitude to the NAP, etc. You can't do everything with the whip. Behind the dogs stand the people from whom we anticipate everything. For the whip more opportune moments will come. Criticism need not because of this be less irreconcilable. Also the program is not everything. Many subscribe to it only to ignore it in practice. In the new International we have a special International (ICL plus RSP). This state of affairs would be impossible if a new International were to be built in earnest. We do not stand as near to each other as we thought we did in Paris. I support the technical center [proposed permanent commission] and the bulletin. The International to be should not be measured by the yardstick of a completed one. At the youth conference in February it is possible that a few good decisions will be adopted but we must not forget that the youth are very weak and not at all symptomatic for the working class.

Sneevliet: At the Paris conference seven organizations were for the idea of a new International—three of them, however, against the Declaration of Four (Kilbom, Maurin, Leninbund). Inside the Bloc of Four there are two groups, one of which stands with one foot on a resolution that so contradicts the Declaration of Four that Tranmael could actually interpret it as being against the new International and agreed with it. But also this group is not unanimous. The SAP demands the entry of all four organizations [into the London Bureau], the OSP is ready to leave and predicts the death of the London Bureau. In essence the OSP and the SAP want to keep the door open for themselves in case of another eventuality.

The Comintern has finally declared that a world congress will be called for 1934. We must transcend the platonic recognitions of the new International and impart to the February conference a positive content, then we will govern the Comintern congress. The debates on sectarianism, tactics with regard to the NAP, etc., are absolutely secondary—

Schwab: Even without the NAP and the London Bureau there would have been the same differences.
Sneevliet: The program of the new International is not ready made but is to be elaborated in the course of the intellectual preparatory work. I support the [ICL's] proposal. It was through "sectarianism" that world history was made! Not later than March a conference must be prepared.

The [Dutch] youth organization inviting organizations to a youth conference is totally independent of the OSP. Without our help this congress will be a caricature.

Trotsky: If one speaks of tactical errors at the Paris conference, one must not forget that the voting on our resolution was prevented by the English with the help of the OSP and with the toleration of the SAP. Consequently, the game was made easier for those who did not want to show their true colors. The Brussels resolution was from the beginning as meaningless as only a resolution can be when it is agreed to by organizations with diverging tendencies, and was compromising as long ago as June. With the NAP we can enter into practical agreements, but to sign a resolution with Tranmael, the speculator and scoundrel, on the fate of the international working class movement borders on the criminal.

Schwab: The SAP would also never have signed the Declaration of Four had it known what the Left Opposition really had in mind.

Trotsky: Now you have taken an orientation to the right. To the lefts you use threats and show the fist, with the rights you are good friends. [In such matters] it's not ourselves but the public we are thinking about.

With regard to the journal, only the decision of the IS can stand. Gumperz\textsuperscript{414} gave the impression that he was in complete agreement on publishing the discussion journal on the basis of the Declaration of Four with an editorial majority of adherents of the Fourth International and a minority not hostile to it. Then Schwab demanded an invitation to the Brandlerists. Why not Manuilsky, the boss, instead of the lackey, Brandler? Behind him also undoubtedly stand many fine people. A journal without a platform is an illusion. We are ready to consider any other platform than yours and that of the Four.

(Schwab declares that he is ready on this basis to negotiate once more with Gumperz.)

Trotsky: Moreover, Gumperz was ready, in case the journal falls through, to publish pamphlets.

What would our comrades have said if we were connected with the Amsterdam antiwar congress? The latter is just as much an
agent of the Third International as Tranmael is of the Second International. The question now is not when to establish the Fourth International but of doubling our efforts to create it. It would be nonsense to proclaim something that is not ripe. Everyone has the right and duty to try to persuade the other. No one would take us seriously if we did not strive to make our principles the principles of the new International. We cannot and do not want to force anything on anybody, nor do we want to smuggle it through. By taking a principled and timely position on all questions we will gain a thousand times more than by running after Tranmael. No one outside of us can do it, not because they are dumb, but because they are, collectively and individually, compromised and must betray the workers. The timing of the establishment of the Fourth International also depends on events. Let us be impatient of the work and not of the results!

Goldenberg: With the lefts with whom we want to fuse we can speak as we do among ourselves, but with the rights we must be polite without giving up our point of view, so as to get the ear of the masses who are with them. Even if the Brussels resolution says nothing to the vanguard, it does to the masses. Because the vanguard is ahead of the masses, the resolution cannot become reactionary. When Seydewitz signed the SAP’s declaration of principles he compromised himself and not we ourselves, since by this he came into contradiction with his deeds. The whip can only repel the readers of Miles. With all sharpness in essence we must be flexible in form. In reality the Third International was built up on the October Revolution.

Trotsky: If not for Lenin’s persistent work for the Third International the October Revolution would have been impossible. The establishment [of the Third International] itself was only a formal crowning act.

Goldenberg: The discussion in the NAP will take place upon Tranmael’s break from us, not upon our break with him.

Bauer: It must be emphasized that the organizations which signed the declaration already base themselves on certain principles. To hold on to them is not to be made a reproach to the Left Opposition. The fear of occupying a second place in the joint work and unification unjustifiably plays a deterrent role with some leaders.

Even the SAP recognizes that a lasting coexistence of both centers is impossible. But the London Bureau is nothing but an unprincipled, paralyzed heap of centrifugal tendencies. On the
basis of the Declaration of Four an entry would have been impossible. The ILP cannot go to the Second International—

De Kadt: But to the Third.

Trotsky: Even that would be a step forward. After a few months a split would occur and a part would inevitably come to us.

Schwab: The London Bureau will remain only a source of information and can go under if the ICL remains outside of it. But three of the organizations belonging to it have gone through a revolutionizing process. Together with them the London Bureau could be made into a functioning body. If it dies, no one will profit from it.

If Gumperz is the publisher of the paper we do not assume any responsibility for it. Couldn’t the Brandlerists be invited as an editorial minority?

Trotsky: No. You prefer to break with us rather than with the Brandlerists. (Trotsky asks the opinion of de Kadt. No answer.) But one cannot hide behind Gumperz’s back. Politically we would be held responsible.

Schwab: By their unmaskings, the CP and the Left Opposition only isolated themselves. We must take into account what the audience or readers will stand for. Despite even odds the Left Opposition has gotten nowheres in the SAP. Trotsky too, despite his great personality, stands all alone in the world. It became clear that the barrenness of the Left Opposition is not to be attributed only to its having been a faction of the CP. We do not dispute the intentions of the Left Opposition nor their right to realize them. But we note the gap between these good intentions and the small organizational achievements.

Trotsky: The revolution is isolated and all of us with it. In the SAP you were a necessary stage. You all know that we’re not talking about a dictatorship in our organization. Our great teachers were also at first surrounded by small circles of young comrades.

De Kadt: The RSP only plays with Trotsky; in reality it stands much below Trotskyism. It will yet be seen that it really consists of trade unionists who stand quite to the right. These questions are more important than that of the NAP. Since so far we have to do with an International that is yet to be created we will still have to remain for a certain length of time in the London Bureau until its natural end. A split resolution would not find much of an echo in the working class. Entirely too much importance is attributed here to resolutions; the practical work cannot be
neglected out of sheer programmatic radicalism.

The ICL has the full right to fight for its point of view but the events of the last years have proved that by far not all of their positions have been the correct ones. At the Seventh World Congress [of the Comintern] we will hardly play a big role. Programmatic work is of course of great importance, but if we will not tend also to practical work we will not win the elite of the proletariat but discussion fanatics.

_De Nieuwe Weg_ in Holland is almost the realization of the idea of a discussion journal; the basis is revolutionary socialism, the Declaration of Four is being defended, the editorial board consists of a majority of OSP and RSP.

_Sneevliet:_ The Holland experiences were inevitable. At present it means to activate the united front work. Then we will see who is to the right and who is to the left.

_Trotsky:_ I appeal to both Dutch parties not to contribute to the disappointment of the workers in their mass papers but rather to stress the still hoped for common perspectives and unity after a thoroughgoing discussion.

4. _Decisions._

1. The representatives of the undersigned organizations, after a thorough analysis and discussion of the effects of the Bloc of Four entered into at the Paris August Conference had on the international working class movement, decided the following, in order to intensify, spread, and coordinate the unprecedentedly great tasks in the sphere of clarification as well as of the necessary organizing of the preparations for the new International:

   (a) Immediate establishment of a technical permanent commission, the first task of which is to prepare the Conference of Four for the end of February. The commission charges two of its members residing in Paris to carry on the current work.

   (It was agreed that only unanimous decisions of the commission are valid and that when important decisions are to be made in current work the two comrades charged with it, one of the SAP and one of the ICL, are to obtain the opinion of the other members of the commission.)

   (b) The publication of a common bulletin that will publish all documents in connection with the work of the conference (among them also discussion articles of the adhering organizations).

   (It was decided to name it “The Bulletin of the Commission for the Preparation of the Fourth International.”)

2. The technical commission is instructed to ascertain whether
the creation of a discussion journal will be possible with the participation of Comrade Gumperz.

3. It would be desirable to create in Amsterdam a subcommission of representatives of the four youth organizations so as to lend assistance to the initiators of the youth conference.

4. The conference will take place on February 25. The corresponding theses of the ICL are to be sent out to the other organizations by January 15. The replies, supplements, etc., are to be delivered by February 1.

5. The technical commission is to work out the agenda for the February conference by January 28. It must however contain at least the following points:
   1. Work on the Fourth International
   2. Programmatic theses
   3. Manifesto

6. The technical commission is to issue a questionnaire on the work concerning the survey of the working class movement in individual countries, as provided for in the Declaration of Four.415
NOTES

1. “Interview by the Daily Telegraph.” Daily Telegraph (London), March 16, 1929, where it had the title “Special Interview with Leo Trotsky.” The name of the paper’s correspondent in Constantinople (Istanbul) was not given. The interview was granted a month after the Soviet government deported Trotsky to Turkey and a week after he was expelled from temporary quarters at the Soviet consulate. Leon Trotsky (1879-1940) called himself Leon Sedov because that was his legal name in the Soviet Union and on his passport when he was deported. His son, who accompanied Trotsky and Natalia Sedova in exile, was also named Leon Sedov. Trotsky became a revolutionary in 1896 and a collaborator of Lenin on Iskra in 1902. He broke with Lenin the next year over the nature of the revolutionary party and aligned himself with the Menshevik faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. He broke with the Mensheviks in 1904 and tried during the next decade to reunite the RSDLP factions. In the 1905 revolution he was the leader of the St. Petersburg Soviet and developed the theory of permanent revolution. In 1915 he wrote the Zimmerwald manifesto against the war. He joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917, was elected to its central committee, and organized the insurrection that made the Soviet state possible. In the new government he served first as commissar of foreign affairs and then as commissar of war. He organized the Left Opposition in 1923 and fought for the next ten years to restore Leninist principles, practices, and norms to the Communist International and its affiliated parties. Defeated by the Stalin faction, he was expelled from the CP and the Comintern in 1927, banished to central Asia in 1928, and exiled to Turkey in 1929. In 1933 he decided the Comintern could no longer be reformed and called for the creation of a new International. He viewed his work on behalf of the Fourth International as the most important of his life. He was assassinated by a Stalinist agent in Mexico in 1940.

2. The Bolsheviks were a faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP), affiliated to the Second International, that was organized by Lenin in 1903. Later they became an independent political party, which changed its name to the Communist Party after leading the Russian Revolution of October 1917 (November in the non-Russian calendar). In this volume the letters “CPSU” are used to designate this party from 1918 on.

3. “Help the Imprisoned Bolshevik-Leninists.” The Militant, June 1, 1929, where the initials used by Trotsky, “G.G.,” were erroneously given as “T.T.” This was written a little more than a month after Trotsky was
forcibly deported from the Soviet Union to Turkey. Bolshevik-Leninists was the name used for members of the Left Opposition, which Trotsky organized at the end of 1923 as a faction defending workers' democracy and proletarian internationalism in the CPSU. They were the first nucleus of the International Left Opposition, founded in 1930, and the Fourth International, founded in 1938. The Bolshevik-Leninists were expelled from the CPSU at the end of 1927; thousands were fired from their jobs and arrested or banished from the chief political centers.

4. The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries (SRs) were Russian political parties that supported the capitalist Provisional Government in 1917 and opposed the new Soviet government. The Mensheviks, led by Julius Martov, began as a faction in the RSDLP in 1903, later becoming an independent party affiliated to the Second International. The Social Revolutionaries, founded in 1900, were a populist movement and the most influential party among the peasants before 1917. They both were outlawed in the civil war for helping the counterrevolution. The Left SRs were a faction that collaborated with the Bolsheviks in the first Soviet cabinet, but tried to overthrow them in 1918 and were outlawed.

5. The October Revolution, when the Provisional Government was overthrown by the Bolshevik-led Soviets, was the second in 1917. It was preceded, in February, by the overthrow of czarism. The civil war that followed the October Revolution lasted from 1918 to 1921; the Red Army, organized by Trotsky, finally defeated the Russian counterrevolutionaries (White Guards or Whites) and the interventionist forces of the leading imperialist countries.

6. P.K. (Budu) Mdivani (1877-1937), an Old Bolshevik, was expelled for “Trotskyist activity” in 1928. He was rehabilitated in 1931 and held high state and party posts in Georgia until 1936, when he was again expelled, this time for “anti-party activity.” Tried secretly, he was executed in 1937. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870-1924) restored Marxism as the theory and practice of revolution in the imperialist epoch after it had been debased by the opportunists, revisionists, and fatalists of the Second International. The Bolshevik faction he organized in the RSDLP, in opposition to the Mensheviks, was the first tendency to understand the kind of party needed to lead a working class revolution. He was the first Marxist to explain the central importance of colonial and national struggles. He led the first victorious workers’ revolution in 1917 and served as head of the first Soviet government. He founded the Communist International and helped to elaborate its principles, strategy, and tactics. He prepared a fight against the bureaucratization of the Russian CP and the Soviet State (see Lenin’s Fight Against Stalinism, Pathfinder Press, 1974), but died before he could carry it out.

7. “Interview Given to the Social Democratic Press.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by Marilyn Vogt. Parts of this document were quoted in “A Lesson in Democracy I Did Not Receive” (Writings 29) and in My Life, where Trotsky added, “So
far as I am aware, this interview was never published.” But several German papers did carry a Trotsky interview around this time, according to Louis Sinclair’s *Leon Trotsky: A Bibliography* (Hoover Institution Press, 1972). The Russian text at Harvard is preceded by a note from Trotsky to his European comrades saying, “To be on the safe side I am reporting to you my conversation with a reporter for the Social Democratic press.” In this case Trotsky was doubly concerned not to be misquoted: he had applied to the German Social Democratic authorities for a visa that would enable him to leave Turkey; and he knew the Stalinists would try to use any interview with Social Democrats as “proof” of his alleged renegacy from Bolshevism. The Social Democrats (or Social Democracy), uniting revolutionary and reformist elements in parties affiliated to the Second International, were the major Marxist formations before 1914. Their progressive role ended with World War I, when most of them violated the most elementary socialist principles and supported their own imperialist governments. Revolutionary Marxists stopped calling themselves Social Democrats after 1917.

8. **Joseph Stalin** (1879-1953), an Old Bolshevik, was elected commissar of nationalities in the first Soviet government and general secretary of the CP in 1922. Lenin called in 1923 for his removal from the latter post because Stalin was using it to bureaucratize the party and state apparatuses. After Lenin’s death in 1924, Stalin gradually eliminated his major opponents, starting with Trotsky, until he became virtual dictator of the Soviet Union in the 1930s. The chief concepts associated with his name are “socialism in one country,” “social fascism,” and “peaceful coexistence.” From 1923 to 1935 Trotsky considered Stalin’s faction to represent a form of *centrism* (“bureaucratic centrism”). In Trotsky’s terminology, centrism refers to tendencies in the radical movement that oscillate between reformism, which is the position of the labor bureaucracy and the labor aristocracy, and Marxism, which represents the historic interests of the working class. Beginning in 1935, Trotsky felt this term was no longer adequate to describe the continuing degeneration of Stalinism.

9. **Dictatorship of the proletariat** is the Marxist name for the form of rule by the working class that follows rule by the capitalist class (dictatorship of the bourgeoisie). Modern equivalents for the term are workers’ state and workers’ democracy.

10. **Nikolai Bukharin** (1888-1938), an Old Bolshevik, was an ultraleftist after the October Revolution, but became the leader of the CP’s right wing after Lenin’s death and an ally of Stalin against the Left Opposition until 1928. Stalin crushed the right wing in 1929 and Bukharin was removed from the CP leadership. Although he capitulated and served in minor posts, he was executed after the 1938 Moscow trial.

11. **Socialism in one country** was Stalin’s theory, introduced into the communist movement for the first time in 1924, that a socialist society could be achieved within the borders of a single country. Later, when it was incorporated into the program and tactics of the Comintern, it became the ideological cover for the abandonment of revolutionary
internationalism and was used to justify the conversion of the Communist parties throughout the world into docile pawns of Soviet foreign policy. A comprehensive critique by Trotsky is in his 1928 book *The Third International After Lenin* (Pathfinder, 1970).

12. “Tactics in the USSR.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by Carol Lisker. In 1929 and 1930 Trotsky was still able to get letters from the Soviet Union and to send letters there that had some chance of reaching the intended recipients. This was a “circular-letter” answering questions sent by Oppositionists in the USSR, and probably was copied and circulated clandestinely by Bolshevik-Leninists and sympathizers.

13. **Christian Rakovsky** (1873-1941), a leading revolutionary in the Balkans before World War I, served as chairman of the Ukrainian Soviet and later as Soviet ambassador to London and Paris. An early leader of the Left Opposition, he was deported to Central Asia in 1928, where he suffered illness, medical neglect, and isolation. In 1929, when many Oppositionists were capitulating to Stalinism, Rakovsky, Vladimir Kosior, and Mikhail Okudzhava published a declaration that appealed for reinstatement of the Left Opposition in the CPSU but made it plain that Stalin's left turn was no basis for reconciliation with Stalinism. Trotsky endorsed this declaration and wrote several letters about its significance (*Writings* 29). Rakovsky held out until 1934 before surrendering to Stalin. In 1938 he was one of the major defendants in the third Moscow trial, where he “confessed” and was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment.

14. **Stalin's left zigzag** on economic questions in the USSR began early in 1928, after the Left Opposition had been expelled for advocating a leftward turn in economic planning and administration. It was brought on by a grain crisis of the type the Left Opposition had been predicting, but its full implications were not unveiled until the end of 1929, after Stalin had broken with Bukharin and the right wing and had given the signal for immediate and all-out collectivization of the land.

15. During the civil war the open ballot was instituted in the unions, the soviets, and the CP as a way of putting pressure on backward, wavering, and reactionary elements. In the changed conditions of the late 1920s, however, the open ballot served mainly as an instrument through which the Stalinist apparatus could exert pressure against oppositional or independent-minded elements. That was why Trotsky in 1928 raised the demand for a secret ballot, beginning with the unions and the soviets as an opening step in the restoration of proletarian democracy.

16. **Gregory Bessedovsky** was a Stalinist functionary in the Soviet embassy in Paris, where he helped to purge Left Oppositionists, including Rakovsky, in 1927. He defected to the capitalist world in October 1929. Claiming that he had been prevented from leaving the embassy, he made his departure by climbing over a garden wall and calling the police.

17. The Opposition's support of the right to strike in a workers' state
was formulated in the 1927 "Platform of the Opposition" when it reaffirmed the position adopted by the Eleventh Party Congress at Lenin’s initiative (see The Challenge of the Left Opposition [1926-27], Pathfinder, 1979).

18. "Our French Press." From Avocat de Trotsky by Gerard Rosenthal (Robert Laffont-Opera Mundi, Paris, 1975). Translated from the French by Jesse Smith. These three letters were sent to Gerard Rosenthal (1903-), who used the pen name Francis Gerard. Rosenthal entered the Left Opposition as part of the group associated with La Lutte de classes and became one of the founders of the French section. He first visited Trotsky in Turkey in the summer of 1929 and later became his lawyer in France. He left the Fourth International during World War II and joined the Socialist Party in 1945.

19. La Verite was founded, with Trotsky's support, in August 1929 as the weekly paper of the French Opposition. It continued in that role until 1936, when it was replaced by La Lutte Ouvriere.

20. The article on which Trotsky was working was probably incorporated into his pamphlet, "The Third Period of the Comintern's Errors," reprinted in Writings 30.

21. Edouard Daladier (1884-1970), a Radical Socialist, later became premier of France, under whose regime Trotsky was permitted to move to France in 1933. He became premier again in 1934 and 1938-40, when he signed the Munich pact.

22. A. A., or Andre Ariat, was the pen name of Aime Patri, a member of the French Opposition until 1931. Les Cahiers du bolchevisme (Notebooks of Bolshevism), which Trotsky here calls "pompous," and La Revue marxiste were magazines of the French Stalinists, and L'Humanite was their daily paper.

23. The Comintern (Communist International or Third International) was organized under Lenin's leadership in 1919 as the revolutionary successor to the Second International, and was dissolved by Stalin in 1943 as a friendly gesture to his wartime allies. The Profintern (Red International of Labor Unions) was organized in Moscow in 1920 as the Communist-led rival to the reformist International Federation of Trade Unions (Amsterdam International). It was dissolved in 1937. The CGTU (Unitary General Confederation of Labor) was organized in 1921 as a radical rival of the CGT (General Confederation of Labor), the major union federation of France, which was dominated by reformists. By 1929 the CGTU was controlled by the Stalinists. The two federations were reunited as the CGT in 1936.

24. Pierre Naville (1904- ) was a founder of the French Left Opposition and a member of the International Secretariat until World War II, when he withdrew from the Fourth International. Later he wrote several books on sociology and science and joined a series of centrist groups. His memoir of Trotsky was entitled Trotsky vivant (Julliard, Paris, 1962).
25. La Lutte de classes, whose principal editor was Naville, was the theoretical magazine of the French Opposition after the founding of La Verite in 1929, but the Opposition itself did not have a definite organizational structure until April 1930 when the Communist League of France was established.

26. The Sino-Soviet conflict over control of the Chinese Eastern Railroad almost led to war in 1929 between the USSR and the Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek. See Writings 29 for its effects on the Left Opposition.

27. Robert Louzon (1882-1976) was a syndicalist who belonged briefly to the French CP in the 1920s and left it with Pierre Monatte to found La Revolution Proletarienne and the Syndicalist League. Trotsky's criticisms of him are in Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions and Writings 29.

28. The Brandlerites (after Heinrich Brandler, 1881-1967) had been founders of the German CP and were its leaders when it failed to take advantage of the revolutionary crisis of 1923. Brandler was made a scapegoat for that failure and removed from the leadership in 1924. In 1929 they were expelled from the Comintern and German CP for sympathizing with Bukharin's Right Opposition. They organized themselves as the Communist Party Opposition (KPO) of Germany and lasted as a tendency until World War II. The Comintern's "third period" errors against which both the Brandlerites and the CGTU minority tendencies reacted in 1929 were ultraleftism, sectarianism, "red" trade unionism, and opposition to working class united fronts.


30. War Communism was the name given to the system of production that prevailed in the Soviet Union when it was fighting for its life in the civil war. The Bolsheviks had not planned to nationalize and centralize the economy so much and so soon after they came to power; their original economic plans were more gradual. But everything was subordinated to the military struggle for survival. One result was growing conflict between the peasants, whose produce was requisitioned or confiscated, and the Soviet state; another was a continuing decline in production, both agricultural and industrial. The Kronstadt uprising of 1921 was a signal to the Bolsheviks that peasant discontent was reaching the point of explosion.

31. Winston Churchill (1874-1965), British Conservative, former cabinet minister and future prime minister, had recently published The Aftermath, a book on post–World War I developments in which Lenin was bitterly attacked. Trotsky's answer to Churchill's appraisal of Lenin will be found in Leon Trotsky on Literature and Art (Pathfinder, 1972).

32. "Discussions with Max Shachtman." The Militant, May 10, 1930, where it bore the title "A Visit to the Island of Prinkipo"; opening and
closing paragraphs have been omitted here. Max Shachtman (1903-1972) was a founder of the American Left Opposition, the Socialist Workers Party, and the Fourth International, and editor of several books and pamphlets by Trotsky. In the spring of 1930 the Communist League of America sent him as its representative to a meeting in Paris which established the International Left Opposition. Before attending that meeting, Shachtman visited Trotsky at Prinkipo and held several discussions on which he reported in this article. In 1940 Shachtman split from the SWP after an unsuccessful attempt to revise its position of defense of the USSR. He then organized the Workers Party, later renamed the Independent Socialist League, whose remnants he led into the right wing of the Socialist Party in 1958.

33. The first Soviet five-year plan was not adopted until April 1929 but it was counted as having begun in October 1928. Many of Trotsky's most important articles on the subject will be found in Writings 30 and 30-31.

34. Alexei Rykov (1881-1938), an Old Bolshevik, was a leader of the CPSU right wing that joined Stalin in fighting the Left Opposition from 1923 to 1928. Commissar of the interior in 1917, he became president of the Council of People's Commissars after Lenin's death, holding the office to 1930. He capitulated to Stalin in 1929 and was allowed to serve in minor posts until he was executed after the 1938 Moscow trial.

35. The NEP (New Economic Policy) was initiated in 1921 to replace the policy of War Communism. To revive the economy after the civil war, the NEP was adopted as a temporary measure allowing a limited revival of free trade inside the Soviet Union and foreign concessions alongside the nationalized and state-controlled sectors of the economy. The Nepmen, who benefited from this policy, were viewed as a potential base for the restoration of capitalism. The NEP was succeeded by the first five-year plan and forced collectivization of the land, although the Stalin regime continued until 1930 to say the NEP was still in effect.

36. Louis Fischer (1896-1970) was an American journalist who wrote several books on European politics. Trotsky viewed him as an apologist for the Stalinists. He became anti-communist after the Stalin-Hitler pact.

37. Permanent revolution was the theory most closely associated with Trotsky, beginning with the 1905 revolution when he first developed his ideas about the leading role of the working class in industrially backward and underdeveloped countries. Although Lenin and the Bolsheviks accepted the conclusions of this theory in leading the 1917 revolution, the Stalinists centered their fire on it in the 1920s after they adopted the theory of socialism in one country. Trotsky's major exposition, The Permanent Revolution, was written in 1928-29.

38. Old Bolsheviks were those who joined the Bolshevik Party before 1917, that is, members of the party's "old guard." Although it was an honorific designation, Lenin sometimes used it disparagingly for party veterans who hadn't learned or relearned anything for a long time.

39. Gregory Ordzhonikidze (1886-1937), an Old Bolshevik and orga-
nizer of the Stalin faction, directed heavy industry during the 1930s. The circumstances surrounding his death are still not publicly known. Grigory Petrovsky (1878-1958), an Old Bolshevik, was purged from his high posts in the late 1930s but lived to be "rehabilitated" after Stalin's death. Emelyan Yaroslavsky (1878-1943) was a top Stalinist specialist in the elimination of "Trotskyism," which did not prevent him from falling from favor temporarily in 1931-32 when he failed to keep up with the tempo Stalin demanded in the rewriting of Soviet history.

40. Alexander Kerensky (1882-1970), a right-winger in the Social Revolutionary Party, never led or directed any revolution, but he was prime minister of the Provisional Government that held power after the February revolution until it was overthrown by the Bolsheviks.

41. Jay Lovestone (1898- ), a leader of the American CP who supervised the expulsion of Trotsky's supporters in 1928, was himself expelled on Stalin's orders in 1929 because of his sympathies for the Soviet right wing. He led a group that existed until World War II, and later became cold-war adviser to the AFL-CIO bureaucracy.

42. John Pepper was the pseudonym of Joseph Pogany, a Hungarian exile in the American CP leadership and a Lovestoneite in the 1920s, expelled in 1929.

43. A party of two classes (e.g., a "workers' and peasants' party") was a formula used by the Stalinists in the mid-1920s to justify support for the Kuomintang and other bourgeois parties in the East.

44. Leon Kamenev (1883-1936), an Old Bolshevik, helped Stalin to launch the crusade against "Trotskyism" in 1923, and then joined with Trotsky in the United Opposition bloc against Stalin (1926-27). Twice expelled from the CP and twice readmitted after capitulating, he was executed after the first Moscow trial in 1936.

45. Karl Marx (1818-1883) was the founder of scientific socialism and a leader of the First International.

46. "Progressives in the United Mine Workers." By permission of Albert Glotzer. This letter, translated by Max Shachtman while he was in Turkey, was circulated to the members of the CLA National Committee as Trotsky's "amendment" to their statement on "The Mining Situation and the Tasks of the Left Wing" (The Militant, March 1, 1930). There were two miners' unions in the U.S. at this time—the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), affiliated to the American Federation of Labor (AFL), and the National Miners Union, a small sectarian group affiliated to the CP-dominated Trade Union Unity League (TUUL). Most unionized miners still belonged to the UMWA, although it had suffered a catastrophic decline in membership during the 1920s under the bureaucratic control of president John L. Lewis (1880-1969). In March 1930 the UMWA experienced a serious split when the Lewis bureaucracy called a national convention in Indianapolis, while left wing opponents Alexander Howat and John Brophy (1886-1963) joined with dissident Lewisites at the head of the UMWA apparatus in Illinois ("the Fishwick
machine") in holding a national convention in Springfield, Illinois, to "reorganize" the UMWA. The CLA National Committee statement urged left-wing miners to participate in the Springfield convention; the CP and TUUL advised them to boycott it. The Green bureaucracy referred to the AFL's executive council, whose president, William Green (1873-1952), supported Lewis against his UMWA opponents. Albert A. Purcell (1872-1935) and Arthur J. Cook (1883-1931) were British union leaders who flirted with Communism when it was popular in the mid-twenties but never ventured beyond "left unionism." Edo Fimmen (1881-1942) was a leader of the Dutch unions, an official of the International Transport Workers Federation. The "reorganized" UMWA founded in Springfield elected the militant Howat as president and a Socialist Party leader as vice-president. It existed for a few years as the Progressive Miners of America but disintegrated when the Lewis-led union recovered its strength in the radicalization that occurred later in the thirties. Brophy and Lewis were reconciled, and when the CIO was organized in 1935, Lewis was its first chairman and Brophy its first executive director. Trotsky's more critical attitude to the Brophy types was approved by the CLA National Committee.

47. "Prospects of the Communist League of America." From the archives of James P. Cannon. By permission of the Library of Social History, New York. This letter, seeking closer relations with the CLA, was written shortly after Shachtman's visit.

48. Trotsky's initial opinion that the CLA and the Belgian opposition could develop into independent parties was expressed in his letter, "Greetings to the Weekly Militant," October 19, 1929, in Writings 29.

49. The American "Platform of the Communist Opposition" was printed in The Militant, February 15, 1929, and was adopted, with amendments, at the founding national conference of the CLA in Chicago in May 1929. Trotsky's "doubts on the slogan of the labor party" concerned the CLA conference's advocacy of a labor party in the U.S. The second national conference of the CLA in September 1931 decided to discontinue advocacy of a labor party, a change that Trotsky praised in "The Labor Party Question in the United States" (Writings 32). His later position in favor of advocacy is presented in The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution (Pathfinder, 1977).

50. "The Mute Conference." By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Russell Block. A letter to Max Shachtman, who had returned to the United States after attending the meeting in Paris that established the International Left Opposition on April 6, 1930. The Berlin events referred to a national conference at the end of March which set up a Left Opposition group independent of the Leninbund, after the Leninbund leader, Hugo Urbahns (see note 168), had decided to break with the Left Opposition. The Italians not officially represented at the April meeting were the Bordigist exiles in France (see note 104);
Trotsky's remarks about their nonparticipation are in his "Open Letter to the Prometeo Group," April 22, 1930, in *Writings 30*. The Belgians, who attended, were divided between a group that split from the ILO later in the year, and the Charleroi Federation, which Trotsky supported. For Franz Pfemfert, see note 277. For Martin Abern, see note 258. Harry Winitsky was business manager of the Lovestoneite weekly; Trotsky's "Letter to a Lovestoneite," April 16, 1930, is in *Writings 30*.

51. "More About Comrade Blumkin." *Biulleten Oppozitsii* (Bulletin of the Opposition), number 11, May 1930. Translated from the Russian by Donald Kennedy. Unsigned. Jakob Blumkin (1899-1929) was a Left Socialist Revolutionary terrorist during an insurrection against the Soviet government in 1918; subsequently he became a Communist and a GPU official. For visiting Trotsky in Turkey in the summer of 1929 he was executed after returning to the USSR with a message he asked Trotsky to prepare as an exposition of the Left Opposition's views. *Biulleten Oppozitsii* was the Russian-language magazine edited by Trotsky from 1929 until his death. A complete set, in four volumes, has been reproduced by Monad Press, 1973 (distributed by Pathfinder Press).

52. The announcement that Silov and Rabinovich had been executed for alleged “sabotage of the railroad system” was made shortly after the killing of Blumkin.

53. Boris Souvarine (1893- ) was a founder of the French CP and one of the first biographers of Stalin. Expelled from the CP in 1924 for his criticisms of Stalinism, he considered himself an Oppositionist until 1929 when he rejected Trotsky's concepts of the Left Opposition. Later he renounced Leninism too.

54. GPU was one of the abbreviated names of the Soviet political-police department; other names were Cheka, OGPU, NKVD, MVD, KGB, etc., but GPU is often used in their place.

55. "G. Mannoury and the Comintern." *Biulleten Oppozitsii*, number 11, May 1930. Translated by Donald Kennedy. Unsigned. Gerrit Mannoury (1867-1956), a mathematician, was a founding member of the Dutch CP, suspended in 1929 and expelled in 1930 for alleged “Trotskyism.” His pamphlet cited by Trotsky was entitled *Heden is het keerpunt* (Today Is the Turning Point).

56. David Wijnkoop (1876-1941), whom Lenin classified as an ultraleftist, was expelled from the Dutch CP and the Comintern executive committee in 1926. Soon after this article in 1930, he made a “self-criticism” and was reinstated in the Dutch CP.

57. Scissors was a term used by Trotsky in 1923 to call attention to the simultaneous rise of industrial prices and fall of agricultural prices occurring when agriculture was being revived at the expense of industry; on a graph the price changes resembled a scissors opening.

Stalin’s article, first published in Pravda April 3, 1930, is translated in his Works, volume 12. It was part of his attempt at that time to avoid responsibility for early “excesses” in the forced collectivization of Soviet agriculture.

59. “Official Deceit and the Truth.” Biulleten Oppozitsii, number 11, May 1930. Translated by Donald Kennedy. Unsigned. Andrey A. Andreyev (1895- ) was commissar of agriculture, 1943-46, and a member of the Politburo from 1932 until 1952, when he was removed for agricultural failures. He was rehabilitated after Stalin’s death.

60. “Bureaucratic Tendencies.” By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Russell Block. A letter to Max Shachtman, continuing Trotsky’s criticisms of the ILO’s April meeting. As promised here, he went into these in greater detail in his “Circular Letter Number One,” June 29, 1930 (see Writings 30), although that letter was addressed to all sections of the ILO, it was shown only to their leaders. The Chinese platform was “The Political Situation in China and the Tasks of the Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition,” June 1929 (see Writings 29); the passage referred to said, “Never and under no circumstances may the party of the proletariat enter into a party of another class or merge with it organizationally. An absolutely independent party of the proletariat is a first and decisive condition of communist politics.” Trotsky’s article “The New Masses as ‘Defender’ of the October Revolution,” June 10, 1930, is in Writings 30.


62. “We Should Proceed as Democratically as Possible.” By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Russell Block. A letter to Max Shachtman, who had expressed concern about the crisis in the French Opposition. Trotsky’s belief that the crisis had been “basically overcome” proved to be erroneous. Although Alfred Rosmer (see note 73) had not yet resigned from the French section and the International Bureau, he did withdraw from both in November. For Raymond Molinier, see note 69. For Jan Frankel, see note 98. The two groups of the Italian Opposition were the Bordigists and the New Italian Opposition (see note 66). For Benjamin Gitlow, a Lovestonite leader, see note 409. For Leon Sedov, see note 80. Charalambos was a young fisherman who worked as Trotsky’s guide when he went fishing in the waters off Prinkipo (see “Charalambos,” July 15, 1933, in Portraits, Political and Personal, Pathfinder, 1977).

63. “To the Bolshevik-Leninist Organization of Greece.” International
64. "Personal Elements in the French Struggle." By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Russell Block. A letter to Max Shachtman. For Raymond Molinier, see note 69. For Alfred Rosmer, see note 73. For Pierre Gourget, see note 71. For the Unitary Opposition in the CGTU, see note 68. For Jan Frankel, see note 98. For Pierre Frank, see note 82. For M. Mill, see note 81. For Pierre Monatte, see note 323. La Vie Ouvriere was a revolutionary syndicalist paper with which Trotsky collaborated when he was in France during World War I. For Edouard van Overstraeten, see note 99. For the Bordigists, see note 104. Revolution Surrealiste was a surrealist magazine, of which Naville was an editor. Clarte was a CP magazine which was taken over by Oppositionists, including Naville, and later was succeeded by Lutte des classes. For Souzo, see note 66. For Kurt Landau, see note 80. For Roman Well, see note 238. Trotsky's small pamphlet following the German elections was "The Turn in the Communist International and the Situation in Germany," September 26, 1930 (see The Struggle Against Fasicm in Germany). For Anton Grylewicz, see note 229. For Oskar Seipold, see note 601.

65. "Every Group Should Take a Clear Stand." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by George Saunders. A letter to the leadership of the United Left Opposition in Germany about the crisis of the French section and its repercussions in the ILO. Not only the French section but the ILO as a whole was in a precarious and unhealthy condition, almost from its establishment in April 1930 until 1933, when the decision to work for a Fourth International put new...
wind in its sails. Unfavorable objective conditions and the inexperience of its cadres kept the ILO and its sections isolated and organizationally stagnant throughout these years despite their politically correct propagandist work around such issues as the Nazi threat in Germany and the revolution in Spain. An International Bureau selected in 1930 was unable to fulfill its functions and had to be supplemented and eventually replaced by an International Secretariat that did not carry much authority. At the end of 1930, the French, German, and Belgian sections were undergoing severe internal disputes, soon to lead to splits. The fall of the monarchy and the first phases of the Spanish revolution in 1931 saw the development of bitter differences between the ILO leadership and the new Spanish section on one side and the Italian Left Faction (Bordigists) on another. The section in the United States became half-paralyzed by factionalism over personal rather than political differences. In 1931 and 1932, forces that had split from the ILO tried to put together a new international center in competition with the IS. They received toleration and even sympathy from some of the anti-IS people still in the ILO, but the effort finally failed because the only thing the dissidents had in common was a distaste for the “methods” of Trotsky and the IS, and because the main cadres of the ILO rallied around Trotsky and the IS in 1932. Trotsky’s letter at the end of 1930 indicated that he thought the ILO’s whole future depended on the outcome of this fight, whose meaning was not at all clear to everyone at the beginning. Naville was the principal leader of the Communist League and a member of the IS at the end of 1930. In trade union matters, he played a conciliatory role toward a quasi-syndicalist tendency in the leadership. In regard to the CP, he disagreed with those who wanted to give critical support to the limited self-criticism the CP was making of its third-period sectarian practices (1930-31); instead of using the CP’s “turn” as a springboard for an active campaign to influence the CP ranks, he thought it was sufficient to condemn it as an expression of opportunism. In regard to international tasks, he was in Trotsky’s opinion, negligent about regular publication of the International Bulletin and other duties of the IS and underestimated the need to consolidate the ILO cadres as a homogeneous ideological tendency. Naville and Trotsky also disagreed over organizational norms, the relations between leaders and members, etc.

66. “To Alfonso Leonetti on the French Section.” By permission of Tamara Deutscher. Translated from the French by Jeff White. Alfonso Leonetti (1895- ), who used the pseudonyms Souzo, A. Feroci, Akros, and Martin, was one of the three members of the Italian CP’s Political Bureau in France who broke with the Comintern’s third-period line in 1930 and formed the New Italian Opposition (NOI), which joined the ILO. He was a member of the IS from 1930 to 1936, when he became inactive before dropping out of the movement. He rejoined the Italian CP after World War II. His sympathies for the Naville group gave it a
majority on the three-member IS at the start of 1931. In January 1931 the French section elected a new Executive Committee, in which the Naville group was reduced to a minority. As part of this change, Naville resigned from the IS, where he was replaced by Pierre Frank.

67. A **purge**, or measures to expel opponents or exclude them from the leadership, was attempted by some leaders of the French section in 1930. Trotsky, and a majority of the French membership, opposed this move then, when Rosmer and Naville sought to use it against Raymond Molinier (see *Writings 30*), and he continued to oppose it in 1931, after Rosmer had withdrawn from the section and the Naville group had been reduced to a minority.

68. The **trade union question** arose in the French section after its leaders joined with other anti-Stalinists in April 1930 to create the Unitary Opposition, a left-wing caucus in the Stalinist-led CGTU. The UO broke up after its first national conference in December 1930. This was accompanied by a bitter fight in the French section between the defenders of the UO policy (the Gourget group) and its critics (the "Marxist wing"), who were supported by Trotsky and who charged that the policy pursued in the UO represented an impermissible adaptation to non-Bolshevik allies and a violation of the French section's independence in trade union work. Naville's bloc with the Gourget group did not prevent the "Marxist wing" from taking over the leadership in January 1931. Trotsky's views will be found in *Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions* (Pathfinder, 1975).

69. **Raymond Molinier** (1904- ) was a founder of *La Verite* and the French section, elected to its Executive Committee in January 1931 and one of its chief leaders until 1935, when he was expelled for violating discipline by publishing his own paper. Readmitted in 1936, the Molinier group was expelled again the same year, and the French section was not reunified until 1944. See *The Crisis of the French Section (1935-36)* (Pathfinder, 1977).

70. The **"Prinkipo peace pact"** was an attempt to moderate the French factional struggle through informal discussions with Trotsky and other non-French Oppositionists. They were held at Trotsky's home in Turkey in the summer of 1930, with Naville, Molinier, Mill, Frankel, and Sedov participating. But the battle was resumed a few weeks later.

71. **Pierre Gourget** was a founder of *La Verite*, a member of the French section's first Executive Committee, director of its trade union work, and leader of a small faction that Trotsky designated as "rightist." It split from the section in April 1931 to publish the *Bulletin de la Gauche Communiste* and rejoined later in the year. Gourget quit again in 1932, to join the CP.

72. "You Should Help the New Leadership." By permission of Tamara Deutscher. Translated from the French by Jeff White. This letter to Leonetti solicited his collaboration with the new leadership of the French section (Molinier, Pierre Frank, and the Jewish Group).
73. Alfred Rosmer (1877-1964), a revolutionary syndicalist who collaborated with Trotsky in France during World War I, was a leader of the Comintern and the French CP until his expulsion as an Oppositionist in 1924. He joined the French Opposition in 1929 and was editor of _La Verite_. He withdrew from the International Bureau and the French section in November 1930 because of differences with Trotsky over how to build the movement; prominent among these were their conflicting assessments of Molinier. Their personal friendship was renewed in 1936 but Rosmer never rejoined the movement. A sympathetic political biography is _Alfred Rosmer et le mouvement revolutionnaire international_ by Christian Gras (Maspero, Paris, 1971).

74. Paul Le Pape, who signed his articles Daniel Levine, was a member of the French section's first Executive Committee, in charge of youth work. He quit the section in 1931, around the time of the Gourget split. _L'Avant-Garde_ was a labor journal published in Tours.

75. "Miliukov and the February Revolution." This preface to the Russian edition of the first volume of _The History of the Russian Revolution_ (republished by Monad Press, 1976), which was not included in the English-language edition, was translated by Michael Sosa. Pavel Miliukov (1859-1943), minister of foreign affairs in the Provisional Government until May 1917 and the Bolsheviks' principal bourgeois opponent, was the leader of the Constitutional Democrats (Cadets), a liberal capitalist party that favored a constitutional monarchy or republic. He fled to Western Europe after the October Revolution where he wrote, among other things, the three-volume book discussed here by Trotsky, _A History of the Second Russian Revolution_, published in 1921-23. _Rech_ was the Cadet paper in 1917. Lavr Kornilov (1870-1918) was a Siberian cossack general chosen by Kerensky as his commander in chief in July 1917, who led a counterrevolutionary putsch against the Provisional Government a few weeks later. The Kornilovites were crushed under the leadership of the Bolsheviks and Kornilov was arrested, but he escaped to lead the counterrevolution until he was killed in April 1918. Erich Ludendorff (1865-1937) was the German army chief of staff in World War I, who conducted negotiations in 1917 that allowed Lenin to return to Russia through Germany, then at war with Russia.

76. "Andres Nin and Victor Serge." _Biiiletten Oppoziitsii_, number 19, March 1931. Unsigned. Translated by Ron Allen. Andres Nin (1892-1937), a former leader of the Spanish CP and former secretary of the Red International of Labor Unions, was deported from the USSR as a Left Oppositionist in September 1930 and returned to Spain to become the Spanish section's best-known leader and a member of the International Bureau. Deepening differences with Trotsky, described in _The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)_ (Pathfinder, 1973), led him to split with the Opposition and to help found the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM) in 1935. He was kidnapped and murdered by the Stalinists during the
Spanish civil war. Victor Serge (1890-1947), formerly an anarchist, moved to the USSR and worked for the Comintern in Lenin's time. Arrested as an Oppositionist, he was released in 1928 and rearrested in 1933. He was freed and allowed to leave the USSR in 1936. He soon developed differences with the Movement for the Fourth International and left it. His 1930 book has been translated in English as *Year One of the Russian Revolution* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972).

77. Solomon Lozovsky (1878-1952) broke with the Bolsheviks in 1912, rejoined them in 1917, was expelled for publicly opposing their policy toward the SRs and Mensheviks after the October Revolution, and rejoined the CPSU in 1919. He was the principal official of the Red International of Labor Unions throughout its existence and a reliable Stalinist until 1949 when he was purged and arrested. He died in a concentration camp and was rehabilitated in 1956.

78. Damaso Berenguer was a Spanish general appointed by King Alfonso XIII to head the government after dictator Primo de Rivera resigned in January 1930. He himself resigned in February 1931, two months before the monarchy fell and the Spanish republic was proclaimed.

79. “The International Secretariat and the International Bureau.” From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. A 1931 translation. At the April 1930 meeting in Paris where the ILO was established, an International Bureau to handle administrative matters and coordinate relations with the national sections was approved. Its members were Rosmer, in France; Leon Sedov, representing the Russian section and then living in Turkey; and a representative chosen by the German section, Kurt Landau. Later Nin, in Spain, and Shachtman, in the U.S., were coopted to the Bureau. The Bureau found it difficult to carry out its functions, partly because of the distance of most of its members from the center in Paris, partly because of the sharp factional strife that gripped the major sections. As a result, an International Secretariat (sometimes called the Administrative Secretariat) was set up in addition to the IB. All three members of the first IS—M. Mill, Leonetti, and Naville—were resident in Paris. When the German and French factional crisis deepened, the relative authority of the IB and IS became one of the issues disputed. Trotsky’s letter attempted to clarify the history of their development and to show the need to maintain and strengthen the IS. By this time the German section was on the verge of a split led by Landau, who refused to recognize the IS in any way.

80. N. Markin was a pseudonym of Leon Sedov (1906-1938), Trotsky’s son and a leader of the movement in his own right. He moved to Germany in 1931, where he was a member of the IS until Hitler came to power. Then he served on the IS in France until he was murdered by the GPU. Kurt Landau (1903-1937) was a Left Oppositionist who had moved from Austria to Germany and become the leader of the German section formed in 1930. He split from the ILO in 1931. He was murdered by the Stalinists
in Spain. Trotsky's views on the 1931 German dispute are in *Writings 30-31*, and his appraisal of "Landauism" is in *Writings 32-33*.

81. **M. Mill** and J. Obin were pseudonyms of Pavel Okun (1905-1937?), a Ukrainian who emigrated to Palestine and France, where he joined the CP in the 1920s. He was a founder of *La Verite* in 1929 and of the French section in 1930. Because he knew Russian, he was chosen to represent the Russian section on the IS in 1930 when Sedov was unable to go to France, and he became the only full-time member of the IS. Dissatisfaction with his performance led to his removal from this post, and he defected to the Stalinists in 1932.

82. **Pierre Frank** (1905- ) was a founder of *La Verite* and a member of the French section's first Executive Committee. He served on the IS, 1931-32, and as a secretary of Trotsky in Turkey, 1932-33. He was a leader of the Molinier group, expelled in 1935 for violating discipline. After internment in Britain during World War II, he became a member of the IS and its successor, the United Secretariat.

83. "To Preserve Our Politics from Degeneration." By permission of Tamara Deutscher. Translated from the French by Jeff White. The identity of Torino, to whom this letter was written, was not established for this volume, but it may have been Leonetti.

84. **Mikhail Tomsky** (1886-1936) was a right-wing Bolshevik and head of the Soviet trade unions, who worked closely with Stalin in the mid-twenties, especially during the period of the Anglo-Russian Committee, until he joined with Bukharin in the short-lived Right Opposition fight against Stalin in 1928. He committed suicide during the first Moscow trial.

85. "National Conferences First." From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. A 1931 translation. Late in 1930 the IS decided to call a conference of the ILO's European sections by May 1931, as a first step toward an international conference. Trotsky agreed, on the condition that conferences of the national sections be held first. The IS accepted the position presented in Trotsky's letter. A European conference was never held, and an international conference did not take place until February 1933 (see *Writings 32-33*).

86. Trotsky's theses on the Russian question were entitled "Problems of the Development of the USSR" (*Writings 30-31*). There is no record of Trotsky having sent theses on democratic slogans, but there are several articles and letters on this subject in *Writings 30-31*.

87. "Will Help New Publishing House." By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Russell Block. A letter to the CLA leadership, which had decided to set up Pioneer Publishers to issue Marxist books and pamphlets. The CLA educational work commended by Trotsky referred to several pamphlets already published. For James P. Cannon, see note 259. Trotsky's *pamphlet on syndicalism* was
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entitled *Communism and Syndicalism*. It was reprinted, without Cannon's introduction, in *Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions*.

88. **"What a Control Commission Should Do."** By permission of Colette Chambelland, Musee sociale, Paris. Translated from the French by James P. Nolan. This was a reply to an April 1931 letter from Auguste Mougeot (1878-1961) of Longwy, France, and Edouard Reiland (1897-1967), a founder of the Luxemburg CP who was sympathetic to the Left Opposition; both were friends of Rosmer, and Mougeot remained a member of the French section after Rosmer withdrew in November 1930. The French leadership was again in turmoil at this time. In April the Gourget group quit, began publishing its own bulletin, and looked around for allies in France and elsewhere. It hoped to win the support of Rosmer, whose defection was not officially recognized by the French section until a national conference at the end of May. The new French majority disintegrated when the Jewish Group withdrew its support from Molinier and Frank and, like the Gourget group, began to make overtures to Rosmer.

89. The **Molinier question** referred to charges, never formally presented, that Molinier was unqualified to be a leader of a revolutionary organization because of unscrupulous business practices by his debt-collection agency and a plea of mental instability made when he was prosecuted for desertion as a military conscript in 1929.

90. The French section energetically supported an important **miners' strike** against wage cuts that took place in northern France in March-April 1931. But in the April 3 *Verite* the leaders of the section called on the miners to recognize that the strike could not be won and to return to work in a body. A majority of the members and of the IS strongly disagreed with this call, and the members refused to circulate that issue of *La Verite*. To express their discontent with the attitude of the members, the authors of the call, Molinier and Paul, then submitted their resignations as members of the Executive Committee.

91. **"The First Lesson from Spain."** By permission of Tamara Deutscher. Translated from the French by Jeff White. A letter to Leonetti, whose group had just published the first number of the NOI's *Bollettino*. All the issues of this periodical have been reprinted as a book entitled *All'Opposizione nel P.C.I. con Trotsky e Gramsci* (Controcorrente, Rome, 1977).

92. The **report of Mill** would be about his trip to Spain on behalf of the IS in April, shortly after the establishment of the second Spanish republic. Mill met with the Spanish Oppositionists and wrote articles printed in several Opposition journals that infuriated Trotsky because of their generally uncritical attitude to the Catalan Federation led by Joaquin Maurin.

93. **Prometeo** was the public journal of the Italian Left Faction (Bordigists), published in exile in France.
94. The proposals of the Secretariat were designated to prevent a premature split in the German section by measures to hold a national conference where the differences between the Landau group and the German supporters of the IS could be democratically discussed and decided. Pierre Frank was sent to Berlin as the IS representative late in May, but the Landau group refused to recognize the IS's authority. Landau split with the ILO a few weeks later.

95. "Part of the Responsibility for the German Split." From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. A 1931 translation. The second and third paragraphs of this letter to Max Shachtman were published in a CLA internal bulletin and were reprinted in Writings 30-31.

96. The China book was entitled Problems of the Chinese Revolution (Pioneer Publishers, 1932), whose foreword was written by Shachtman as editor. All the selections by Trotsky in that book, including the ones suggested in this letter and many others not included in Problems, will be found in Leon Trotsky on China (Monad, 1976).

97. Andre Malraux (1901-1976) wrote two novels about the Chinese revolution, The Conquerors (1929) and Man's Fate (1933). Trotsky here is referring to the first of these, about which he wrote two articles. Malraux met and defended Trotsky in France in 1933, then collaborated with the Stalinists during the People's Front period, and became a Gaullist government official after World War II.

98. Jan Frankel (1906- ), a founder of the Czech Opposition in 1927, was a member of Trotsky's secretariat-guard in Turkey, 1930-33; Norway, 1935; and Mexico, 1937; a member of the IS at various times; and the only other witness besides Trotsky at the 1937 hearings of the Dewey Commission in Coyoacan, Mexico (see The Case of Leon Trotsky, Merit Publishers, 1968). He left the Fourth International in 1940 when he joined Shachtman's Workers Party.

99. Edouard van Overstraeten (1891- ), a founder of the Belgian CP, was expelled in 1928 and helped found the Belgian Left Opposition. He developed differences with Trotsky over the Sino-Soviet conflict in 1929, and split in 1930 with a small group that existed for a short while as the League of Communist Internationalists. He withdrew from politics before it expired. Albert Weisbord (1900-1977), resigned from the American CP in 1930, and a year later formed the Communist League of Struggle, which proclaimed its adherence to the ILO although its policies vacillated between those of the Right and Left Oppositions. He broke with Trotsky in 1934, dissolved the CLS in 1937, and supported the U.S. government in World War II.

100. The Mahnruf group was the Communist Opposition of Austria, one of several sects in that country on the margin of the ILO. It published a journal called Der Neuer Mahnruf (The New Call).

101. There were two brothers named Boni, American publishers of The

102. Max Eastman (1883-1969) was the editor of The Masses before World War I, an early sympathizer of the Left Opposition, and the translator of several of Trotsky's books. He also acted as a literary agent for Trotsky in the early 30s. Later in the decade he broke with Marxism, becoming eventually a Reader's Digest editor.


104. Amadeo Bordiga (1889-1970) was a founder and central leader of the Italian CP. He was imprisoned on a remote island by the Mussolini regime in 1926, and was kept under strict police surveillance when he was released in 1930.

105. The Catalan Federation of the Spanish CP, led by Joaquin Maurin, was an independent right-centrist group from 1930 until 1935, when it merged with former Left Oppositionists led by Nin to create the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM). Trotsky's criticisms of the Catalan Federation will be found in The Spanish Revolution (1931-39).


107. The first American edition of Trotsky's The Permanent Revolution was issued by Pioneer Publishers in New York in 1931.

108. Trotsky was wrong in his estimate that the internal misunderstandings of the Spanish section had been eliminated by its second national conference in March. The differences were to continue and become more fundamental.


Charleroi Federation of the Belgian section, dated June 28, 1931, is printed under the title “French Leadership Problems” in Writings 30-31.

110. “Irresponsible Types.” By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Russell Block. A letter to Max Shachtman, who had shortened the title of Trotsky's Spanish pamphlet so that it became The Spanish Revolution in Danger; the contents of this 1931 compilation are in The Spanish Revolution (1931-1939). Naville's critical article was about the French majority's policy in the miners' strike in the spring of 1931.

Although Trotsky declined in this letter to participate in the internal discussion preceding the second national conference of the French section, he soon changed his mind and contributed several critical articles before the conference in October (see Writings 30-31).

112. Raymond Molinier's trip to Spain was intended to explore ways of helping the Spanish section, but in the end the leaders of the section were very dissatisfied with the results.

113. Rosmer's latest letter was probably one he wrote to the Charleroi Federation on July 22, 1931. Although he failed to explain his withdrawal to the French section, he did write letters about his grievances to individual members and the Charleroi Federation, copies of which were circulated among Oppositionists in France. Despite his remarks here, Trotsky did have something to say in reply to Rosmer, and he said it a few days later in the next selection.

114. "Rosmer's Politics." From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. A 1931 translation. This is part of a letter to Andres Nin. The other part, dealing with tactical questions in Spain, was published at the time and is reprinted under the title "More on Soviets and the 'Balkanization' Argument" in The Spanish Revolution (1931-39).

115. M.'s brother was Henri Molinier (1898-1944), himself a founder and leading activist in the French section, who was killed during the battle over Paris.

116. Frederick Engels (1820-1895) was a lifelong collaborator of Karl Marx and co-author with him of many of the basic works of Marxism. In his last years he was the outstanding figure of the young Second International.

117. Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937) was prime minister in the first and second British Labour governments (1924, 1929-31). He then bolted from the Labour Party to form a "national unity" cabinet with Conservatives and Liberals, in which he was again prime minister (1931-35).

118. There was actually no formal "Rosmer-Naville group" at this time. One of the leaders of the Gourget group, which had split in April, was Claude Naville (1908-1935), brother of Pierre. The older brother remained in the French section when the younger one split. Rosmer collaborated with the "Gauche Communiste" group but did not join it.

119. "Discussions with Albert Glotzer." The Militant, January 2, 1932, where it bore the title "A Sojourn with Comrade Trotsky: Five Weeks in Kadikoy"; opening and closing paragraphs have been omitted here. Albert Glotzer (1908- ) was a founder of the American Left Opposition and a leader in the Socialist Workers Party until 1940, when he split away with Shachtman. In the autumn of 1931 he visited Trotsky in Turkey for the discussions on which he reported in this article. He had recently helped found Young Spartacus, monthly paper of the Sparta-
cus Youth Clubs, later renamed the Spartacus Youth League, the youth affiliate of the Left Opposition in the U.S., 1931-35.

120. **Morris Hillquit** (1869-1933) was a founder of the American SP and a staunch reformist. **Norman Thomas** (1884-1969) was the SP's presidential candidate in 1928 and subsequent elections through 1948. Trotsky later said that it was through a misunderstanding that Thomas thought he was a socialist.

121. These discussions took place more than a year before **Adolf Hitler** (1889-1945) and his Nazis came to power and destroyed the German working class parties and unions. The record of Trotsky's efforts to create a fighting united front against the Hitlerites is in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* (Pathfinder, 1971).

122. **Maxim Litvinov** (1876-1951), an Old Bolshevik, was Soviet commissar for foreign affairs during the 1930s. Stalin used him to personify "collective security" when he sought alliances with the democratic imperialists, and shelved him during the Stalin-Hitler pact and the cold war.

123. **Karl Radek** (1885-1939), Comintern representative and journalist, was a leader of the Russian Left Opposition until 1929, when he led a wing of the Opposition into capitulating to Stalin. He was reinstated in the CPSU until the second Moscow trial in 1937, where he was convicted and sentenced to prison.

124. "To Help in Britain." By permission of Albert Glotzer. A 1931 translation by Glotzer. A letter to Max Shachtman, who had been assigned by the CLA, along with Glotzer, to visit Britain to help organize a Left Opposition group. The Labour Party had just suffered a crushing defeat in the parliamentary elections, and some sympathizers of the Opposition in London were advancing the idea that fascism was imminent in Britain. Trotsky's countertheses, "What Is a Revolutionary Situation?," November 17, 1931, are in *Writings 30-31*, along with several other articles on Britain. Trotsky's 1925 book *Where Is Britain Going?* is reprinted in *Leon Trotsky on Britain* (Monad Press, 1973). **Ivor Montague** (1904- ), a wealthy film director and producer, later became a virulent anti-Trotskyist and fellow traveler of the British Stalinists in various "peace" committees.

125. "What Is Fascism?" By permission of Albert Glotzer. A 1931 translation by Glotzer. A letter to Max Shachtman for use in his British assignment. Most of this appeared in *The Militant* at the time but only a truncated version was printed in *Writings 30-31*, where it was wrongly identified as a letter to a British comrade. General **Miguel Primo de Rivera** (1870-1930) was dictator of Spain from 1923 until his resignation in 1930 after he failed to get a vote of confidence from his fellow officers. For **Benito Mussolini**, see note 590. **Oswald Mosley** (1896- ) entered British politics as a Tory, switched to the Labour Party, and then quit that to form the "New Party," which he transformed
into the British Union of Fascists in 1932. For the ILP, see note 154. Ellen Wilkinson (1891-1947) was a former union organizer, a left Labourite who helped found the Tribune, a Labourite M.P., and minister of education in the Attlee cabinet after World War II.

126. “Better to Seek the Solid.” By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Duncan Williams. A letter to Max Shachtman, who had visited France and Spain before going to Britain. For Henry Lacroix, see note 143. For Reg Groves, see note 152. F.A. Ridley (1897- ), a former ILP member, and Aggarwala (d. 1932), an Indian law student who used the pen name Chandu Ram, were authors of documents claiming that the then “National” government represented “the first stage of British fascism”; they did not join the Left Opposition when it was formally organized. Trotsky’s theses bore the title “Germany, the Key to the International Situation,” November 26, 1931 (in The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany). His views on the Japan-China conflict were expressed in “The Japanese Invasion of Manchuria,” November 30, 1931 (in Writings 30-31). His position on the inevitability of war between a fascist Germany and the USSR, “I See War with Germany,” was published in an American magazine in April 1932 (in Writings 32).

127. “Why Mill Should Be Removed.” By permission of Tamara Deutscher. Translated from the French by Jeff White. Trotsky’s relations with Mill worsened after the latter’s reports from Spain in the spring of 1931. By October, Mill tentatively raised the possibility of resigning from the IS as a way of removing an obstacle to Trotsky’s collaboration, but the IS did not take this step. Meanwhile Mill sought to strengthen his position by a number of maneuvers involving the internal struggle in the French section, where the Jewish Group, with which he was associated, began overtures to Rosmer as a counterweight to Molinier. The anti-IS forces in the ILO began to group themselves around Mill; when the leaders of the Spanish section heard that Mill might be removed from the IS, they sent a letter proposing that he become their representative on that body. The Mill-IS crisis was not resolved until 1932, when the site of the IS was transferred from Paris to Berlin. The Jewish Group was part of the French section from its inception. Most of its members were immigrants, many were clothing or fur workers; they represented one-third of the members and the main proletarian base of the League’s Paris region. Originally, their task was to conduct Opposition work among Jews, and they published a paper in Yiddish for this purpose. But increasingly they began to play the role of a faction inside the section. When Trotsky and others criticized them on these grounds, two Jewish Group members resigned from the French Executive Committee in protest early in 1932. Most of the Jewish Group quit the section in 1933 to help set up the Communist Union.

128. Felix was Michiel Mayliak (1900-1943) a Polish fur worker in Paris, a leader of the Jewish Group and a member of the French
Executive Committee until his resignation in 1932. He disappeared in a Nazi concentration camp in World War II.

129. **Maurice Paz** (1896- ) was a French Oppositionist and editor of *Contre le Courant* until 1929, when he broke with the Opposition. After publishing *Le Liberateur* for a short while, he joined the SP, where he became part of a reformist tendency.

130. **Myrtos** was a member of the Greek Archio-Marxists, coopted into the IS in 1931.


132. “Two Pamphlets.” By permission of Tamara Deutscher. Translated from the French by Jeff White. The first pamphlet referred to was *What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat*, reprinted in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*; one chapter was entitled “Lessons of the Italian Experience.” There is no record that the second pamphlet was written or published.


134. “Bordiga and Social Fascism.” By permission of Tamara Deutscher. Translated from the French by Jeff White. Stalin’s theory of social fascism, introduced in 1928, was one of the worst disasters of the Comintern’s disastrous third period. Decreeing that Social Democrats were not opponents but were “twins” of the fascists, it forbade united fronts against the fascists with Social Democrats and other non-Stalinist working class tendencies. This was a major factor in the easy victory the Nazis had in Germany in 1933. Bordiga, an ultraleft opponent of the Leninist united front tactic, had previously argued in favor of his own theory of social fascism in 1921, and Zinoviev, while president of the Comintern, had done the same in 1924. But Bordiga’s position was rejected at the time, and Zinoviev’s, receiving little attention, was soon forgotten. Only Stalin’s position was put into practice, with results catastrophic for many millions of people.

135. This passage suggests that a new IS had already begun to function in Berlin. IS minutes in 1932 listed the following as attending its meetings: Witte, Bauer, Schwarz (Sedov), Well, and a person called Kin or Kiu.


Left Opposition, German edition, number 16, May 1932. Translated from the German by Warren Dean. The SAP (Socialist Workers Party of Germany) was a centrist party formed in October 1931 when the Social Democratic Party (SPD) expelled a left wing led by Max Seydewitz and Kurt Rosenfeld. Early in 1932 a split took place in the German Branden­rite organization (KPO) and a minority, led by Jakob Walcher (also known as Jim Schwab) and Paul Froehlich, decided to enter the SAP. Trotsky's letter was to a member of the KPO minority who had asked his opinion. In February 1933, Seydewitz and Rosenfeld withdrew from the SAP and its leadership was taken over by the former KPO group. Under that leadership the SAP moved to the left and it advocated a new International in June 1933. In 1934 it veered to the right again and became a bitter opponent of the movement for a new International.

138. Richard Scheringer was a German army officer who broke with the Nazis and went over to the CP in March 1931, becoming a showpiece in the campaign of the Stalinists to prove that they were better nationalists than the Nazis.

139. In the German election of March 1932, the SAP wanted a united presidential candidacy by the workers' parties and proposed that the joint candidate be Paul Loebe, the Social Democratic president of the Reichstag. But the Social Democrats chose to support the militarist incumbent Hindenburg as the lesser evil against Hitler (whom Hindenburg appointed as chancellor less than a year later), and the CP ran its own candidate, Thaelmann. When Trotsky spoke here about "our own candidacy" he was not referring to a Left Opposition candidate but to the candidate of the CP, of which the Left Opposition considered itself a faction. In both the primary election and the April runoff, which was won by Hindenburg, the Left Opposition campaigned for Thaelmann.

140. SAZ (Sozialistische Arbeiterzeitung) was the SAP's daily paper.

141. "Our Strength Is in Clarity." By permission of Tamara Deutscher. Translated from the French by Jeff White. A letter to Leonetti.

142. "The American Dispute and International Questions." By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Russell Block. The American dispute was a factional fight in the CLA leadership that had been smoldering for over two years and that brought the CLA to the threshold of a split in 1932. Cannon was on one side in the dispute, Shachtman, Abern, and Glotzer on the other. Trotsky did not align himself with either side, despite his differences with Shachtman on international questions (the ILO's internal disputes); believing that no differences of principle were involved, he advocated compromise and conciliation. A truce was reached at a CLA National Committee plenum in June 1932 but it soon broke down. With the intervention of Trotsky and the IS, the dispute was finally resolved a year later, without a split.

143. Henri Lacroix, the pseudonym of Francisco Garcia Lavid, was a founder and general secretary of the Spanish Left Opposition until March
1932, when he was replaced by Nin. He led a struggle against Nin and was expelled in May 1933. After renouncing “Trotskyism,” he was allowed to join the SP. A commissar in the Republican army, he was killed during the civil war, perhaps by the Stalinists.

144. This interview, entitled “Answers to Questions by the New York Times” and dated February 15, 1932, is in Writings 32.


147. Trotsky's article, “The Labor Party Question in the United States,” May 19, 1932, is in Writings 32.

148. The CLA's position on the international questions had aligned it with Trotsky and the IS and against the anti-IS forces inside and outside the ILO, who were agitating for an international conference open to groups that had split from the ILO or had never joined it. G. Gourov was a Trotsky pseudonym, used when he wrote “Who Should Attend the International Conference?,” May 22, 1932, reprinted in Writings 32.


150. Trotsky's letter, “To the Communist League of Struggle,” May 22, 1932, is in Writings 32.

151. Gregory Zinoviev (1883-1936), an Old Bolshevik, was president of the Comintern, 1919-26. Together with Stalin and Kamenev, he launched the campaign against “Trotskyism” in 1923. He broke with Stalin in 1925 and joined with Trotsky and Kamenev in a United Opposition bloc, 1926-27. When he was expelled in 1927, he recanted his ideas and capitulated to Stalin. After doing this twice, he was sentenced to death at the first Moscow trial. “Zinovievism” generally refers to the 1923-26 period.

152. “Murphy's Expulsion.” From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. This was a letter to Reg Groves (1908- ), a member of the British CP who made contact with the ILO in 1931 and became the leader of the first British section of the ILO when he and other members of the “Balham Group” were expelled from the CP later in 1932. John T. Murphy (1888-1965) was a British CP leader and a member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. He was expelled in May 1932 for advocating a campaign to make the British government extend credits to the Soviet Union as a means of aiding the first five-year plan and of reducing unemployment in Britain—a position close to that of the Left
Opposition. Trotsky's interest in Murphy's expulsion was heightened by the fact that in 1927 the Stalin faction had delegated Murphy to make the motion expelling Trotsky from the Comintern. Murphy became secretary of the Socialist League in the Labour Party, 1934-36, and later moved further to the right.

153. **Dick Beech** was an early member of the British CP who was attracted toward the British Left Opposition when it was being organized but did not join it. He later became president of the Chemical Workers Union.

154. The **Independent Labour Party** (ILP) was organized in 1893, and became an affiliate of the British Labour Party in 1906. It disaffiliated from the Labour Party in 1932 and was associated with the London Bureau until 1939. A decision to return to the Labour Party was approved by a national conference in 1945, but this was rescinded by the next conference in 1946; the ILP's members of Parliament returned to the Labour Party anyhow. The ILP **left wing** in 1932 was called the Revolutionary Policy Committee, a bloc of pro-Stalinists and Brandlerites that disintegrated in 1935 when most of its remnants joined the CP. In 1975 the ILP's name was changed to Independent Labour Publications, a publishing group in the Labour Party.

155. "Shachtman's 'Character.'" By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Russell Block.

156. **Albert Treint** (1889-1972), a central leader of the French CP in the mid-20s, was expelled in 1928 for having supported the Russian United Opposition. He organized his own oppositional groups until 1931, when he joined the Communist League. But he quit in 1932 and joined a syndicalist group.


158. In the spring of 1932 a call was issued in Paris for an **international congress** to combat war, originally scheduled to be held in July but actually held at the end of August in Amsterdam. While the initiative in calling the congress was ostensibly taken by pacifists, the real planners and organizers were the Stalinist leaders of the Comintern, who, at that very time, were adamantly opposing any united front actions with the Social Democrats against the growing Nazi danger in Germany.


160. **Romain Rolland** (1866-1944), French novelist and dramatist, was a pacifist in World War I and got the Nobel prize for literature in 1916. He lent his name to Stalinist literary congresses and manifestos in his later years. **Henri Barbusse** (1873-1935) was a novelist and pacifist who
joined the French CP in 1923 and wrote books about Stalin and Christ.

161. Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948) was the leader of the nationalist movement that later became the Congress Party of India. He organized mass resistance to British rule but insisted on nonviolent, passive resistance methods. Maxim Gorky (1868-1936), the Russian writer, was a sympathizer of the Bolsheviks but was opposed to the October revolution in 1917. In his last years he gave support to the Stalin regime.

162. The Two-and-a-half International (or International Association of Socialist Parties) was formed in February 1921 by centrist parties and groups that had left the Second International under pressure of the revolutionary masses at the end of World War I. While criticizing the Second International, its leaders did not have a basically different orientation, and in May 1923 they reunited with it. Since the Two-and-a-half International did not exist after that date, Trotsky may have been referring to a tiny group with a long name, the International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Parties, also called the Paris Bureau, which tried to succeed the Two-and-a-half after its dissolution; its principal figures were Isaac Steinberg, a Left SR exile from the USSR, and Angelica Balabanova, of the Italian Maximalist exile group. But it is possible that Trotsky was referring instead to the IAG (International Labor Community), a more serious formation of centrist groups affiliated to neither the Second nor the Third International, which had been set up in Berlin in April 1932. The IAG was also known as the London Bureau or London-Amsterdam Bureau, and gradually absorbed most of the groups connected with the Paris Bureau. To complicate the confusion, the London Bureau changed its name to the International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Parties in 1935.

163. The Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Committee was created in May 1925 as a bloc of British and Soviet union leaders, dedicated among other things to preventing war. It was a cheap device for the British "left" union bureaucrats to demonstrate "progressivism," especially during the British general strike of 1926, which they betrayed. When they had no further use for the committee in 1927, they walked out and it folded up.

164. The Anti-Imperialist League (or League Against Imperialism) was a Comintern front organization masterminded by the German Willi Muenzenberg (1889-1940), who specialized in various propaganda enterprises as a loyal Stalinist until 1937, when he broke with the Comintern over its People's Front policies. The League held two international congresses—at Brussels in February 1927 and at Frankfurt on the Main in July 1929. At the first, central roles were given to the British bureaucrats connected with the Anglo-Russian Committee and to delegates from the Kuomintang, the Chinese bourgeois nationalists. Before 1927 ended, the British had deserted the Anglo-Russian Committee and the Kuomintang had drowned the second Chinese revolution in blood.

Translated from the German by Candida Barbarena. This was the transcript of a discussion between Trotsky and leaders of the Archio-Marxists, the Greek section of the ILO. The text, which was circulated to all ILO sections, was accompanied by an introductory note by Trotsky, dated June 15, 1932: "The enclosed minutes of a conversation among individual comrades is only a brief outline and should be useful as information for the sections of the Left Opposition. Because of the incompleteness of this transcript, not too much weight can be attached to every particular phrase and each individual formulation contained within it." In the original text Trotsky was listed as “Question” or “Q.” “Answer” or “A” designated a representative or representatives of the Archio-Marxists, one of whom was probably their principal leader, Witte, who had just become a member of the IS.

166. The “faction or party” question had been settled on the international level from the start of the ILO, but it kept coming up on the national level in a number of different countries. It had arisen recently in a sharp form at a national conference of the Spanish section, whose leaders had adopted a course of action turning away from the “faction” perspective toward that of an independent party. Since Trotsky disagreed with the leaders of the Spanish section, which was then the largest ILO section in Western Europe, he was particularly interested in discussing the question with the leaders of the Greek section, which was then not only the largest organization in the ILO but also the one with the longest experience in mass work.

167. Despite a financial crisis that resulted in three Greek governments in 1932, the Greek CP was isolated and disorganized. As a result, the relationship of forces between the Stalinists and Left Oppositionists was unusually favorable to the latter in Greece. The Archio-Marxist experience therefore seemed to Trotsky to be especially relevant to the faction/party question.

168. What these four groups had in common were their attempts—unsuccessful in each case—to gain hegemony of the revolutionary movement through bypassing or ignoring the Communist parties. Two of them had been associated with the Left Opposition but left it in 1930: the German Leninfund, founded in 1928 by Hugo Urbahns (1890-1946) and others after their expulsion from the CP, and the Belgian League of Communist Internationalists, the name taken by the Overstraeten group after it left the ILO. The others were the German Right Opposition (KPO) and the German SAP, which had six seats in the Reichstag when it was founded in 1931, originally elected on the Social Democratic ticket, all of which were lost when they were contested on the SAP ticket in a 1932 election.

169. Following a disastrous military campaign in Asia Minor in 1921, the remnants of the Greek army and over a million destitute Greek refugees began to return to Greece.

170. The Stalinist “united front from below” was based on the idea that joint-action arrangements with non-Stalinist organizations had to be
made only with the ranks and not with the leaders of such organizations. The effect was to exclude the possibility of actual united fronts.

171. The “third period,” initiated by the Stalinists in 1928, was supposedly the last phase of capitalist rule, to be quickly replaced by successful proletarian revolutions. In line with this theory, the Comintern’s tactics during the next six years were marked by ultraleftism, sectarianism, adventurism, opposition to united fronts with other workers’ organizations, and the building of small “red” unions. The results were so self-defeating that on occasion the Stalinists would temporarily desist from some of their more stupid excesses, leading to speculation by Left Oppositionists that the third period was being “liquidated.” But it actually was not dropped until 1934, a year after Hitler came to power.

172. The Factionists were a small group, chiefly students, whom the Greek section expelled as irresponsible and undisciplined. They also called themselves the Unitary Group and the Leninist Opposition of the [Communist] Party. They later fused with the Spartakos group led by Pouliopoulos. Their leader, Michel Raptis (1911- ), also known as Pablo, became the secretary of the Fourth International after World War II.

173. In this period the Left Opposition was critical of the “workers’ and peasants’ government” slogan as used by the Comintern because of the meaning the Stalinists had given it in the Far East since the mid-twenties, when they claimed that the victory of the Kuomintang would produce a Chinese workers’ and peasants’ government. Later, the founding conference of the Fourth International in 1938 approved the use of the slogan in a revolutionary sense.

174. The Stahlhelme (Steel Helmets) was an ultraright organization of World War I veterans mobilized as a counterrevolutionary force in Germany in the 1920s.

175. Dimitri Manuilsky (1883-1952) supported Stalin in the 1920s and served as a secretary of the Comintern, 1931-43. Vasil Kolarov (1877-1950) was a member of the Comintern executive committee, 1922-43, president of the Peasants International (Krestintern), 1928-39, and a leader of the Bulgarian government after World War II.

176. Trotsky was a military correspondent for a Russian paper in the Balkans during the Balkan War of 1912-13. His writings on the subject were collected in a book that will be published by Monad Press under the title The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky (1979).

177. The Tesniaki were a revolutionary tendency in the Bulgarian Social Democracy which took over the leadership of the party in 1903 and of the Bulgarian unions later. They changed their name to the Communist Party of Bulgaria in May 1919, two months after participating in the founding congress of the Comintern.

178. Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876), the Russian founder of anarchism, was an opponent of Marx and Engels in the First International.

179. The Duma was the Russian parliament with extremely limited
powers, established in 1905 by Czar Nicholas II and dismissed by him whenever it failed to follow his wishes to the letter.

180. "After the CLA Plenum." By permission of Albert Glotzer. A 1932 translation. In June 1932 the CLA National Committee held a meeting (plenum) at which the Cannon group received a majority and sufficient agreement was reached to avert a split.

181. "Permanent Factionalism Is Not Needed." By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Russell Block.

182. Otto Schuessler (1905- ), also known as Oskar Fischer, was a leader of the German section and a secretary of Trotsky in Turkey, 1932-33, and in Mexico, 1938-40. He left the Fourth International after World War II.

183. "Hope for CLA Unity." By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Russell Block.

184. Recent differences in the CLA referred to resumption of the factional dispute between the Cannon and Shachtman groups, despite the June plenum agreements. The dispute was to continue until the spring of 1933.

185. Josef Frey (1882-1957), a founder of the Austrian CP who was expelled in 1927, was the leader of the Austrian Communist Party (Opposition) which published Arbeiter Stimme. This group proclaimed its adherence to the ILO on a number of occasions but did not belong for long.

186. Trotsky's writings on the Anglo-Russian Committee have been collected in Leon Trotsky on Britain (Monad Press, 1973).

187. Shachtman's articles were published as a pamphlet entitled Ten Years—History and Principles of the Left Opposition (Pioneer Publishers, 1933) and reprinted in Education for Socialists, a bulletin of the SWP National Education Department, April 1974.

188. "A Discussion with Herbert Solow." By permission of Harvard College Library. Translated from the German by Warren Dean. Herbert Solow (1903-1964) was a radical American journalist who visited Trotsky in Turkey in 1932. He became a sympathizer of the Left Opposition and briefly belonged to the Workers Party, 1934-35. He was prominent in defense of Trotsky during the Moscow trials. Later he broke with Marxism and became an editor of Fortune.

189. Alexander Trachtenberg (1885-1966), founder and president of International Publishers, was a charter member of the American CP, prominent in its educational and publishing activities.

190. William E. Borah (1865-1940) was a Republican U.S. Senator from Idaho, 1907-40. In 1932 he was chairman of the Senate committee on foreign affairs.

191. In 1932 Trotsky thought that the Soviet government should threaten and prepare war against Germany if the Hitlerites took power
there. But he changed his mind in 1933, after the Nazi victory, on the ground that the Stalinist regime was too crisis-ridden to conduct such a war successfully.

192. Hugo Eberlein (1887-1944) was a delegate of the newly founded CP of Germany at the founding congress of the Comintern in 1919. He spoke against founding the new International, as his party had instructed him, but abstained in the voting instead of voting against. He worked for the Comintern until 1937, when he was arrested in Moscow during a purge of "foreign" Communists.

193. Hermann Gorter (1864-1927) was an ultraleft leader of the Dutch CP and a target of Lenin's *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*. He was part of a small international tendency that pronounced the Comintern to be bankrupt as early as the Second World Congress in 1920.


195. "After the British Expulsions." From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. Dictated in English. The leaders of the small Left Opposition group in Britain, including Reg Groves, had been expelled from the CP only a few weeks before this letter.

196. Harry Pollitt (1890-1960) was general secretary of the British CP, 1929-56, except during the Stalin-Hitler pact period, when he was removed for favoring a Soviet pact with British instead of German imperialism. Stewart Purkis (1885-1969) was an activist in the British railway clerks' union who was expelled from the CP as part of the "Balham group" led by Reg Groves. His letter to Pollitt explaining why he supported the Left Opposition was written in July 1932. He left the British section in 1934 and later became a Christian Socialist.

197. B.J. Field, a member of the CLA's New York branch who specialized in economics, had been expelled for violating discipline. He and his wife, Esther, visited Trotsky in 1932, offering his collaboration in several projects. He was readmitted to the CLA on his return to the U.S. but was expelled again in 1934 for violating discipline in a hotel workers' strike. For a few years he led a small group called the League for a Revolutionary Workers Party.

198. "Minutes of the Commission: I." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the German by Cathy Rothman. When it was decided in mid-1932 to hold an international conference of the ILO, Trotsky and his co-workers in Turkey were asked to constitute themselves as a commission to prepare drafts of documents for the discussion to precede the conference. Starting in September 1932, the commission held at least three sessions where minutes were kept. Participants in the first
session were Trotsky, his three secretaries—Jan Frankel, Otto Schuessler, and Pierre Frank—and B.J. Field.

199. **Twenty-one conditions** for parties seeking affiliation to the Comintern were adopted at its Second World Congress in 1920. Their aim was to discourage affiliation by groups that had not broken completely with reformism. Lenin wrote the first nineteen points (see *Collected Works*, vol. 31); the other two were added by the congress.

200. **Epigones**, disciples who corrupt their teachers’ doctrines, was Trotsky's derisive term for the Stalinists, who claimed to be Leninists.

201. In August 1932 pro-monarchist **generals**, supported by the fascists, organized a coup against the Spanish republican government, which was quickly suppressed. Trotsky's article about this episode, “The Spanish Kornilovs and the Spanish Stalinists,” September 20, 1932, in *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)* strongly disavowed the pessimistic appraisal of the Spanish developments attributed to the Left Opposition by *Pravda*.

202. The **first platform of the Russian Opposition**, written by Trotsky in collaboration with Zinoviev, was published in 1927. It will be retranslated in *The Challenge of the Left Opposition (1926-27)* (Pathfinder, 1979).

203. **Alois Neurath** (1886-1952) was a leader of the Czechoslovakian CP and a member of the Comintern's executive committee when he was expelled in 1929 as a “Trotskyist.” Actually he was closest to the Brandlerites. He became critical of them and sympathetic to the ILO in 1932 and later joined the Fourth Internationalist movement.

204. “Minutes of the Commission: II.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the German by Warren Dean.

205. General **Jose Sanjurjo** (1872-1936), the commander of the customs guards who was notorious for his repressive role in Morocco in 1927, led the unsuccessful generals’ uprising in August 1932.

206. **Joaquin Maurin** (1897-1973), after being expelled from the Spanish CP in 1931, led the Catalan Federation, also known as the Workers and Peasants Bloc. This group united with the ex-Left Oppositionists led by Nin to form the POUM in 1935. Maurin, elected to parliament in 1936, fell into the hands of Franco's forces when the civil war began but survived and went into exile because they could not identify him.

207. The **CNT** (National Confederation of Labor), led by the anarchists, was the strongest section of the Spanish labor movement in the thirties.

208. At its national conference in March 1932, the Spanish section changed its name from Left Opposition to Communist Left.

209. **T.V. Sapronov** (1887-1939) was the leader of a semisyndicalist, ultraleft group in the Russian CP while Lenin was still active, the Group of Democratic Centralism, or Decemists. Its members joined the United Opposition bloc in 1926, where they advocated forming a new communist
party rather than fighting as a faction of the CP. The Decemists were expelled and imprisoned along with the Left Oppositionists in 1927. The Leninbund was the chief German Opposition group from 1928 to 1930, when it quit the ILO under Urbahns's leadership.

210. The UGT (General Workers Union), led by the Social Democrats, was the second largest union federation in Spain in the thirties.

211. RGO was the initials of the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition, a small “red” union federation organized by the German CP in 1929 to compete with the big union movement dominated by the Social Democrats. This self-isolation from the main body of the organized workers was a prominent feature of “third period” policy in all capitalist countries.

212. El Soviet was the weekly paper of the Spanish section, 1931-32. Its theoretical magazine was Comunismo, 1931-34.

213. Georges Sorel (1847-1922) was a French writer who advocated revolutionary syndicalism. His Reflections on Violence (1908) had a big influence on the syndicalist movement.

214. “The Poverty of Our European Sections.” By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Duncan Williams. These letters were prompted by the breakdown of an arrangement to help the IS and the German and Spanish sections financially through the sale of Yiddish newspaper rights in New York to The History of the Russian Revolution.

215. Arne Swabeck (1890- ) was a founder and leader of the American CP, CLA, and SWP. In 1932 he was national secretary of the CLA. He visited Trotsky in Turkey in 1933 and represented the CLA at the February 1933 international preconference of the ILO. He left the SWP in 1967 after becoming a Maoist. Petrus Carlsson (1898-1958) moved to the U.S. from Sweden in 1917 and returned in 1929. He was a member of the American CP, being expelled in 1929 as a Lovestoneite. He described himself as a Left Oppositionist in 1932-33 but ceased political activity in the mid-thirties. The first Fourth Internationalist section in Sweden was not formed until 1949.

216. “A Duty to Speak.” By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Duncan Williams. A letter to Arne Swabeck, secretary of the CLA, about Trotsky's coming trip to Denmark. Trotsky hoped that Swabeck could meet him there, partly because Swabeck was a native Dane, but factional objections by the Shachtman group prevented this.


218. Eugene Bauer and Erwin were pseudonyms of Erwin Ackerknecht (1906- ), the central leader of the German section after it went underground in 1933. He was a member of the IS, 1932-34, and when the IS moved to Paris and directed him to leave Germany too, he was IS
administrative secretary for around a year. He defected to the SAP in
1934.

219. "Communism and Syndicalism," October 14, 1929, and "The
Question of Trade Union Unity," March 25, 1931, are in Leon Trotsky on
the Trade Unions (Pathfinder, 1975).

220. The International Federation of Trade Unions, dominated by the
Social Democrats, was often called the Amsterdam International after
the city in which its headquarters was located.

221. Jean van Heijenoort ("Van") (1912- ) was a member of the
French section who became part of Trotsky's secretariat-guard in 1932
and served in that capacity in each of the four countries of Trotsky's last
exile. He left the Fourth International after World War II and became a
professor of philosophy in the U.S. His memoir is entitled With Trotsky in
Exile: From Prinkipo to Coyoacan (Harvard University Press, Cam­
bridge, 1978).

222. "'Down With Stalin' Is Not Our Slogan." By permission of the
Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by Marilyn Vogt,
who rearranged the sequence of some paragraphs in this uncompleted
manuscript. In 1932 supporters of the Stalinist faction, alarmed by the
chaotic conditions in the USSR and the growing isolation of the regime
from the masses, began to discuss the need to remove Stalin. In October,
according to Isaac Deutscher, Trotsky and Leon Sedov (in Berlin)
exchanged a number of letters on the attitude the Left Opposition should
take to the slogan "Down with Stalin," in one of which Trotsky wrote:
"The slogan 'remove Stalin' is correct in a definite specific sense [the
sense in which Lenin used it when he advised the Central Committee to
elect another General Secretary]. . . . If we were strong now . . . there
would be no danger at all in advancing this slogan. But at present
Miliukov, the Mensheviks, and Thermidarians of all sorts . . . will
willingly echo the cry 'remove Stalin.' Yet it may still happen within a
few months that Stalin may have to defend himself against Thermido­
rian pressure, and that we may have temporarily to support him. We have
not left this stage behind us. . . . This being so, the slogan 'down with
Stalin' is ambiguous and should not be raised as a war cry at this
moment. . . ." (The Prophet Outcast, p. 175.) The present document may
be a draft of one of these letters to Sedov. Trotsky discussed the question
publicly a few months later in "Alarm Signal," March 3, 1933 (Writings
32-33). Later that year, after the Stalinist capitulation to Hitler, he
concluded that the Soviet regime could no longer be reformed and
proletarian democracy could be restored only by removing the regime
forcibly ("The Class Nature of the Soviet State," October 1, 1933, in
Writings 33-34).

223. Vyacheslav M. Molotov (1890- ) and Lazar Kaganovich
(1893- ) were Old Bolsheviks and undeviating Stalinists in various
high Soviet governmental and party posts. Both were removed from the
leadership in 1957 for opposing Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization."
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224. This is a reference to the William Tell legend.

225. **Thermidorean forces** in the U.S.S.R., according to Left Opposition terminology before 1935, were those striving to restore capitalism, and the Stalinists were condemned for pursuing policies that prepared the ground for a Russian Thermidor, that is, capitalist counterrevolution. The term was taken by analogy from a shift of power in the French revolution in Thermidor (July) 1794 when the radical Jacobins led by Robespierre were overthrown by a right wing in the revolutionary camp. The flaw in the analogy was that the French Thermidor, while opening up a period of political reaction that culminated in Napoleon’s seizure of power in 1799, did not go so far as to restore the feudal system. In 1935 Trotsky modified his theory, saying that the Russian Thermidor, instead of being just a threat, had actually triumphed in 1924-25 when the Stalinist bureaucracy took over the state and the Bolshevik Party. Thereafter Trotsky used the term to designate a reactionary development which occurred “on the social foundation of the revolution” and which therefore did not alter the class character of the state (see “The Workers’ State, Thermidor and Bonapartism” in *Writings 34-35*). From then on he included the Stalinist bureaucracy among the Thermidoreans rather than as centrists who merely gave objective aid to Thermidor.

226. The **open letter** to the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets appears under the title “On Being Deprived of Soviet Citizenship,” March 1, 1932, in *Writings 32*.

227. “A Left Opposition Statement Should Be Prepared.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by Donald Kennedy. This document bears the designation “draft letter” and the date “1932.” Obviously written for someone in the USSR, it was an attempt to revive the Left Opposition as an organization there, and to guide it along lines that would be realistic in what were then very fluid conditions. It is not known if the letter was actually sent or received.

228. “Documents from Copenhagen.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Jeff White. Trotsky obtained a Danish visa and went to Copenhagen in November 1932, where he spoke at a big public meeting sponsored by the Social Democratic students, gave a talk to America by radio, and made a short propaganda film. In addition, he was able to meet with more than a score of comrades and supporters from several European countries, who had come to Copenhagen partly to guard Trotsky from his enemies, both capitalist and Stalinist, and partly to be able to discuss political problems with him. In the literature of the movement these consultations are sometimes referred to as the ILO’s “Copenhagen conference.” The problem with this term is complicated by the following factors: First, the ILO was planning an international conference at this time; but preparations had not been completed, and documents had not been circulated, so the sections could not have acted on them yet. Second, the Kremlin
announced, as soon as Trotsky arrived in Denmark, that he was there for a "Trotskyist conference"; this was intended to create trouble for Trotsky with the Danish government, and Trotsky promptly denied that any conference was held or had been planned for Copenhagen. Third, a few weeks later, when he was back in Turkey, Trotsky repeated this denial: "Unfortunately a conference did not and could not have taken place. It is needless to say, however, that the comrades who came there took full advantage of the opportunity to get to know each other and to discuss in private consultations the most urgent and burning problems. The unforeseen, hastily improvised meeting of two dozen Bolshevik-Leninists from seven European countries will undoubtedly be recorded as an important achievement in the history of our international faction" ("On the State of the Left Opposition," December 16, 1932, in *Writings* 32-33). Fourth, in 1937, when Trotsky supplied documents to the Dewey commission investigating the Moscow trials, he included these documents from Copenhagen, which were described on an accompanying list as "Resolutions of informal conference of Left Oppositionists." Fifth, in 1977 Harry Wicks, who represented the British section at Copenhagen, gave this account, based on notes he made at the time: "I was not told anything about a conference in Denmark when I was sent there. In the evenings before Trotsky's main public speech on November 27, informal discussions were held by us visitors in the parlor of the house where Trotsky was staying, while he would meet with one or a few people in a room upstairs. In the evenings after his speech, there were more formal meetings, two or three of them, attended by not more than a dozen people. My notes referred to these as 'plenums.' Among those present whom I can recall were Trotsky, Raymond Molinier, Pierre Naville, Denise Naville, Leon Lesoil, Oskar Fischer [Otto Schuessler], Anton Grylewicz, Georg Jungclas, Feroci [Alfonso Leonetti], Julien [Pietro Tresso], and myself. The subjects discussed included the Left Opposition's relations with the Bordigists; problems of the Spanish section; electoral tactics of the Belgian section; a campaign to force the International Red Aid to extend help to class-war prisoners like Chen Tu-hsiu and M.N. Roy; and the situation in Germany (this was just two months before Hitler came to power). There definitely were no documents circulated before or at these meetings and there were no votes taken at them, agreement being reached by consensus." It is therefore likely that these documents were written after those meetings, expressing the reports and views agreed on there.

229. Anton Grylewicz (1885-1971), a leader in the German revolution of 1918 and the Hamburg insurrection of 1923, was expelled from the German CP for "leftism" in 1927 and helped to found the Leninbund the following year. When the Leninbund leadership broke with the Left Opposition in 1930, he sided with the Left Opposition and became a leader of its new German section. He moved to Czechoslovakia after Hitler's victory and under the pseudonym "Zemann" was elected to the General Council of the Movement for the Fourth International in July 1936.
230. In August 1932 the New York branch of the CLA held a street rally in the Lower East Side to warn against the mounting Hitlerite danger in Germany. The Stalinists organized fist fights to break up the rally, and finally the CLA members left in a group, marching together to their headquarters. The Stalinists then began a meeting of their own, during which rocks hurled from adjacent roofs killed two of their members. The Stalinists accused the CLA members of responsibility for the murders and refused to appear before an independent commission of inquiry to support their charges.

231. **International Red Aid** was a Comintern auxiliary organization, established in Moscow in September 1922 to provide defense and support for class struggle victims. Its national affiliates had various names, for example the International Labor Defense in the U.S., organized in 1925.

232. Mill's open break with the ILO and negotiations with the Stalinists became known publicly in October 1932.

233. **Leon Lesoil** (1892-1942), a founder of the Belgian CP, helped to organize the Belgian section of the ILO and remained one of its leaders until his death in a German concentration camp.

234. "Answers to Personal Questions." From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. Translated from the Russian by George Saunders. These questions from an unnamed correspondent were answered shortly after Trotsky's return from Denmark.

235. **Isaac Babel** (1894-1941) was a Soviet writer of fiction and plays who had served in the Red Army during the civil war. He was arrested in 1938 and died in a concentration camp.

236. "Memorandum on a Forgery in Spain." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by Donald Kennedy.

237. "The International Preconference." From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. Translated from the Russian by George Saunders. At Copenhagen, Trotsky and his comrades thought that an international preconference of the ILO could be held in December 1932. But it was not until mid-January 1933 that the preconference resolutions were drafted, and the preconference did not meet until early February, in Paris. This letter about the resolutions was addressed to Jan Frankel, who had left Trotsky's secretariat in Turkey to work with the IS in Paris and to help prepare the preconference. Trotsky's draft, "The International Left Opposition, Its Tasks and Methods," is in *Writings 32-33*, and the final, expanded document approved by the preconference is in *Documents of the Fourth International (1933-40)*.

238. **Roman Well** was the pseudonym of Ruvelis Sobolevicius (1901-1962), one of two brothers from Lithuania who became leaders of the German section in 1931, after the split with the Landau group. At the end of 1932 they began to criticize the Opposition's irreconcilable attitude to Stalinism and they split a small group away from the section, joining the
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German CP in January 1933 just before Hitler's appointment as chancellor. In 1957, when they were being prosecuted as Soviet spies in the U.S., they admitted having become GPU agents in 1931. After being convicted of espionage, Well-Sobolevicius, then calling himself Robert Soblen, committed suicide.

239. Witte was the pseudonym of Demetrious Giotopoulos (1901-1965), a leader of the Greek Archio-Marxists and a member of the IS, 1932-33. He broke with the ILO in 1933 and led the Archio-Marxists into the London Bureau in 1934.

240. Sch. or Schwarz was a pseudonym of Leon Sedov, then living in Berlin. Wer. or Werner was a pseudonym of Jan Frankel.

241. “A Possible Lecture Tour.” Karl Faber catalog (Munich), April 20-30, 1959. Translated from the French by Russell Block. In 1959, B.J. Field put up for sale, through a Munich auctioneer, thirteen letters Trotsky had written to Field in New York in 1933 and 1934. The Karl Faber catalog advertising this sale printed excerpts from the letters (in German, French, and English). The CLA had readmitted Field after his return from Europe.

242. “Greetings to the German Bolshevik-Leninists.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Mavis Parr. This message was sent after it became clear that the majority of the German members had rejected the pro-Stalinist split led by the Well faction, who published a counterfeit issue of the German section’s paper.

243. Die Permanente Revolution was the paper of the German section from 1931, after the Landau split, until 1933, after Hitler came to power. Then it was replaced by Unser Wort, which was printed abroad and smuggled into Germany.

244. In order to defeat the Labour government in the 1924 general elections, the Tories circulated a forged letter giving the British CP “instructions” on taking over the Labour Party. It was supposedly signed by Zinoviev in his capacity as president of the Comintern.

245. Die Rote Fahne was the central daily paper of the German CP.


247. Maurice Parijanne was a pen name of Maurice Donzel (1885-1937), a French translator of books by Trotsky, who played an important part in persuading the French government to admit Trotsky in 1933.

248. Edouard Herriot (1872-1957), Radical Socialist premier of France three times and president of the Chamber of Deputies, 1936-40, represented the “center” or moderate tendency of his party.


250. Santini was the pseudonym of Paolo Ravazzoli (1894-1940), one of the three former Italian CP leaders who organized the New Italian
Opposition in 1930. He quit the Left Opposition for the Italian Socialist Party in 1934.

251. Stalin's report to the Central Committee of the CPSU in January 1933 was analyzed in "The Danger of Thermidor," January 11, 1933, and "Alarm Signal," March 3, 1933, both in Writings 32-33.

252. "What Is Happening in Germany?" From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. Translated from the Russian by Ron Allen. Hitler's appointment as chancellor on January 30, 1933, did not give him full control of the country. His first cabinet was a reactionary coalition in which the Nazis were a minority. He had the Reichstag dissolved and new elections were called for March 5. The outcome was not settled in advance, and when the ILO preconference met in Paris in early February, its delegates did not exclude the possibility, even at that late hour, that the Stalinists and Social Democrats might still be forced into a united front and that this might lead to a mass workers' struggle against the Nazis. But Hitler launched a vast wave of repression, including the Reichstag fire provocation, the suspension of all civil liberties, and the arrest of thousands of his opponents. Trotsky's letter asking about the activities of the German section during these weeks was sent to Jan Frankel, who had gone to Germany to examine the new political conditions there after attending the preconference.

253. Trotsky's pamphlet, "The United Front for Defense: A Letter to a Social Democratic Worker," February 23, 1933, is in The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany.

254. "The Struggle in the CLA." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the German by Russell Block. Arne Swabeck was the CLA's delegate to the ILO preconference, and he was also the representative of the CLA majority faction who visited Turkey in an attempt to win Trotsky's support for the majority. Several of their discussions were transcribed (see "The Negro Question in America," February 28, 1933, in Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination, and "Uneven and Combined Development and the Role of American Imperialism," March 4, 1933, in Writings 32-33). This was the earliest Trotsky-Swabeck transcript.

255. Joseph Carter was a pseudonym of Joseph Friedman (1910- ), a founding member of the CLA. He was elected to the SWP National Committee in 1938, and left the SWP in 1940 with Shachtman.

256. Maurice Spector (1898-1968) was a founder of the Canadian CP who broke with Stalinism after participating in the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern. He founded the Canadian Left Opposition (as a branch of the CLA) in 1929; it became an independent section in 1934. After moving to New York he was a leader of the CLA and its successors until 1939, when he quit the movement.

257. Cooptation in the Marxist movement is a practice enabling a committee to add new members to itself without the approval of the body
that originally elected the committee. At the June 1932 plenum of the CLA National Committee the Cannon faction won a majority, but it was so slim (five out of nine) that it proposed the cooptation of two supporters onto the NC in order to assure that its majority would not be upset in the New York resident committee by absences or other accidental factors. The minority offered no objections, two new members were coopted, and the step was submitted to a national referendum vote. In the weeks that followed, the minority changed its mind and voted against the cooptations, which failed to get a majority in the referendum and were therefore nullified.

258. Martin Abern (1898-1949) was a founding member of the American CP and a founder of the CLA. He was a member of the National Committee from the start of the CLA until he split from the SWP with Shachtman in 1940.

259. James P. Cannon (1890-1974) was a member of the SP and the IWW before World War I and a founder of the American CP. Won over to the Left Opposition’s views at the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern, he was expelled from the CP in 1928 and, with Shachtman and Abern, founded the CLA in 1929. He was national secretary of the SWP, 1938-53, and a member of the first International Executive Committee of the Fourth International.

260. The IWW or Industrial Workers of the World (“Wobblies”) was organized in 1905 as a revolutionary industrial union movement. Its influence waned after World War I when many of its members, like Cannon and V.R. Dunne, left it to found the new CP.

261. “The Situation in Germany.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the German by Russell Block. In preparation for an underground national conference, held in Leipzig March 11-12, 1933, the leadership of the German section had submitted a resolution to guide the organization in the swiftly changing situation that followed Hitler’s appointment as chancellor. The discussion of the resolution recorded in this transcript took place three days before the Reichstag elections on March 5. Later in the month, when the devastating scope of the Nazi victory had become apparent, Trotsky was to conclude that the German CP’s default was irreversible and that the ILO should call and work for the creation of a new revolutionary party in Germany.

262. The bourgeois Center Party was the Catholic party, the ancestor of today’s Christian Democratic Party in West Germany. Its leader, Heinrich Brüning (1885-1970), was appointed chancellor by Hindenburg in March 1930. Lacking a parliamentary majority, he ruled by decree from July 1930 until May 1932, virtually annulling all union contracts at the end of 1931 and restricting freedom of the press and assembly. The Social Democrats “tolerated” his minority regime as a “lesser evil” than the Nazis.

263. The Iron Front for Resistance Against Fascism was organized in
December 1931 as an antifascist coalition of the Social Democrats, their youth organization, the General German Trade Union Federation, and the Reichsbanner, a mass organization created in 1924 to defend the German republic. The Social Democratic workers wanted to fight the Nazis through the Iron Front, but their leaders kept it under control and the Stalinists boycotted it as “social fascist.”

264. **Bonapartism** was a central concept in Trotsky's writings during the 1930s. He used the term to describe a dictatorship, or a regime with certain features of a dictatorship, during periods when class rule is not secure. It is based on the military, police, or state bureaucracy, rather than on parliamentary parties or a mass movement. He held that the German governments from 1930 to Hitler's victory in 1933 were Bonapartist, while the Stalinists characterized them as fascist. Trotsky saw two types of Bonapartism—bourgeois and Soviet. His most extensive writings on the former are in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*; his views on the latter reached their final form in “The Workers’ State, Thermidor and Bonapartism,” in *Writings 34-35*.

265. **Franz von Papen** (1879-1969), a representative of the Junkers and a member of the Center Party, was chosen by Hindenburg to replace Bruening as chancellor in June 1932. His chief accomplishment was to drive the Social Democrats out of their posts at the head of the powerful Prussian state government. He was replaced as chancellor in December 1932 but became vice-chancellor in Hitler's cabinet and served Hitler throughout the war. Papen’s successor was **Kurt von Schleicher** (1882-1934), a Reichswehr general who served less than two months before being replaced by Hitler. He was murdered by the Nazis in their June 1934 “blood purge.”

266. The German CP's “national program” and advocacy of “people's revolution” were unsuccessful efforts to compete with the Nazis for the support of nationalist forces opposed to the Versailles system.

267. The “red referendum” was the German CP's name for its alliance with the Nazis in the summer of 1931 to oust the coalition government in Prussia, which was headed by the Social Democrats. Despite the campaigns of the CP and the Nazis, the ouster move failed to get the approval of more than half the electorate in the August referendum.

268. The **eleven points** elaborated the basic positions of the ILO at the time of the preconference in February 1933. Later in the year one of these points was changed to conform with the decision to work for a new International.

269. **1923** referred to the German CP's bungling of a great revolutionary opportunity. The CP at that time was led by the future leaders of the KPO and the SAP.

270. The **July days**, in the Russia of 1917, were a period of severe setbacks for the Bolsheviks four months before they came to power. Trotsky was speculating here that analogous troubles for Hitler might still occur although he already was chancellor.
271. **Free Trade Unions** was a name sometimes used for the General German Trade Union Federation (ADGB), the largest union movement in the country, which was controlled by the Social Democrats. Hitler outlawed it when he gained full dictatorial power later in 1933.

272. "A Personal Letter on the CLA." From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. Translated from the German by Arne Swabeck in 1933. Eight days after beginning his discussions with Swabeck, Trotsky wrote the IS a letter expressing his views on the CLA dispute, "The Situation in the American League" (in *Writings 32-33*). On the same day he gave a "strictly personal" letter on the same subject to Swabeck, which was more directly critical of the CLA majority group's course than the letter to the IS. Sent to the leaders of the majority group, it undoubtedly had a strong influence on their subsequent development. Parts of the Swabeck translation have been revised here.

273. When Swabeck left New York for France and Turkey, his absence changed the factional balance in the CLA's resident committee, giving the Shachtman group a possible majority on that subcommittee of the National Committee although it was a minority of the NC. To solve this problem, the majority voted to deprive Abern of his vote on the resident committee until Swabeck's return.

274. "Don't Forget We Have an International Organization." By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from the German by Duncan Williams. A letter to Max Shachtman, pursuing the same aims Trotsky had followed in his personal letter to Swabeck the previous day.

275. "In These Uncertain Times." From the Cannon Archives, Library of Social History. Translated from the German by Russell Block. This was a letter to Jan Frankel at a time when the most uncertain thing in Trotsky's mind was whether or not the ILO should call for the formation of a new party in Germany. He decided that it should four days later. Rakovsky's poor health and the isolated nature of the places to which he was banished led to rumors of his death on several occasions between 1928 and 1934.

276. **Natalia Ivanova Sedova** (1882-1962) was a member of the Iskra group when she met Trotsky in France in 1902; they fell in love and lived together until his death in 1940. Active in both the 1905 and 1917 revolutions, she worked for several years in the Soviet Commissariat of Education, in charge of preserving museums, art treasures, and historical monuments. She developed differences with the Fourth International in 1941 and severed her ties to it in 1951.

277. **Franz Pfemfert** (1879-1954) was a German radical editor who had published articles by Trotsky but was not a member of the Left Opposition.

278. "To the National Council of Labour Colleges." From the Cannon Archives, Library of Social History. Dictated in English.
279. **Arthur Henderson** (1863-1935) was a British Labour Party leader who supported World War I and was president of the Second International, 1923-24 and 1925-29. **John R. Clynes** (1869-1949) was a Labour member of Parliament for twenty-five years.

280. **Hendrik de Man** (1885-1953) was a leader of the Belgian Labor Party's right wing. In 1933 he authored a "labor plan" to end the depression and expand production, which was supported by the Belgian unions and imitated in other countries.

281. "Advice for the CLA Minority." By permission of Albert Glotzer. Translated from German by Russell Block. Trotsky's letter to Shachtman, tendering the same advice he sent Glotzer, could not be located for this volume.

282. "The German Decision Against a New Party." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Mavis Parr. The German section's national conference on March 11-12 was its last on German soil until after World War II. The day it ended, Trotsky wrote a letter advocating a new course in Germany, summarized in his statement, "The official German party is politically liquidated, it cannot be reborn. The vanguard of the German workers must build a new party" ("KPD or New Party (I)," in *Writings 32-33*). Two days later, he submitted a discussion article motivating this proposal, "The Tragedy of the German Proletariat," March 14, 1933 (in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*). The German conference reaffirmed the "Faction, not party" line adopted at the international preconference in February, and its leaders were at first strongly opposed to Trotsky's new proposal.

283. "A Congress Against Fascism." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the German by Maria Roth. In March 1933 the Stalinists announced that an international congress against fascism would be held in Prague in April, along the same lines as the congress against war held in Amsterdam in August 1932. The site of the anti-fascist gathering was later shifted to Copenhagen and then to Paris, where it was held at the Pleyel hall in June.

284. **Henricus Sneevliet** (1883-1942) was a founder of the CP in Holland and in Indonesia. He was expelled from the Dutch CP and founded the Revolutionary Socialist Party in 1929. He was a co-signer of the first public call for a new International ("The Declaration of Four," August 26, 1933, in *Writings 33-34*), and the RSP joined the ILO later in 1933. He broke with the Fourth International in 1938 because of differences over Spain and trade union questions. He was executed by the Nazi occupation forces in World War II.

285. "Complaints to the IS." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Mavis Parr. Trotsky was complaining here because although he had made a formal proposal for a change in policy that would affect the entire future of the ILO, the IS had
not even acknowledged its receipt, let alone expressed its attitude to the proposal. The third and fourth paragraphs of this letter were later published without a date in an international bulletin and reprinted as "KPD or New Party (II)" in *Writings 32-33*.

286. The **Fourth of August**, 1914, was the day when the Social Democratic deputies in the German Reichstag voted for the government's war budget in violation of the party's antiwar policies; on the same day the French and Belgian Social Democrats issued manifestos supporting their capitalist governments in the war. The date was used by Marxists to symbolize the degeneration of the Second International and its finish as a revolutionary force. Trotsky uses the term here by analogy to assert that the German CP could no longer be reformed.

287. "We Must Have a Discussion on Germany." From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. Translated from the Russian by Ron Allen. A letter to Jan Frankel.

288. The **Hamburg candidate** for the post of Trotsky's German language secretary, replacing Otto Schuessler, was Rudolf Klement.

289. **Stoi** and Otto Lehmann were pseudonyms of Samuel Hundert (d. 1942), a leader of the German section in exile.

290. **Blasco**, also called Julien, was Pietro Tresso (1893-1944), one of the three founders of the New Italian Opposition in 1930. His major activity in the thirties was as a leader of the French section. He was elected to the IS at the 1933 preconference and to the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International in 1938. After escaping from a French prison, he was murdered during World War II, probably by Stalinist partisans.

291. **Walter Held** was the pseudonym of Heinz Epe (1910-1941), a leader of the German section who emigrated after Hitler's victory. He was the first German member to favor a new party in Germany. He became a leader of the ICL's youth work, its representative in the Stockholm Youth Bureau, and a secretary of Trotsky in Norway. After the Nazi invasion of Norway, he was seized by the GPU and disappeared while crossing the Soviet Union on his way to the United States.

292. "Tasks of the Coming Plenum." From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. Translated from the Russian by George Saunders. The ILO's international preconference in February 1933 was supposed to be followed by a full-scale international conference in the summer. But the IS, in agreement with Trotsky, decided to postpone the conference and in its place to hold a plenum in May. The plenum, whose members had been elected in February, was the highest body of the ILO between international conferences. A letter to Jan Frankel.

293. **Vaclav Skandera** (1902- ) was one of the principal leaders of the Left Opposition in Prague. **Otto Friedmann** (1908- ) was a founder of the first Czechoslovakian Opposition group, in 1927.

295. Arlen, the pseudonym of an army officer, Federico Vazquez, and Mariano Vela (d. 1936), a student, were members of the Spanish Opposition who Trotsky and the IS hoped could create a pro-IS, anti-Nin tendency in the section. Their letter opposing Trotsky’s proposal for a new party in Germany was printed in the International Bulletin, number 2/3, April 1933.

296. Sebastian Pappas, a leader of the Food Workers Industrial Union in New York, was expelled from the CP as a “Trotskyist” in 1932 and joined the CLA. He later joined Weisbord’s group.

297. Arkadi Maslow (1891-1941) and Ruth Fischer (1895-1961) were the central leaders of the German CP following Brandler’s demotion in 1924. They were expelled in 1927 for having supported the Russian United Opposition. They helped found the Leninbund in 1928 but withdrew after Zinoviev’s capitulation in the USSR. Their small “International Group” adhered to the ICL in 1934 but the German section refused to admit them as members. Fischer served on the IS, 1934-36, and Maslow was elected to the General Council of the MFI in 1936. They quit the MFI in 1937.

298. “Errors of the Spanish Leaders.” From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. Translated from the French by Brenda Zannis. This was a letter to Arlen and Vela in Spain.

299. L. Fersen, the pseudonym of Enrique Fernandez Sendon, was a leader of the Spanish section, a supporter of Nin, and the section’s delegate to the February 1933 preconference. He opposed Trotsky’s proposal that the section enter the Spanish Socialist Party in 1934, and was opposed to the unification with the Maurin group that led to the formation of the POUM. Then he quit and joined the SP.

300. “Intellectuals Regrouping.” Karl Faber catalog, April 20-30, 1959. Translated from the French by Russell Block. When this extract from a letter to B.J. Field was written, some American radical intellectuals were beginning to develop sympathy for the Left Opposition.

301. Sidney Hook (1902- ) belonged in 1933 to the Musteite American Workers Party and was treasurer of the American Committee for Help to the Imprisoned and Deported Bolsheviks, of which Field was secretary. He later became one of the most vociferous supporters of the cold war and the witch-hunt.


303. This paragraph is written in Aesopian and coded language. Leon Sedov (Schwarz) had recently escaped from Berlin (the old quarters of
the IS) and come to Paris, the site of the current IS (Mill’s firm, a coded term for the IS used even after Mill’s defection). Trotsky felt strongly that Sedov should not get involved in local (French) or central (IS) work but should concentrate on national work (tasks related to his homeland, the USSR) as he had done so ably in Berlin.

304. Trotsky wrote this one day after Sneevliet was convicted and sentenced to prison for leading the Revolutionary Socialist Party’s campaign of solidarity with the mutinous crew of a Dutch warship in the Java Sea. The rebellion of the predominantly Indonesian crew of the Zeven Provincien in February 1933 was quelled only when the ship was bombed and several of the crew were killed. Sneevliet was arrested in February and held without bail although he was a candidate for the lower house of the Dutch parliament. Thirteen days after the trial ended with a five-month prison sentence for Sneevliet, he was elected to parliament, but he was not released from jail until July.


306. Trotsky may have been referring to one of two brothers named Kurella: Alfred (1895- ), a Comintern representative and secretary of the International Committee for Struggle Against War and Fascism, or Heinrich, who had been an editor of the German edition of International Press Correspondence.

307. “The Discussion on Germany.” From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. Translated from the Russian by George Saunders. This letter to Jan Frankel was accompanied by “In Reply to the German Draft Resolution” of the same date (in Writings 32-33).

308. “A Nucleus Outside.” From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. Translated from the Russian by George Saunders. This letter to Jan Frankel was accompanied by “The Left Opposition and the SAP” of the same date (in Writings 32-33).


310. W. Krieger was a pseudonym of Wolfgang Salus (1908-1953), one of the founders and leaders of the Czech section. He served as a secretary-guard for Trotsky in Turkey, 1929-30. He was one of Trotsky’s principal sources of information about Austria in 1933.

311. J. Thomas was a pseudonym of Yakov S. Reich (1886-1956), a Comintern functionary assigned to work in Germany in the 1920s. He joined the German CP, supported the Brandlerites, and became a part of the KPO minority that joined the SAP in 1932. He emigrated to Prague after Hitler came to power. Boris Goldenberg (1905- ), who used the
pen names Bernhard Thomas and Bertrand Gilbert, was also a Brandlerite before becoming a leader of the SAP. In Berlin he had had friendly relations with Leon Sedov. As a refugee in Paris, he represented the SAP during its negotiations with the ILO in 1933. Like most of the SAP leaders, he became an opponent of the new International by 1934. In 1935 he was one of the founders of the centrist Revolutionary Left led by Marcel Pivert in the French SP.

312. The expulsion of Blasco was from the New Italian Opposition, whose leaders wanted him to work under their direction rather than that of the French section. The ILO’s May plenum reinstated him and he remained a member of the IS and the French section.

313. “A French Visa and an Essay on Herriot.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Mavis Parr. While Maurice Parijanine was working to persuade the Radical Socialist government of France to grant visas to Trotsky and Sedova, Trotsky had written an unflattering article about Edouard Herriot, one of the central leaders of the Radical Socialist Party, and had sent it to the U.S. for publication. When it seemed that the visas might actually be granted, Trotsky withdrew the article. After leaving France, Trotsky reworked the article, redated it November 7, 1935, and gave it the title “Edouard Herriot: Man of the Golden Mean.” In this form it is printed in Portraits, Political and Personal (Pathfinder, 1977).

314. “A Warning and a Criticism.” By permission of Albert Glotzer. A 1933 translation. This letter to Max Shachtman was written after Trotsky had repeatedly expressed his opinion that no principled differences were involved in the CLA’s factional dispute. A few weeks later, a truce terminating the struggle was accepted by both sides. As a result it was decided that the CLA’s third national conference, scheduled for the summer of 1933, should be postponed indefinitely. It was not held until the end of 1934.

315. In January 1933 the Progressive Miners of America sponsored a broad national conference in Illinois to discuss the possibility of launching a new union federation, and the CLA was able to send a fraternal delegate. Cannon was selected but only after the CLA minority voted against him and nominated Shachtman instead. After the conference the minority bitterly criticized Cannon because his speech to the conference concentrated on union problems instead of the CLA’s presence and program. Trotsky defended Cannon’s tactics in the given situation and was to return to this subject in his letter, “Trade Union Problems in America,” September 23, 1933, later in this volume.

316. Shachtman disagreed with Trotsky’s opinion on the Negro question expressed in his discussion with Swabeck in February 1933. Although Trotsky eventually read Shachtman’s manuscript, he was not convinced by it and continued to hold a self-determinationist position.

318. Chen Tu-hsiu (1879-1942), a founder and first general secretary of the Chinese CP, was expelled in 1929 and helped to found the Chinese Left Opposition. He was imprisoned by the Kuomintang, 1932-37. The Stalinists rejected appeals to support the ILO's defense campaign. In the late thirties he developed differences and left the Fourth Internationalist movement in 1941.

319. "Paralyzed Financially." From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. The main body of this letter to Jan Frankel was in German, translated by Russell Block; the postscript was in Russian, translated by George Saunders.


321. Raymond Poincare (1860-1934) was the conservative president of France, 1913-20, and premier three times. Trotsky's essay "Celine and Poincare: Novelist and Politician," not published until 1935, is in Leon Trotsky on Literature and Art.


323. Pierre Monatte (1881-1960) was a syndicalist who joined the French CP in the early twenties, then left it and founded La Revolution Proletarienne and the Syndicalist League. Trotsky broke with him politically in 1929. Maurice Chambelland (1901-1966) was a close collaborator of Monatte.

324. The Stalinist periodical Die Rundshau replaced the German edition of Inprecorr after it was banned by the Nazis.

325. Georgi Dimitrov (1882-1949), a Bulgarian CP leader living in Germany, was a defendant in the Reichstag fire trial staged by the Nazis in 1933. Acquitted, he moved to the USSR where he became a Soviet citizen and executive secretary of the Comintern, 1934-43. After World War II, he was premier of Bulgaria, 1946-49. In April 1925 a bomb exploded in a cathedral in Sofia, Bulgaria, killing 128 people attending the funeral of an assassinated general; although the identity of the terrorists was never established, the explosion was attributed to the Bulgarian CP.

326. Schaffhausen was a Swiss canton where the whole CP organization went over to the Right Opposition in 1930. In 1933 Trotsky received reports that Hitler's victory had led to ferment in the Schaffhausen organization and interest among its leaders in the Left Opposition's ideas.
327. “What I Would Do in France.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Mavis Parr. This was a letter to Henri Guernut (1876-1943), a Radical Socialist member of the French Chamber of Deputies and a civil libertarian.


329. Hynek Lenorovics (1879-1942?) was a founder of the CP in Czechoslovakia and a leader of the Left Opposition. He was ill with tuberculosis.

330. “Interview by Alice Hughes.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by Ron Allen. Alice Hughes (1899-1977) was a correspondent for the New York World Telegram, where an article about her meeting with Trotsky was printed August 1, 1933.

331. “Restructuring the IS.” From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. Translated from the German by Russell Block. A letter to Jan Frankel, one day after Trotsky was informed by telegram that the French government was ready to let him move to France.


333. “Dangers Threatening the CLA.” Karl Faber catalog, April 20-30, 1959. Translated from the German by Russell Block. The American factional situation was no longer as bad as Trotsky thought in these excerpts from a letter to B.J. Field. In May, Swabeck and Shachtman, attending the ILO plenum in Paris, had accepted the plenum proposal to suspend factional hostilities in the CLA, and in June after their return to the U.S. the CLA National Committee approved the proposal and began to put it into effect. Cannon and Shachtman collaborated effectively for the next six years, during which internal disputes did not follow the factional lines that existed in 1933. Thanks to Field’s efforts, the article “Hitler and Disarmament” (June 2, 1933) was published as a pamphlet entitled “What Hitler Wants” (John Day Company, 1933). It is in Writings 32-33 along with “Japan Heads for Disaster” (July 12, 1933). “What Is National Socialism?” (June 10, 1933) is in The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany.


335. “Full-Time Staff.” By permission of the Harvard College Library.
Translated from the French by Mavis Parr. Trotsky arrived in France July 24, 1933, and found a place to live in Saint-Palais, near Royan, where he stayed until October. This letter about IS personnel was written to Eugene Bauer, who had visited Trotsky in Turkey after leaving Germany and was still in Turkey before moving to Paris.

336. “A Decisive Turn Is Necessary and Urgent.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Mavis Parr. In mid-July, as he was preparing to leave Turkey, Trotsky made a momentous decision—that it was necessary for the ILO to call and work for a new International and new revolutionary parties everywhere. His document containing this proposal (his “theses”) was “It Is Necessary to Build Communist Parties and an International Anew” (July 15, 1933). On the ship to France he also wrote “It Is Impossible to Remain in the Same ‘International’ with Stalin, Manuilsky, Lozovsky and Company” (July 20, 1933). The former is in Writings 32-33, the latter in Writings 33-34. This letter was written to Pierre Naville, who had sent Trotsky a draft of his own theses on ILO perspectives.

337. Denise Naville (1896-1970) was an activist in the French section, whom Trotsky had met in Prinkipo and Copenhagen.

338. “Barbusse’s Cynicism.” By permission of Colette Chambelland, Musee sociale. Translated from the French by James P. Nolan. This was a letter to August Mougeot, who had sent Trotsky a copy of a letter from Barbusse about his attitude to Trotsky.

339. Emile Vandervelde (1866-1938) was the reformist leader of the Belgian Labor Party and president of the Second International, 1929-36. Karl Renner (1870-1950) was the right-wing leader of the Austrian Social Democracy, chancellor of Austria, 1918-20, and president of its national assembly, 1931-33.

340. “A Plenum Is Needed to Deal with the Paris Conference.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Robert Cantrick. Unsigned. Trotsky sent this document to the IS as the draft of a statement calling for an ILO plenum to take action on the recently announced conference that several independent left Socialist and Communist groups associated with the International Labor Community (IAG) were going to hold in Paris at the end of August. It was another contribution to the ILO’s internal discussion, and evidence that he felt the IS and the plenum had the authority and the duty to work publicly for a new International before the ILO could convene a full-scale international conference. The IS agreed to call a plenum, which was held on August 19, a week before the Paris conference. The Comintern’s resolution of April 5 declared that “The political line . . . of the [German CP’s] Central Committee, with Thaelmann at its head, was completely correct up to and during Hitler’s coup d’etat.” Since Thaelmann was only carrying out the Comintern’s line, this was a complete whitewash of the Comintern. All
the parties in the Comintern took the same position.

341. “Remarks on the French League’s Theses.” Internal bulletin, Communist League of France, number 4, September 1933. Translated from the French by David Keil. In preparation for its national conference in September, the leaders of the French section submitted a resolution (“theses”) on the new party and new International orientation. It reflected a transition from the old “reform” position of the movement and some of the pressures coming from opponents of the new turn, who would split away soon after the conference. Trotsky’s remarks were designed to point out the contradictions and ambiguities in the document so that they could be corrected by the time of the conference. The Hotel Lux was the place where foreign Comintern functionaries and visitors were lodged in Moscow.

342. “Moving to France.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by George Saunders. These pages from a diary were written for publication in a bourgeois periodical but do not seem to have been published anywhere.

343. Herman Mueller (1876-1931) was the last Social Democratic chancellor of Germany before Hitler; he was succeeded by Bruening.

344. Louis Malvy (1875-1949) was the Radical Socialist minister in Briand’s cabinet responsible for deporting Trotsky in 1916. Alexander Izvolsky (1856-1919), former czarist minister of foreign affairs, was Russia’s ambassador to France, 1910-17. George Clemenceau (1841-1929), a Radical Socialist deputy, became premier in November 1917 and launched a witch-hunt against “pacifists” and “defeatists,” of which Malvy was one victim. After the war he was an architect of the Versailles treaty and an advocate of intervention against the Russian Revolution.

345. “Documents for the Conference.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Barbara West. Unsigned. This was a letter to Jan Frankel and the IS, then preparing for the ILO plenum and the Paris conference. The two documents submitted to the conference were the “Declaration of the Bolshevik-Leninist Delegation . . .” (August 17, 1933) and “The Declaration of Four” (August 26, 1933); Trotsky’s later views on a proposed antifascist boycott were expressed in “An Interview by C.A. Smith” (August 29, 1933). All three are in Writings 33-34.

346. “To Jacob Walcher on the Declaration of Four.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the German by Russell Block. The ILO plenum on August 19 approved the orientation for a new International. A few days before this, Trotsky was visited by Jacob Walcher (who also used the name Jim Schwab). Trotsky proposed a merger of the SAP and the ILO’s German section and asked their support of the ILO declaration for a new International to be submitted at the Paris conference, which the SAP was cosponsoring. They agreed to work
for the SAP's support of the declaration in Paris. This was a letter to Walcher (1887- ), who had been a founder of the German CP and a leader of the Brandlerites before his group joined the SAP in 1932. He changed his mind about a new International by the end of 1933 and thereafter actively opposed it. Under his leadership the SAP embraced People's Frontism by 1936 and disintegrated with World War II. He rejoined the German Stalinists after the war.

347. The Dutch RSP (Revolutionary Socialist Party) and the Dutch OSP (Independent Socialist Party) both signed the Declaration of Four; in 1935 they merged to become the RSAP (Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party), affiliated to both the London Bureau and the ICL. Karl Kilbom (1885-1961) attended the Paris conference as a delegate of the independent Swedish Communist Party, which had been expelled from the Comintern in 1929 and changed its name to the Socialist Party of Sweden in 1934. Internationally, this party was allied with the Brandlerites and the IAG, becoming a part of the London Bureau in 1935; it fell apart in 1937 when Kilbom quit and most of its members joined the Social Democrats. Kilbom, together with the ILP delegates, was part of a "center" tendency at the Paris conference. Mot Dag (Dawn) was a Norwegian centrist group of intellectuals who had been expelled by both the NAP and the Norwegian CP. The PUPists were members of the French Party of Proletarian Unity (PUP), a short-lived centrist group that supported the most conservative tendency at the Paris conference.

348. Inprecorr was short for International Press Correspondence, a Comintern news bulletin published in several languages in the twenties and thirties.

349. Rudolf Klement (1910-1938) was Trotsky's German-language secretary in Turkey and France, 1933-34, and administrative secretary of the IS, 1935-38. He was murdered by the GPU in Paris while he was working to organize the founding conference of the Fourth International.

350. "Reassuring the Polish Section." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated form the German by Russell Block. Unsigned. The Polish section was unsympathetic to the new International orientation.

351. Max Seydewitz (1892- ) and Kurt Rosenfeld (1877-1943) were founders of the SAP and therefore influential in the IAG. They quit the SAP after trying to take it back to the Social Democracy. Seydewitz became a Stalinist functionary in East Germany after World War II. Josef Kruk headed a small centrist group called the Independent Socialist Labor Party of Poland; he could not get a visa to attend the Paris conference. He later became a Zionist, escaping to Palestine after Poland was invaded in 1939.

352. "The ILP and the British Section." From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. This letter to Cannon was dictated in English one day before the IS wrote to the British section urging its members to
enter the ILP. Later in the month Trotsky was visited by some of the ILP delegates at the Paris conference.

353. **James Maxton** (1885-1946) was the principal leader of the ILP in the thirties. His pacifism led him to hail the appeasement at Munich in 1938. **Fenner Brockway** (1890- ) was chairman or secretary of the ILP through most of the 30s and chairman of the London Bureau during most of its existence. **John Paton** (1886-1977) was secretary of the ILP from 1926 until he resigned from the party at the end of 1933, and secretary of the London Bureau, 1932-33.

354. "Information for the U.S." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Dictated in English. A letter to Max Shachtman, whom the CLA had sent to Turkey to assist Trotsky in moving to France and settling there under the most favorable conditions.

355. Shachtman’s "work on the Negro question" was never published. He disagreed with the position Trotsky had taken on self-determination in his discussion with Swabeck on February 28, 1933, which is reprinted in *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination*. But he voiced no objections when Trotsky’s position was adopted by the 1939 convention of the SWP.

356. "Building a New International and the United Front Policy." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by George Saunders. Signed "G. Gourov." This was written two days before the SAP, OSP, and RSP signed the Declaration of Four.

357. The **Norwegian Labor Party** (NAP) was the strongest force in the IAG and the Paris conference. The major workers’ party in its own country, it quit the Second International, joined the Third in 1919, and quit the Third in 1923. It opposed a new International at the Paris conference and quit the IAG in 1934, to return later to the Second International. It became the governing party of Norway in 1935 and granted asylum to Trotsky, only to withdraw it after the first Moscow trial and to deport him to Mexico in 1936.

358. "‘As It Is’ and ‘As It Should Be.’” From the Arbetarrewelsense Arkiv (Archives of the Working Class Movement), Stockholm. Translated from the German by Russell Block. This letter to Jacob Walcher was written the day before the Paris conference began.

359. **Martin Tranmael** (1879-1967) was the general secretary of the NAP, editor of its central paper, and principal architect of its evolution to the right.

360. The Second International held an international conference in Paris August 21-25, 1933, its first meeting since the crushing of its German section.

Rimbert (1910- ), who had quit the French Communist League in May 1933, visited Trotsky at Saint-Palais to discuss the ILO’s new orientation, which he opposed. Later in the year he helped to found a sect called the Communist Union. Subsequently he joined the SP and the dissident Stalinist group that published _Que faire?_ In the transcript of the discussion Rimbert was referred to as R, Trotsky as T. An editorial introduction said: “Comrade T is neither a member of the French League (nor, therefore, of its Executive Committee) nor of the IS. He is speaking strictly on his own behalf and his opinions are binding on no one else.”

362. **Zimmerwald**, Switzerland, was the site of an international conference in September 1915 to reassemble the antiwar and internationalist currents that had survived the debacle of the Second International. **Kienthal**, Switzerland, was the site of a second conference, in April 1916, that attempted to continue and go beyond the positions taken at Zimmerwald. Although most of their participants were centrists, the conferences proved to be steps toward a new International.

363. **Karl Liebknecht** (1871-1919) was a left-wing leader in the German Social Democratic Party who broke with his party after it supported World War I. He helped to organize the Spartacus League and was imprisoned for leading antiwar demonstrations, becoming a symbol of proletarian opposition to imperialist war. After helping to found the new Communist Party, he was murdered by government troops.

364. The bourgeois-democratic **Weimar republic** of Germany, named after the town where it was organized, was initiated in 1919 and lasted until Hitler took full power in 1933.

365. “After a Talk with Fritz Sternberg.” Arbetarrorelsense Arkiv, Stockholm. Translated from the German by Russell Block. **Fritz Sternberg** (1895-1963), an SAP member and writer on economic and political problems, was a delegate at the Paris conference. He visited Trotsky during the period when the SAP still felt close to the ILO. His “Draft Economic Thesis for the Program of the Fourth International” was printed in _Documents et Discussions_, a bulletin published by the IS in January 1934. He later became a Social Democrat.

366. “Roosevelt’s Experiment and Workers’ Control.” Karl Faber catalog, April 20-30, 1959. The letter to B.J. Field from which this selection was excerpted in the catalog was written in English. **Franklin D. Roosevelt** (1882-1945) was Democratic president of the U.S., 1933-45. Soon after taking office in March 1933 he began his experiment, called the New Deal, which sought through reforms to overcome the Great Depression while containing the militancy of the American workers.

366. “Planned Economy in the USSR: Success or Failure?” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by George Saunders. This two-part article seems to have been written for a non-radical periodical, probably in the U.S., but no record of its publication has been found.
367. "Soliciting Suggestions." By permission of Albert Glotzer. A 1933 translation by Sara Weber. A letter to the CLA leadership. Trotsky probably sent similar letters to the other sections at the same time.

368. "Trouble in the French Section." By permission of Tamara Deutscher. Translated from the French by J.R. Fidler. This letter to Henri Molinier reflected Trotsky's view that the French section should discontinue its fruitless internal disputes (the one with the leaders of the Jewish Group had lasted two years) and throw its energies into work centered on the ILO's new international orientation. A fuller expression of this view was the article "It Is Time to Stop," September 18, 1933, in *Writings 33-34*. A few weeks later the Jewish Group leaders quit the French section for the new Communist Union.

369. "In Defense of the IS." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Richard Lesnik. The IS plenum's decision in August to call for a new International and to initiate the Declaration of Four at the Paris conference was approved by the sections of the ILO, but not by all of its members, including some of the IS itself. Two of these, Witte of the Greek section and Giacomi of the Italian section and its representative in the Executive Committee of the French section, charged that the IS was betraying Bolshevism, challenged its authority, began to violate its decisions, and sought to split the French section away from the IS. In this letter to the plenum, Trotsky took his side with the IS and its disciplinary measures against Giacomi, a pseudonym of Mario Bavassano (1895-1964).

370. "Trade Union Problems in America." *International Bulletin, ICL*, English-language edition by the CLA, number 1, April 1934. When this letter was sent to the CLA it was signed "Plenum of the ILO" and dated September 26, 1933, three days after Trotsky wrote it.

371. "Attempts to Revive the Control Commission's Corpse." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Robert Cantrick. Trotsky evidently wrote this document, which was subtitled "Draft Resolution of the Executive Committee of the (French) League," to counter some maneuver by Witte.


373. "Comrade Witte's Violations of Bolshevik Organizational Principles." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Barbara West. Unsigned. This was the draft of a resolution prepared by Trotsky for an IS meeting that was to act on Witte's status.

375. The conciliators, sometimes called the compromisers, were the political forces in or around the Mensheviks and SRs that had supported and participated in the capitalist Provisional Government after the February revolution in 1917. They opposed the October insurrection that overthrew the Provisional Government and rejected invitations to join the new Soviet government as a minority.

376. Karl von Clausewitz (1780-1831) was a Prussian general and military strategist, whose major book On War contains the well-known statement that "War is a mere continuation of policy by other means."

377. "On the Projected Youth Conference." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Jeff White. This letter, signed "International Secretariat," was prompted by a call for an international youth conference sent out by the Socialist Youth League, the youth affiliate of the Dutch OSP. Conference invitations were extended to the youth groups of all the organizations that had participated in the August Paris conference and any others that might be interested. The site announced was Amsterdam, the dates December 9-10, 1933. The conference finally was opened in Laren, Holland, on February 24, 1934.

378. Austro-Marxism refers to the branch of reformism practiced by the Social Democratic Party of Austria, a section of the Second International.


380. "Man's Fate Is a True Work of Art." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the French by Ivan Licho. This letter was to Clifton Fadiman, then an editor at Simon and Schuster, which recently had published The History of the Russian Revolution. Man's Fate was published in the U.S. by Random House in 1934.

381. "Answers to Questions from New York." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by Ivan Licho. The questions answered here had been submitted by someone in New York named Berman. This may have been Nathan Berman, a garment worker and member of the CLA.

382. In the first Nazi "election," on November 12, 1933, there was only one slate on the ballot—the Nazis—for whom the voters could say Yes or No. There was also a plebiscite on Hitler's foreign policy. The results announced by the Nazis were 43 million votes in favor, 3 million against.

383. "Comments on the 'Active-Socialist Front.'" By permission of the
Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by Pat Galligan. The *Active-Socialist Front* was something that a group of refugees from Germany tried to organize, without success. Its projected program placed strong emphasis on the use of psychology as a political weapon. In this translation that concept is called "psycho-technique."

384. **Rudolf Hilferding** (1877-1941) was a German Social Democrat and the author of *Finance Capital*. He served as finance minister in 1923 and 1928. The French government turned him over to the Nazis in 1940, and he died in a concentration camp. **Albert Grzesinsky** (1879-1948) was the Social Democratic police chief in Berlin. He ordered his cops to shoot down workers trying to hold a May Day demonstration in 1929, but he offered only token resistance when the Social Democratic government of Prussia was dismissed by Papen's coup in 1932.

385. **Ivan P. Pavlov** (1849-1936) was a Russian physiologist noted for the theory of conditioned and unconditioned reflexes he developed from experiments with dogs. Trotsky's polemic against Pavlov is in "Science in the Task of Socialist Construction," November 23, 1923, in *Problems of Everyday Life and Other Writings on Culture and Science* (Monad Press, 1973).

386. "After the British Municipal Elections." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by Ivan Licho. Signed "International Secretariat." In August 1933 the IS had urged the British section to formally dissolve and send its members into the ILP in order to win the ILP left-wingers to the movement for a new International. This proposal was debated in the British section during the subsequent months, with Trotsky writing several letters in favor of the proposed entry (in *Writings 33-34*). A majority of the section, led by Groves, opposed the proposal, while a minority favored it so strongly that the section was virtually paralyzed. While the debate continued, municipal elections were held on November 1, 1933, with the Labour Party making significant gains at the expense of the Tories and Liberals. Trotsky saw in these results confirmation of his view that the ILP should orient to the Labour Party and the British section should orient to the ILP. This draft of a letter for the IS was intended to prod the leaders of the British majority into stating their alternative to the entry proposal.

387. "Minutes of the ICL Plenum." From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. This is a 1933 translation of minutes of a plenum held in France. Although they refer to a "third and last session," only the first two sessions are included in the translation. The ILO had changed its name to International Communist League (ICL) in September, a month after deciding to work for a new International.

388. **Georges Vereecken** (1896-1978) represented a sectarian tendency in the leadership of the Belgian section. He led splits in 1935, when he disapproved the section's decision to enter the Belgian Labor Party, and in 1938, when he disapproved of the majority's criticisms of the POUM and its support of the proposal to found the Fourth International. His

389. The NAS (National Labor Organization) was a small left-wing union federation in Holland that had been organized in 1893 and was led by Sneevliet and the RSP in the 1930s.

390. **De Baanbreker** (The Pathfinder) was the paper of the RSP, and **De Fakkel** (The Torch) was the paper of the OSP before the two parties merged in 1935 and began publishing **De Nieuwe Fakkel**.

391. Peter J. Schmidt (1896-1952) was the leader of the Dutch OSP, who chaired the Paris conference and signed the Declaration of Four. When the OSP and the RSP merged in 1935 to form the RSAP, he became its president. He withdrew from the RSAP and revolutionary politics in 1936 after the first Moscow trial. Jaques De Kadt (1897- ), a former Dutch CP and SP member, was a founder of the OSP in 1932; a leader of its right wing, he was expelled in 1934.

392. Paul Louis (1872-1948), a French journalist and labor historian, was a member of the Party of Proletarian Unity (PUP).

393. Neu Beginnen was a German emigre group which published pamphlets and a journal that had a strong influence on the SAP and other centrist groups after Hitler's victory.

394. The majority position at the Paris conference (the so-called **Declaration of Seven**) rejected the Declaration of Four by advocating the convocation some time in the future of a world congress to regenerate the workers' movement and retrieve international workers' unity on a revolutionary socialist basis. This was supported not only by the NAP, PUP, etc., but also by the SAP and the OSP, who claimed that this vague perspective did not contradict the Declaration of Four.

395. Maria Reese (1889-1958) was a German CP deputy in the Reichstag whose unsuccessful efforts to get a discussion in the CP about the causes of Hitler's victory led her to break with Stalinism and join the Left Opposition. In 1934, however, she broke with Marxism altogether and went over to the Nazis. For Trotsky's later comments, see "Notes of a Journalist," January 10, 1936, in *Writings* 35-36.

396. La Voix Communiste was the Belgian section's paper. There was no publication named L'Étincelle du Nord; Sneevliet probably was thinking of L'Étincelle de l'Est, a regional bulletin published by the Communist League from 1931 to at least the end of 1933.

397. Adhemar Hennaut (1899-1977) was the chief leader of the Belgian League of Communist Internationalists, which had split from the Belgian section in 1930. Unity negotiations in 1933 proved unsuccessful.

398. "Youth Conference Plans." By permission of Albert Glotzer. This letter in English was to Glotzer, who would attend the international youth conference in February 1934 as an ICL delegate.

399. "On Calling for Soviets in Cuba." From the Cannon archives,
Library of Social History. Translated from the Russian by Donald Kennedy. This was a letter to Joseph (Usick) Vanzler (1902-1956), whose pen name was John G. Wright. He was a new member of the CLA in 1933, then starting his long collaboration with Trotsky as translator in English. He had written a discussion article ("Problems of the Cuban Revolution" in *The Militant*, October 28, 1933), about tactics in Cuba, which was then in a prerevolutionary condition. Trotsky thought it was one-sided.

400. "For United Action Against Fascism." By permission of Harvard College Library. Translated from the Russian by Pat Galligan. Unsigned. No record of how the IS handled this proposal was available for this volume.

401. "Bad News About the CLA." By permission of Albert Glotzer. A 1933 translation by Sara Weber. A letter to Max Shachtman about one of the final flareups of the factional situation in the CLA. The national office was not transferred to Chicago, but this was not for factional reasons, and a national conference was not held until the end of 1934. The CLA had been hoping to start a theoretical magazine since 1932, but the first issue of *The New International* did not appear until July 1934.

402. "Intervening in the SP." From the Cannon archives, Library of Social History. Translated from the German by Warren Dean. Signed "Onken." This letter was written, probably to Jan Frankel, shortly after the French SP had expelled its right wing (Neo-Socialists or Neos) for having violated party discipline by its votes in the Chamber of Deputies.

403. Louis-Olivier Frossard (1889-1946) was general secretary of the new French CP after the left-wingers took over the SP in 1920. He resigned from the CP in 1923 and later returned to the SP. After the Neo split in November 1933, he represented the most conservative positions in the party. He resigned from the SP in 1935 to become minister of labor, and subsequently served in both People's Front and Petainist cabinets.

404. Yvan Craipeau (1912- ) was a leader of the French section's youth work, elected to the Executive Committee in 1931. He was a central leader of the French section during World War II and until 1946, when he resigned and joined a series of centrist groups.


407. The text of the ICL delegation's proposals, also dated December 30, 1933, is in *Writings 33-34*. 


408. Marceau Pivert (1895-1958) was the leader of a left tendency in the French SP who became an aide to Leon Blum in the first People's Front government. In 1938 he left the SP to form the Workers and Peasants Socialist Party (PSOP), affiliated to the London Bureau.

409. Benjamin Gitlow (1891-1965) was a founder and vice-presidential candidate of the American CP who was expelled with the Lovestoneites in 1929. In 1933 he left them and formed the Workers Communist League, which held discussions with the CLA about possible collaboration in building a new revolutionary party. A.J. Muste (1885-1967) was the leader of the American Workers Party, which merged with the CLA in 1934 to form the Workers Party of the U.S.; disillusioned by the Moscow trial and the Spanish civil war, he withdrew to pacifism and the church in 1936. Ludwig Lore (1875-1942) was an early sympathizer of the Left Opposition in the American CP, but he never joined the CLA. He belonged to the AWP but withdrew soon after the WPUS was created.

410. Miles was the pseudonym of Walter Loewenheim, leader of the small left-Social Democratic group that published the pamphlet “Neu Beginnen! Faschismus oder Sozialismus” in August 1933. Otto Wels (1873-1939) was a German Social Democrat who crushed the Spartacist uprising as military commander of Berlin in 1919 and headed his party's delegation in the Reichstag until Hitler took over in 1933.

411. Willy Brandt (1913- ) was an SAP leader in his youth and Social Democratic chancellor of Germany, 1969-74. Louis Blanc (1811-1882) was a French Utopian Socialist who was a member of the Provisional Government in 1848 and an opponent of the Paris Commune in 1871.

412. The USPD or Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany was founded in 1917 through a centrist split from the prowar Social Democrats. A majority of the USPD merged with the German CP in 1920, and the minority rejoined the Social Democracy in 1922.

413. “Our Present Tasks,” November 7, 1933, which discussed revolutionary tactics in Europe after Hitler's victory, is in Writings 33-34.

414. Julian Gumperz (1899-1972) was born in the U.S. and moved to Germany in the 1920s where he joined the CP and became part of the Frankfurt School. Emigrating to Switzerland in 1933, he became an editor for the publisher Malik-Verlag. Later, he moved back to the U.S.

415. The proposed conference in February 1934 was never held, the permanent technical commission never accomplished anything, no joint discussion bulletin or journal was ever published. Shortly after the December 30 meeting the leaders of the SAP permanently abandoned all efforts for a new International and opposed such efforts by the ICL.
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**Writings of Leon Trotsky (1932)**

(Turkey)

On being deprived of Soviet citizenship—The crisis of the Soviet economy—The peasant war in China—The revolutionary future of the oppressed colored races—Morality and the family—Pacifism, disarmament, and a Stalinist-sponsored international antiwar congress in Amsterdam—Pilsudskism and fascism—Stalin’s slanders against Rosa Luxemburg—A preface to a Polish edition of Lenin’s *Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*—A letter to the workers of Zurich—The nature of ‘proletarian’ literature—International conferences and the ILO—The second expulsion of Zinoviev and Kamenev from the CPSU—The wholesale falsification of Soviet history—The perspectives of American Marxism—Leninism and Stalinism—Students and intellectuals in the revolutionary movement—The text of a CBS radio speech from Copenhagen to the United States.
Writings of Leon Trotsky (1932-33)  
(Turkey)

The principal resolution for an international conference of the ILO in Paris—Stalinist provocateurs split the German Left Opposition on the eve of Hitler’s coming to power—The suicide in Berlin of Trotsky’s daughter, Zinaida Volkova—A bank crisis hits the U.S. as Roosevelt becomes president—A proposal that the German Left Opposition stop trying to reform the German Communist Party and seek to build an independent, revolutionary party—A prediction that Austria will be the scene of the next fascist bid for power—A manifesto to a Stalinist-sponsored international antifascist congress in Paris—An exploration of the problems of historical objectivity—Proposals for handling a crisis in the American Left Opposition—A pamphlet on Nazi foreign policy exposing the strategy behind Hitler’s temporary “pacifist” mask—An interview with Georges Simenon—Marxist policy in the field of art and philosophy—Why the Japanese invasion of China will end in disaster—The need for new propaganda tactics in a Europe threatened by fascism—An appeal to the ILO to recognize that the Comintern was finished as a revolutionary force and that a new Marxist International must be built—A visa for France and a farewell to Turkey.

Writings of Leon Trotsky (1933-34)  
(France)

Appeals for a new International sent to a conference in Paris of several centrist, left socialist, and dissident communist groups belonging to neither the Second nor Third Internationals and later known as the London Bureau—Text of the “Declaration of Four,” a document calling for a new International, signed by the ILO and three other groups attending the Paris conference—The Reichstag fire trial in Germany—The ultraright and fascist bid for power in France, and the response of the French workers—An obituary on Anatoly V. Lunacharsky, the former Soviet commissar of education—The class character of the Soviet state and the need for a political revolution to restore workers’ democracy—Christian Rakovsky’s capitulation to Stalin after six years of isolation, pressure, and illness—Tactical problems of party-building in the British, French, and Belgian sections of the International Communist League, successor to the ILO—A detailed analysis of war and the revolutionary struggle against it in the era of imperialism—An explanation of why the French government ordered Trotsky deported in April 1934 (although the order could not be executed until more than a year later).
Writings of Leon Trotsky (1934-35) (France)

A program of action to stop fascism and promote workers' revolution in France—A proposal that the French section of the ICL dissolve and join ("enter") the French Socialist Party to win its leftward-moving members to the Fourth International—Defense of this "entry" proposal after the French section adopted it and joined the Socialist Party—Centrism and the evolution of the French Socialist Party—The distinction between Bonapartism and fascism—What a communist America would look like—The assassination of Sergei Kirov, a Stalinist leader in Leningrad, and the Stalinist efforts to accuse Trotsky of plotting the murder—The trial and conviction of Zinoviev and Kamenev—The workers' state, Thermidor and Bonapartism, a major reappraisal of a historical analogy—Comments on a conference of the London Bureau—A speech prepared for delivery at a French union meeting—Criticisms of a resolution on the national question by the South African section of the ICL—The signing of the May 1935 Franco-Soviet nonaggression pact, when Stalin approved the rearmament of French imperialism and the French CP abandoned opposition to French war preparations—An open letter to the workers of France, written as Trotsky was preparing to leave France for Norway—A letter to the ICL, expressing the opinion that the time had come for its members to prepare to leave the French Socialist Party and orient toward building a new party.

Writings of Leon Trotsky (1935-36) (Norway)

The Open Letter for the Fourth International, bringing up to date the conclusions expressed in the 1933 "Declaration of Four"—The legacy of Rosa Luxemburg—The Italo-Ethiopian conflict—Tactics in Nazi Germany—The seventh and last world congress of the Comintern—Frederick Engels and how he is misrepresented by Soviet hacks—How Stalin defeated the Opposition—Factions and the Fourth International—Tactical questions and splits—Problems of the Independent Labour Party in Britain—Mass purges in the USSR—How to disarm the fascists—The factional fight in the American sections of the ICL and its entry into the American Socialist Party—The new constitution of the USSR—Resolutions adopted by the First International Conference for the Fourth International, held in Paris in July 1936—The sensational August 1936 Moscow trial of sixteen defendants, headed by Zinoviev and Kamenev, and Trotsky's internment by
the Norwegian government under Moscow pressure when he began to expose the trial as a frame-up—Letters to Trygve Lie and the League of Nations—Trotsky’s reconstruction of his speech in a courtroom closed to the public, shortly before the Norwegian government shipped him off on a tanker to Mexico.

Writings of Leon Trotsky (1936-37)  
(Mexico)

The January 1937 Moscow trial of seventeen defendants, headed by Radek and Pyatakov—The need for an international commission of inquiry into the charges made in the Moscow trials—The international commission, chaired by John Dewey, and the hearings in Mexico where it interrogated Trotsky and gave him a chance to present his side—The Nazi trial of the Danzig Trotskyists—Trotsky’s opinion that his cothinkers in the American Socialist Party should begin preparations to build a new revolutionary party—The decapitation of the Red Army through the purges of Marshal Tukhachevsky and other military leaders—The text of an interview with the U.S. Committee on Cultural Relations with Latin America—An analysis of the forces driving toward World War II—Stalinism and Bolshevism, a response to former radicals who were blaming Leninism for the crimes of Stalinism—Contributions to the internal discussions that preceded the formation of the Socialist Workers Party at the end of 1937—The GPU’s assassination in Switzerland of Ignace Reiss after he came out for the Fourth International—The GPU’s kidnapping and assassination in Spain of Erwin Wolf, Trotsky’s former secretary in Norway.

Writings of Leon Trotsky (1937-38)  
(Mexico)

Ninety years of the Communist Manifesto—The Dewey Commission’s findings that the Moscow trials were frame-ups and that Trotsky was not guilty of the charges made against him there—On democratic centralism—Internal polemics on the class character of the USSR—Hue and cry over Kronstadt—The Ludlow amendment to-the U.S. Constitution, requiring a popular referendum before the government could declare war—The GPU’s assassination in Paris of Leon Sedov, Trotsky’s son and a leader of the movement in his own right—The March 1938 Moscow trial of twenty-one defendants, headed by Bukharin and Rykov—Hitler’s seizure of Austria—Transcripts of discussions with SWP leaders on international and programatic problems—A scathing denunciation of The New Republic and The Nation as “priests of
half-truth" because of their stands on the Moscow trials—Defense of the Mexican oil expropriations—Preparations for the founding conference of the Fourth International—For freedom in education—The GPU’s kidnapping and assassination in Paris of Rudolf Klement, administrative secretary in charge of preparing the founding conference—The new stage of the Sino-Japanese War—The significance of the founding conference.

Writings of Leon Trotsky (1938-39) (Mexico)

The September 1938 Munich crisis over Czechoslovakia, which prepared the way for the outbreak of World War II one year later—A prediction that Stalin would seek an alliance with Hitler—Problems of the Latin American revolutionary movement—The nature of a revolutionary youth movement—Answers to the lies of the New York Daily News—The defection of the intellectual ex-radicals—An interview on the coming war—The Eighteenth Congress of the CPSU—Why the Fourth International is still small and isolated—Diego Rivera’s break with the Fourth International—For an independent Soviet Ukraine—Another crisis in the French section—The Bonapartist philosophy of the state—Nationalized industry and workers’ management—A graphic history of Bolshevism—The riddle of the USSR.

Writings of Leon Trotsky (1939-40) (Mexico)

An interview on the coming war with members of the Committee on Cultural Relations with Latin America—India faced with imperialist war—“Progressive paralysis” in the Second International—The Stalin-Hitler pact and the start of World War II—An invitation to testify before the Dies Committee, and why the committee changed its mind—The twin-stars: Hitler-Stalin—Interview on the first 5½ months of the war—Letter to the workers of the USSR—The Tanaka memorial—The manifesto on the war adopted by an emergency conference of the Fourth International—The GPU’s attempt to assassinate Trotsky on May 24, 1940—Transcript of talks with SWP leaders about political and organizational problems in wartime—After fall of France, “we do not change our course”—The Comintern and the GPU, a study of their relations prepared as a deposition in a Mexican court case. Unfinished writings and fragments on dialectics, utilitarianism, the future of Hitler’s armies, China and the Russian revolution, Bonapartism, fascism, and war.
In 1969 Pathfinder Press began publishing the writings of Leon Trotsky in his last exile, 1929-40. Our aim was to print in English everything from this period that had been published in any language, except for books permanently in print (such as The History of the Russian Revolution, My Life, The Revolution Betrayed, and In Defense of Marxism), plus any unpublished material of political interest that we could locate. This led to the publication of several books drawing material from the 1929-40 period and devoted to a single theme—for example, The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany, The Spanish Revolution (1931-39), The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, The Crisis of the French Section (1935-36), and Leon Trotsky on France—and to the Writings of Leon Trotsky series, a twelve-volume collection, chronologically arranged, of letters, articles, pamphlets, statements to the press, and transcripts of conversations not available in other Trotsky books. All together, these contained over 1,250 separate items, amounting to more than 6,000 book pages.

But between 1969, when the Writings series was started, and 1978, when the last of the twelve volumes was published, we came into possession of three hundred additional Trotsky letters and articles that reached us too late to be included in the volumes where they belonged chronologically. These are now published as the Supplement to the twelve volumes. Because of its length, the Supplement is printed in two parts, 1929-33 and 1934-40, each with its own notes and index.

This book is also available in a cloth edition at $25.