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Communist League of America (Opposition)

---Issued by the National Committee---

For Members Only

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THE RESULTS OF THE PLENUM OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

1. The Plenum of the National Committee of the League held on June 10, 11, 12, and 13, 1932 was called together to discuss the disputes which had arisen in the Resident Committee in New York. It established the following facts:

a) On the essential questions of principle and policy of the League, there exist at present no fundamental differences of opinion among the members of the National Committee.

b) On the situation in and development of the International Left Opposition, particularly in Europe, it was shown that in spite of contrary assertions, a unanimous line exists in the Committee enabling the Plenum to present for discussion a single viewpoint.

c) On the situation in the New York branch, the discussions at the Plenum revealed that the charge of an "Opposition Bloc" between the undersigned and the Carter "group" was unfounded.

The last two points were the ones raised in the Resident Committee during the pre-Plenum discussion as questions requiring decision. The fact that the Plenum was able to adopt unanimous resolutions on both questions, on the one hand makes possible a calm and objective discussion of the situation in the League, without exaggerations or factional polemics, and on the other hand, eliminates the danger which threatened us of a sharp factional struggle in the absence of any clearly-defined or fundamental differences of opinion.

2. The friction and lack of collective and efficient collaboration in the Resident Committee did not originate with the disputes over the international questions or the New York branch situation. They have their origin in differences and antagonisms existing in the Committee ~~ever~~ for a long period of time over questions relating to the tempo of the Opposition's development in the United States, the manner of administration at the center, the relations between the Committee and the membership, and the interpretation over the character of the American Opposition. At times, in the past, these differences assumed an extremely acute form, sometimes they appeared only as shadings of opinions or emphasis. The first Plenum of the National Committee in 1930, without adopting any resolutions on the disputes, nevertheless laid the basis for eliminating them as a hindrance to the work of the leading committee. They were further eliminated from an active place on the order of the day by the harmonious collaboration established in the Committee from that time until the convocation of the Second National Conference last fall. The appearance of the whole National Committee with unanimous resolutions was an indication of the progress made towards overcoming the difficulties of the past, and promised an even closer coordination of efforts and sounder political unity in the future.

3. The previously unannounced intervention of com. Cannon against the report on the International Situation in the Left Opposition, unanimously assigned to com. Shachtman and against which no criticism had been levelled when it was delivered at the New York branch, as well as the strenuous opposition offered to the proposal that com. Lewitt be added to the incoming National Committee, created a breach in the collaboration which had existed up to then. In face of this situation ~~xxxxx~~, all the members of the National Committee agreed to grant com. Shachtman's request for a leave of absence. In addition to other reasons that had no relation to the situation in the Committee, he asked to be given the leave in order that the difficult conditions engendered

towards the end of the conference might meanwhile be eliminated, or moderated, and a more effective collaboration be resumed in the Committee.

4. Towards the end of his stay in Europe, com. Shachtman replied to a request from com. Trotsky for his personal views on the situation in the French Ligue with a letter from Paris on Dec. 1, 1931. The views expressed in this letter caused com. Trotsky to request, upon Shachtman's return to New York, that the National Committee declare whether or not it shared these opinions. The Committee of course replied that these views represented com. Shachtman's personal opinion. Comrade Shachtman at that time considered that the situation which was being created in the Committee made it impossible for him to continue in the responsible post of editor which he had occupied up to then.

5. In spite of the assertions and rumors concerning the existence in the League of a Navillist or semi-Navillist or Landauist tendency, which were current at that time in New York, com. Shachtman refused to make a statement of his position in the Committee in order that it might not become the object of misconstruction or dispute in the League. This erroneous silence, however, did not clear up the situation and made it possible for a false interpretation to be put upon his position. His mistake, his actual position with regard to the International Opposition, as well as the question of the letter of Dec. 1, were completely clarified in the statement made by com. Shachtman to the plenum on June 12, 1932. Coms. Abern and Glotzer had already made their positions clear some time before then, when the National Committee was engaged in drafting a resolution on the International question. They submitted their drafts of a resolution because they found themselves unable to agree with the motivation contained in the draft of com. Cannon.

6. The immediate cause for the precipitation of the dispute in the Committee was the discussion which arose within it over the article written in "The Militant" by com. Swaback in reply to that of com. Carter in "Young Spartacus". At the end of a statement on the historical controversy over the Engels' foreword of 1895, com. Shachtman also replied briefly to accusations that had been made against him by coms. Cannon and Swaback in a previous Committee meeting where the Engels dispute was discussed, regarding his alleged attitude towards Naville and Landau. This in turn brought forth a lengthy document by coms. Cannon and Swaback, which dealt not only with the Engels controversy, but primarily with other points: the international question and the New York branch. The dispute over Engels was thereby enlarged to embrace other, more serious and pertinent, questions and charges. In their statement, the comrades declared that their disputes with com. Shachtman began a year or more ago on international questions, and that there has been a "steadily developing divergence over questions which we consider decisive for the future of our movement". The statement was also made that the undersigned had been supporting or encouraging the Carter group in the New York branch. At the same time, com. Cannon advanced the idea that a sharp factional struggle would now break out in the League, requiring a definitive solution and endangering the existence of the various undertakings ("Militant", "Unser Kampf", etc.) to which the League had progressed.

7. The undersigned were therefore compelled to reply to the ac

sertions contained in the document of com. Cannon and Swabeck which we did not and do not consider correct in any respect. In a reply to it, therefore, we outlined that Internal Development and disputes in the League for the past period in order to show that the contentions of coms. Cannon and Swabeck did not correspond to the real situation. While pointing out where the differences had originated, and bringing forward a number of criticisms of the work and conduct of the National Committee, we pointed out that whatever divergences exist on a number of questions today are of an embryonic, and not clearly defined nature, which must not be exaggerated or forced, consequently, we concluded, a factional struggle in the League must be avoided so that the organization shall not be torn by an internal dispute in the absence of any political or principle differences of major importance.

8. On the ground that the differences were so irreconcilable that a Plenum of the National Committee could not solve them, coms. Cannon and Swabeck proposed an immediate discussion in the League and conference to follow directly after it. We proposed an immediate plenum so that the full membership of the National Committee should first have the opportunity to discuss and decide the disputed questions. The affirmative vote of all the out-of-town members finally made possible the holding of such a plenum.

9. At the Plenum, the Committee engaged in a thorough and open discussion of the internal situation, which could not avoid an extreme sharpness at times. At the end of these discussions, it was clear that every possible measure had to be taken to avoid a factional struggle in the organization which would unwarrantedly render it ineffective for the coming period. In view of the disputes, however, it was also decided that the membership shall have adequate opportunity to discuss the situation for a fixed period, at the end of which the resolutions presented by the Plenum should be voted upon and the organization as a whole mobilized for the urgent tasks that confront it. That this is desirable and possible is shown by the fact that the elimination of the sharpest points of contention and the acknowledged absence of deep political differences, have laid the basis for a re-establishment of a functioning collaboration in the leading committee, with the positive results for the League as a whole which this implies.

10. The International Question at the Plenum. After a lengthy discussion on the subject, com. Spector introduced a complete resolution on the international question which represented our point of view. Com. Shachtman, in order to clarify his position on the question and bring all misunderstandings to an end, introduced a statement of his views. Com. Glotzer regarded the resolution of com. Spector more adequate and therefore withdrew his original draft in support of the former. Com. Abern's draft, which com. Spector had originally considered more objective but insufficiently motivated and rounded, was also withdrawn. Both of these withdrawals were made with the aim especially in mind to take the international questions out of the realm of any possible factional conflict and to present the membership and the International Opposition with a single document which would actually reflect the fact that a unanimous view really exists on the fundamental questions of the Left Opposition in the National Committee. For the same reason, all the comrades consented to vote, not only for com. Spector's resolution was then unanimously adopted at the Plenum. This makes it more than ever possible to discuss the international questions and to draw the valuable

lessons from the internal developments in the European Opposition in an entirely objective manner, free from factional considerations and distortions. In this respect, therefore, the Plenum had a most positive value for the coming period of the League.

II. The Carter Question. On this question too there was a lengthy discussion, participated in not only by Committee members, but also by com. Carter who made a statement of his position. The discussion revealed that the assertions originally made concerning the views on this point held by the undersigned did not correspond with their actual standpoint. At the the end of the discussion, com. Shachtman introduced a resolution on the Carter "group", which, while it did not agree entirely with every aspect of the views held on the matter by coms. Cannon and Swabeck, was nevertheless accepted by the latter as a draft basis for a unanimous resolution. The statement made by coms. Carter, Stone and Ray, also served to help clarify this disputed question and made possible its speedy solution in the coming period.

12. Towards the end of the sessions, coms. Cannon and Swabeck demanded of the undersigned the formal withdrawal of the document we had drawn up in reply to their statement of . . . During the Plenum, the statements made in our document were not taken up or replied to by the other comrades. In view of the situation, the comrades declared that unless the document were withdrawn it would involve such a reply on their part and consequent discussion in the League as would throw the organization into a factional struggle. The points raised in our document were presented to the Plenum chiefly as a reply to the erroneous assertions made in the first document of coms. Cannon and Swabeck. In view of the practical agreement that had been reached on such issues as the international question and the New York branch, making possible the elimination of unfounded charges previously made; because of the indications that such a discussion as would follow on the document and the proposed reply would involve a factional battle in the League; and in view of the understanding that the original document of coms. Cannon and Swabeck would not be presented to the membership as a basis for discussion—the undersigned announced their decision to withdraw the document formally from the Committee's records, without however renouncing any of the views expressed in it. This action also, we believe, will have the effect of averting an acute struggle in the League and making the coming discussion an objective one.

13. The Co-optations. We have already expressed our viewpoint on this action of the Plenum in a statement presented to the Committee. The addition of two new members and one candidate to the Committee at the present time, is an action which we cannot support. The additions are not made upon the basis of merit primarily, for there are half a dozen other comrades in the New York branch who take precedence in this respect. It is not in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the Plenum which showed a political harmony and do not warrant a tendentious changing of the composition of the Committee for the purpose of gaining an automatic majority for one side in the Committee against another. It can tend only to perpetuate a division in the Committee instead of breaking it down. While opposing these additions, we at the same time announced our ~~xxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ decision not to make this question, regardless of the vote cast on it, an issue for sharp factional dispute in the League. However, we cannot support it any more than we could support it in the session of the Plenum.

14. The Editorship of "The Militant". In view of the liquidation of disputed issues at the Plenum, com. ABERN thereupon proposed towards the end of the sessions that com. Shachtman resume the post of editor of "The Militant" which he formerly held. All the comrades of the Committee as well as com. Trotsky in his letters here, had previously declared that there were no political objections to com. Shachtman's continuation in the editorial post. Although com. SBERN's motion failed to carry at the Plenum on its first presentation, com. Cannon announced at the same session that, having reconsidered the question, he would also propose that com. Shachtman resume his former position. The Plenum as a whole thereupon favorable upon the proposal. This action, like the resolutions on the international question and the New York branch, helps to remove another source of difference in the Committee and makes possible the consolidation and functioning of the Committee on a collective basis.

15. The Toronto Branch dispute. In the discussion which followed the reports of coms. Krehm and Spector on the situation in the Toronto branch, the Plenum decided to support the political tendency represented by com. Spector and to reject the standpoint of the other section of the Toronto branch. The resolution on this question will make it possible to cement and strengthen the Opposition in Toronto, and throughout Canada, laying the basis for a reunification of the branch and the development towards an increasingly autonomous and eventually independent Opposition section, such as was originally visualized in the constitution of the League.

16. The Engels Controversy. The Plenum took no position on the controversy over Engels' Foreword of 1895. It did, however, make provisions for an objective discussion of the historical and theoretical aspects of the dispute, unmarred by polemical, internal sharpness such as has prevented the League from deriving the maximum of educational value from the controversy.

* * * *

The unavoidable preoccupation of the Plenum with internal disputes did not make it possible to take up a number of important questions of our work in general. This defect can be overcome most speedily and effectively if the discussion which is to follow in the branches is organized in an objective manner, calmly and without acrimony or sharpening of the situation, and if it is dominated by the desire, expressed by all comrades, to prevent the crisis with which we were threatened and which the Plenum took the first important steps to liquidate. Such a discussion will be of benefit to the League, particularly if it comes out of it with serriced ranks and a conviction that the basis exists and must be broadened for a rapid progress of our movement in this country. All developments point to increased possibilities for the growth of the Opposition, for a more energetic intervention in the class struggle for which the past propagandistic work has prepared us. If we act in accordance with the responsibilities that confront us, we will be able to utilize these possibilities to their maximum for the furtherance of our cause.

MARTIN ABERN
ALBERT GLOTZER
MAX SHACHTMAN

REPLY OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO THE MINORITY STATEMENT

The statement of Comrades Abern, Glotzer and Shachtman, which purports to give an account of the proceedings and results of the Plenum, in reality distorts and falsifies them. It attempts to represent the Plenum--which rejected their standpoint on all the essential questions--as a vindication of their rejected position. By this fact they demonstrate that the changes of position which they made at the plenum deserve to be considered merely as diplomatic maneuvers and cannot be accepted in good faith. The real aim of the statement is to circumvent the Plenum, to restore the state of affairs in the Committee to that which obtained before the Plenum, and to hold together a factional grouping in the League as a support for such an attitude.

THE INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS

On this point--the most important issue in dispute--the statement says: "It was shown that, in spite of contrary assertions, a unanimous line exists in the Committee." (Our emphasis).

In this presentation of the question they seek to pass off the most serious disputes in the Committee as nothing at all, as mere "contrary assertions" against comrades who were in full agreement with the standpoint of the Plenum all along. This is ~~not~~ a complete falsification of the whole matter. It is an attempt to deceive the membership in order to cover up comrade Shachtman, who brought his factional war against the National Committee into the open in protest against the position taken on the International question.

Here again, as in the five-months' conflict which preceded the Plenum, comrades Abern and Glotzer are playing the pernicious role of "friends" and "protectors" of comrade Shachtman instead of responsible Communist leaders seeking to clarify policy in order to protect the interests of the movement. In this they only follow the example of comrade Shachtman, who got himself involved in such fatal blunders and brought so much harm to the European sections of the Left Opposition out of personal considerations and sympathies for individuals who obstructed the development of the Opposition by their careerist aims and worthless intrigues. The fatal logic of personal clique formations, is illustrated in every line of the deceitful statement of Shachtman, Abern and Glotzer.

Yes, from a formal standpoint "a unanimous line exists in the Committee," on the international questions. This was shown at the Plenum by the unanimous adoption of the resolution But only after Shachtman, Abern and Glotzer had retreated from their previous standpoint and voted for the original resolution of the National Committee. That is why there is a "unanimous line."

But instead of saying so, openly and honestly, in the manner of Communists who are sincerely attempting to rectify an error and safeguard against its repetition, comrades Shachtman seeks a way out of the difficulty by the simple expedient of denying that there ever was any differences. In this unworthy stratagem he has the assistance and support

of comrades Abern and Glotzer whose "protection" of comrade Shachtman had already led them to co-operate with him in the obstruction of the Committee's intervention on the international questions for five months before the Plenum. By their explanation of the Plenum decisions, their whole conduct there--including their voter for the NC resolution on the international question--stamps itself as a maneuver to gain time and shield themselves from a direct condemnation by the Plenum.

The differences over the international questions, which were quite fundamental ones, have been so completely and so convincingly established in the documents and records of the Committee that no ground is left for doubt as to how matters really stood before the Plenum. In the document of March 28, entitled "International Problems of the Communist League of America (Opposition)", signed by comrades Swabeck and Cannon, the origin and essence of this dispute, which comrade Shachtman has tried to sidetrack with his venomous polemic in defense of Carter, was clearly outlined. Comrades who wish to trace the dispute to its roots are referred to this document which retains its validity in all respects. In order to avoid repetition we shall limit ourselves here to the citation of records and documentary proofs which show how false are the present contentions of comrade Shachtman about mere misunderstandings and "contrary assertions"--to-day nothing of outright "frame-ups"--of which he was the victim.

The first "contrary assertion" in regard to the position of comrade Shachtman on the situation in the European sections was made by comrade Trotsky. And his indictment did not concern itself at all with merely episodic questions, but with the whole course of comrade Shachtman in the International Left Opposition, with his failure to recognize the conflict of tendencies, with his unwillingness to draw any conclusions from the long struggles against the elements of disintegration, of shoddy careerism and intrigue, and his consequent direct and indirect support of these elements. Moreover, the protests of comrade Trotsky were not made once but several times; they were never in the least headed by comrade Shachtman; and on the very day the Plenum opened, a letter from comrade Trotsky returned again, in more emphatic terms than before, to his criticism of the international position of comrade Shachtman.

The conduct of comrade Shachtman since his return from Europe--his contrary votes and his stubborn attempts to sabotage the passing and the publication of the NC resolution on the question, his virulent factional attacks and his attempts to shift the dispute to other, far less important questions--only tended to confirm the accusations of comrade Trotsky, and not to refute them. These letters of comrade Trotsky are submitted as documentary material with this bulletin. Included also is the lengthy letter of comrade Shachtman to comrade Trotsky from Paris on the date of Dec. 1, 1931. Here we quote a few extracts from this material.

Under date of December 25, 1931 comrade Trotsky wrote to the Committee:

"I want to find a common language with him (Shachtman)"

"in the most disputed European questions were never crowned with success. It always appeared to me that comrade Shachtman was, and still is, guided in these questions, which were somewhat more remote from America, more by personal and journalistic sympathies than by fundamental political considerations.

"..You will, however, have to understand that it is not taken very pleasantly here when comrade Shachtman, at the acutest moment, adopts a position which completely counteracts the struggle which the progressive elements of the Opposition have been conducting for a long time and upon the basis of which a certain selection took place, and which appears to be covered by the authority of the American Section." (Our Emphasis)

On December 25, 1931 comrade Trotsky wrote to comrade Shachtman:

"Unfortunately, you have answered nothing to my objections to your conduct in Europe. In the meantime, I had to take a position against you also openly, without, at all events, calling you by name, in a circular to the sections. I must establish regretfully that you have drawn absolutely no conclusions from the bad experience, beginning with the International Conference of April, 1930. The difficult situation in the French Ligue is, to a certain degree, due thanks also to you, for directly or indirectly you always supported those elements which acted like a brake or destructively, like the Naville group. You now transfer your support to Mill-Felix, who have absolutely not stood the test in any regard.

"What you say about the German Opposition sounds like an echo of your old sympathies for Landau, which the German comrades do not want to forget and rightly so. In the struggle which we led here against the accidental burned-out or down-right demoralised elements, you, dear Shachtman were never on our side and those concerned (Rosmer, Naville, Landau and now Mill) always felt themselves covered in a high measure by the American League. I by no means believe that the American League bears the responsibility for it, but I do find it necessary to send a copy of this letter to the American National Committee so that at least in the future our European struggle may be less influenced by your personal connections, sympathies, etc."

Again on Jan. 5, 1932 comrade Trotsky wrote to the Committee

"My concern becomes still more heightened by that fact that comrade Shachtman has not replied to the letters and warnings on my part and on the part of close friends and that comrade Glotzer too, who promised me to call comrade Shachtman to order a little, did not take up this matter by a single word. I had the impression that both of them, Shachtman and Glotzer, stood under the impression of the small Jewish group in Paris and completely overlooked the Opposition movement in Europe.

...of the situation on your part

"is absolutely necessary."

On May 19, 1932 to the National Committee:

"I am very glad you have taken a firm position on the international question..."

On the internal dispute in the American League I do not as yet take a position because I have not 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 in all the international questions; almost without exception. On the other hand, however, it is not easy to assume that one can be correct in the most important national questions, when one is always wrong in the most important international questions."

So much for the vile insinuation that the dispute over the international questions arose as a result of assertions falsely made against comrade Shachtman by other members of the Committee. From the above quotations it is perfectly clear that the opposition to comrade Shachtman's position came most decisively from comrade Trotsky, who was in a far better position to keep track of the International activities and connections of comrade Shachtman than was the National Committee, which he did not find it necessary to consult. But the conflict over the international questions in the National Committee, which comrade Shachtman carried out into the membership on other pretexts, did not by any means rest solely on the letters of comrade Trotsky. There is a clearly established record of actions, votes and abstentions from voting which all go to supplement and confirm the apprehension expressed by comrade Trotsky. Consider this record in contrast to the subterfuge about mere "contrary assertions".

1. On Jan 13, 1932 the National Committee declared that comrade Shachtman's views on the disputes in the European sections had been put forward by himself as an individual without consulting the National Committee and that it took no responsibility for them. Comrade Shachtman abstained from voting, and resigned his position as Editor of the Militant. Comrade Glotzer wrote into the record of the meeting: "In order to clarify my position, particularly because I have returned almost at the same time with comrade Shachtman, I want to state that my views on the international situation are not in accord with his." (Minutes of the NC, Jan 13, 1932)

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2. On February 3 the Committee adopted a motion expressing disagreement with the nomination of Mill as a member of the International Secretariat by the Spanish section. Comrade Shachtman voted against. (Minutes of the NC Feb 3, 1932).

3. On Feb 17 the committee passed a motion to adopt a resolution on the situation in the International Left Opposition, "the resolution draft by comrade Glotzer to be taken as a basis and the outlined points submitted by comrade Cannon be incorporated for the final resolution." Comrade Shachtman voted against. (Minutes of the NC Feb 17, 1932)

4. At the meeting of March 7 comrade Shachtman began his open factional attack against Swabeck and Cannon, on the Carter-Engels dispute, in the presence of New York Branch members, rejecting motions to consider the matter first in a closed session. There he first advanced the idea that the international disputes were a "frame-up" against him. There also he rejected for the second time the proposal that he return to his post as Editor of the Militant. (Minutes of the NC March 7, 1932)

5. At the meeting of March 15 comrade Glotzer refused to accept the combination of his draft resolution and the outlined points of comrade Cannon, which he had previously agreed to. Comrade Abern also submitted a separate draft. Comrade Shachtman abstained on all drafts.

Thus all Resolutions failed of a majority in the resident Committee and a delaying referendum of the full Committee became necessary before the position of the NC could be established. (Minutes of the NC March 15, 1932)

6. On April 18, it was reported at the Committee meeting that the ~~international~~ international resolution had received a majority of the votes in the full committee. Motion carried to send it to the Branches and ask them to proceed with the discussion and record their opinions. Comrade Shachtman abstained. Comrade Glotzer and Abern insisted on sending out their own draft resolutions to the Branches along with the official resolution, an action which was bound to create, and it did create, confusion in the Branches and militated against a mobilization of the membership in support of the official resolution. Motion carried to print the official resolution in the Militant. Comrade Shachtman voted against. (Minutes of the NC, April 18, 1932)

In the face of this record how can anyone seriously maintain that there was no previous objections to the international resolution on the part of comrade Shachtman? And how, likewise can it be denied that comrades Abern and Glotzer, who were "not in accord" with his position, nevertheless assisted him at every step in his opposition and obstruction? In addition, there were many occasions, not recorded in the minutes, when comrade Shachtman frankly stated his disagreement with the resolution, his objection to publishing it in the Militant, his opinion that we were "too hasty" and that we would regret it, etc. As a matter of fact it was not until the last day of the Plenum that comrade Shachtman --after ~~five~~ days of debate--informed us of his agreement with the resolution and his readiness to vote for it.

This correction of opposition can be welcomed, and was welcomed by the Plenum. It motivated the Plenum in refraining from passing a resolution of condemnation, and in its attitude of conciliation with the comrades of the minority. But when it is now maintained that the most important factor in the disruption of the resident Committee--the dispute over the international questions--was not a real dispute but a manufactured one; and that the Plenum only straightened out a misunderstanding, it can only raise the most serious doubts as to the reality of the agreement arrived at. It deprives the organization of any assurance against the repetition of the errors at the next turn in developments. This is precisely

without frankly saying so, and saying why: it leaves the door open for a return to the abandoned policy at any time. We can hardly condemn the Stalinists for this practice with any consistency if we tolerate it in our own ranks.

The attempt of the statement of the minority comrades to explain the change of position by reference to the resolution introduced by Comrade Spector which, they say, "represented our point of view", is no explanation at all. Comrade Spector's resolution follows completely the line of the original NC resolution and does not contradict it at any point. It deals also with some new matters which have arisen since the adoption of the original resolution, and takes the position on them in accordance with its fundamental line. For these reasons it was accepted by the Plenum, not as a substitute, but as "supplementary and further elaboration of the NC resolution already adopted". (Minutes of The Plenum, page 8)

The fault of comrade Shachtman's position on the International questions of the Left Opposition was not incidental or episodic; they concerned his approach to the whole problem and his inability to draw the necessary conclusions from the long process of internal struggle in the European sections. One only needs to read what he has written on the subject to convince himself of this. If it is assumed for the moment that comrade Trotsky may have been mistaken in his judgment as to the position of comrade Shachtman, and that the attitude recorded in the minutes of the committee does not indicate what it seems to indicate, then turn to the lengthy letter of comrade Shachtman to comrade Trotsky under date of Dec 1, 1932, which is included as material in this bulletin. What he said there, as well as what he left unsaid, proves conclusively that his letter has nothing in common with the resolution of the NC.

The NC resolution regards the struggle in the French Ligue as a conflict of tendencies, and takes a firm position in favoring of one and against the others. Comrade Shachtman's letter estimates the matter from the standpoint of episodic disputes of the day, overlooking the conflict of tendencies and giving no support to the more revolutionary current at the moment when international support was the most decisive necessity.

He devotes most of his criticism to the leadership of the French League, shields the Mill-Felix group and minimizes its mistakes, and refrains from criticism of the Neville group altogether. And from this he concludes that the present leadership of the French Ligue should be replaced by a "concentration leadership, in which the Mill-Felix group and the Neville group will participate and prevent the "domination" of the present leading group. If you see the situation in the French Ligue as conflict of tendencies, as the NC resolution estimates it, the proposal of comrade Shachtman has to be regarded as a fundamental error, which would make confusion worse confounded and, in effect, support the faction struggle of the Mill-Felix and Neville group.

The NC resolution says, "The leadership of the German section, which has taken shape in the struggle against Landau and his sterile factional regime, must be given all possible international assistance and support in its tremendous responsibilities and opportunities," Shachtman's letter deprecates the abilities of the German leadership in such a way that it called for the reply of Trotsky: "What you say about the German Opposition sounds like an echo of your old sympathies for Landau, which the German comrades do not want to forget and rightly so."

The NC resolution demands a collective participation in the affairs of the European sections. It says: "In order for the League to be useful in the solution of the International problems of the European sections, and to educate itself in internationalism in the process, it must firmly organize a collective participation. The NC as a whole must familiarize itself with the International questions and bring a collective judgment to bear upon them." The letter of comrade Shachtman, and his general course of action in Europe, regarding which he neither informed nor consulted the Committee--are a shining example of the purely personal and individualistic method of dealing with the affairs of the International Opposition which brought such harmful results.

The vote of comrade Shachtman from the NC resolution can have a real significance only in so far as it represents a complete reversal of the position taken in his letter. As long as he does not see that, as long does not frankly acknowledge it, he gives no assurance against the return to the direct or indirect support of the disintegrating elements at the first superficial change in the situation.

THE NEW YORK BRANCH SITUATION

The attitude of the Plenum toward the situation in the New York branch--the second major question of dispute in the resident Committee--was also decidedly different from the representation made in the statement of the minority comrades, Abern, Shachtman and Glotzer. In this case, as in the case of the International questions, the claim is made that the position of comrade Shachtman and the others had been misrepresented and that the Plenum discussion clarified matters and made possible a common effort for a "speedy solution" of the problem. This can hold good only to the extent that the minority comrades make a radical change in their pre-Plenum attitude and adapt themselves to the resolution on this point worked out by the resident Committee on the instructions of the Plenum. This resolution conforms to the analysis of the problem contained in the statement of comrades Swabeck and Cannon, introduced into the NC on March 28, ("Internal Problems of the Communist League of America, Opposition").

The Carter group, as defined in the resolution, is a crystallization in the New York branch which obstructs its development and menaces its future. The dispute over this question was neither the result of misunderstanding nor of misrepresentation, but rather as in the International dis-

For a long time comrade Shachtman minimized the harmfulness of this group, and in practice gave it direct and indirect support. His ~~first~~ first open attack was made in defence of Carter (See the "Statement by Shachtman" . . . dated March 12). This was the signal for the opening of the faction struggle in the New York branch during which comrades Shachtman, Abern and Glotzer and those closest to them combined forces with the Carter group against us on every issue of dispute in meeting after meeting, both in the branch and in the branch executive committee. At the opening of the Plenum, comrade Swaback demanded as a condition for agreement, a common struggle against the Carter group, as well as a common support of the NC resolution on the International questions. This condition was fully supported by the Plenum and remains unaltered.

On the concluding day of the Plenum comrade Shachtman submitted a statement on the Carter group--and annihilating political characterization, which was acceptable to us and was included in the final resolution on the question of the New York branch (See the NC resolution on "The Situation in the New York Branch"). But when it came to the point of drawing the logical conclusion from such a characterization--to provide in a resolution for a militant political struggle, under the leadership of the NC, to free the branch from this paralyzing influence--comrades Shachtman, Abern and Glotzer drew back and sought to dissolve the whole question in meaningless words that would leave everything where it stood before, and cancel the results of the Plenum discussion. They refused to accept the resolution of the NC on the New York branch.

In this action there is to be seen a striking parallel--and not by accident either--with the drawn out course of ambiguity and evasion we encountered in our efforts to bring the whole Committee to a concrete and unmistakable standpoint on the International questions. And it raises very seriously again the question as to how their final vote for the International resolution of the NC is understood by them and what it will signify in practice. The fight against the elements of disintegration on an International scale, and the corresponding support of the revolutionary groupings in the various sections, is undoubtedly the foremost duty. Comrade Shachtman, according to his vote at the Plenum understands that now, But the European sections are far away. A resolution in regard to them costs nothing and may mean nothing. ~~The~~

The test of one's understanding of the International policy, and his consistency in support of it, arises concretely in connection with the analogous problems at home. The long internal struggle within the European sections has not been a struggle persons. It has been a fight, on the one hand, to make a selection of the genuinely progressive and revolutionary elements in the International Left Opposition, and, on the other hand, to rid the movement of alien tendencies and influences. The refusal to see the problem in this light was at the root of the consistently false judgments of comrade Shachtman in the International field. A real correction of this basic error ought to manifest itself in a ready comprehension of the issues involved in the New York Branch.

The problem there is to consolidate a firm political nucleus, and progressively to transform a heterogeneous body into a Communist organisation. The Carter is the polar grouping which attracts around itself the politically weak and demoralised elements and disorientates the Youth. A resolute fight against it follows inescapably from the premise laid down in the International resolution. The NC resolution on the situation in the New York Branch is the complement to, and the American translation of, the International resolution. Comrade Shachtman's present support of the first will have a weightier significance and will deserve to be taken more seriously when he discontinues his opposition to the second.

By this it is no wise intended to represent the Carter grouping as an exact duplication of this or that European group, nor in general to transplant the concrete struggles of any of the European sections to the American League in a mechanical and artificial way. We have in mind the essence of the problem which is more or less common to all sections of the International Opposition: the consolidation of the organisation around a selection of the progressive and revolutionary elements in the course of a systematic struggle against the "negative and harmful" tendencies of various kinds, each of which have their own peculiar and national characteristics. The thing is to see and understand the specific problem and danger in one's own organisation and to deal with it concretely. Otherwise a hundred general resolutions on the far-away sections are meaningless,

The Carter grouping is not as great a problem nor as great a danger as the groups of Landau-Neville and others proved to be in Europe, nor has it matured all the negative qualities of these groups. And it is not likely to do so. Or, at any rate, it is not likely to do as much harm to the League, although the potentialities are there. But this to be attributed chiefly to the circumstance that for the past period a systematic struggle has been carried on against this group by a part of the NC, despite the interference and protection accorded to the group by comrade Shachtman, and in the course of this struggle a certain selection has already place. The group now stands formally condemned by the Plenum, after a lengthy discussion in which its representative was heard. On that basis the struggle can and must be raised to a higher stage and brought to a successful conclusion. This is the way we understand the question. And that is the way we shall proceed, with or without co-operation of the minority.

The "negative and harmful characteristics" of the Carter group, and the "bad influence" exerted by it "particularly on the younger comrades", which comrade Shachtman explained with sufficient lucidity in his statement to the Plenum on the question, are not exaggerated by the NC, and thereby elevated above their real proportions. No, it is the coddling and shielding of this group, the direct and indirect support given to it under guise of protest against the ~~xxx~~ "clubbing of the youth" that nurtures and strengthens this group and draws out the process of liquidating its influence. It is this attitude, maintained over a period ~~of~~ of time by Shachtman, Abern and C. ~~of~~ the issue and necessitated a direct

intervention by the Plenum of the NC. A united struggle of the entire NC, along the lines of the adopted resolution, would dispose of this obstruction in a comparatively short time, and without convulsions in the branch. The skilfully-shally policy of the minority comrades ~~which would prolong the difficulty, enlarge its scope, spread demoralization in the organization and result in an inevitable convulsion.~~

FOR THE UNITY AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE LEAGUE

The aim of every serious-minded and conscientious Oppositionist must be the consolidation of our organization and the preservation of its unity for the great tasks that lie before us. This is the policy and the aim of the National Committee which has been demonstrated in practice throughout the nearly four years of the existence of the American Opposition. The leadership has been successful up till now in maintaining the unity of the organization because it has understood that the foundation for unity can be only be a common policy on the most important questions and a resolute struggle against divergences from it. The various attempts at disruption which we have seen (Fox, Weisbord, Malkin, etc.) were not frustrated by pacifism and personal diplomacy and pious appeal for peace at any price, but by uncompromising struggle against the elements of disintegration and the false conceptions they advanced. Our unity was won and confirmed in struggle, and so it will always be.

They are wrong who see in the present situation, which threatens a faction struggle in the League, a problem of persons and personal relations which may be solved by diplomacy and by concessions here and there. We understand that personal relations are an important, but nevertheless a secondary question. That is why the Plenum, which was summoned together to deal with the conflict in the resident committee, yielded absolutely nothing from the policy which it considered correct and necessary and then went to every reasonable length toward conciliation to the extent that its political demands were met. Every sign of a reawakening of the conflict in the membership discussion is due entirely and exclusively to the attempt of the minority to negate the conclusions of the Plenum and to return to the positions they abandoned there. A conciliation on such a basis would be an artificial one, and would only prepare the ground for deeper convulsions later on.

The statement of Shachtman, Ahern, and Glotzer speaks a great deal about unity and the avoidance of faction struggle, but the contentions in the document, and their actions since the Plenum, speak a different language. And it is the actions which are most important and decisive, for they have a logic beyond the control of protestations and even of intentions. It is true that the tone of the new statement is more polite than the one heard in the polemics before and at the Plenum. The foul accusations of "fram-up", with which comrade Shachtman poisoned the atmosphere of the committee a short while ago, the attempt to sidetrack the important issues in favor of personal, outlived and secondary questions, are ~~not~~

moderated for the membership discussion into sly hints to the same effect. But the basic position which he maintained before which brought about the conflict, is restated in the document. The content is there, and it is not made more acceptable by the moderated form in which it is presented.

In reality the statement does not speak for a liquidation of the faction struggle, but for the postponement of it. The statement is the program for a truce, during which the worthless "issues" which they withdrew from the Plenum will be kept alive in a concealed form and a faction grouping held together on that basis which would be a standing menace to the unity of the League. If the membership of the League allows itself to be deceived by such a stratagem, if it seeks to purchase a momentary peace on such a basis, it will only condemn the League to a long period of demoralization which will lead the way to a real convulsion. The unity of the League must be ~~re-~~ asserted in the firm rejection of this attempt to circumvent the actions of the Plenum.

The unity of a Communist organisation is not realized by universal agreement, but by an organisational process, by discussion and decision and eventually by the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democratic centralism signifies not only discussion, but also decision. The idea that decisions of the organisation can be ignored, that endless discussion can proceed as though nothing had happened, has nothing in common with the Communist principle of organisation. A Plenum of the National Committee is a highly important and significant affair. The League can allow it to be ignored only at the peril of its own disintegration. Yet that is precisely what the statement of Abern, Glotzer and Shachtman sets out to do. The attitude of the Plenum did not suit them--therefore they appeal against it. The statement even goes so far as to polemicise against the decision of the National Conference on the composition of the NC. They hint at all kinds of "differences" which they did not ask the Plenum to decide. And all the time they protest that they do not want a factional struggle in the League and do not consider a conference necessary. How can a Communist organisation tolerate such an attitude?

If a conference is not needed, and not demanded, then it is self-evident that the unity of the organisation has to rest on the decision of the Plenum. One cannot face both ways on this question. The appeal of the minority against the Plenum--the decision of which are concretized and guaranteed by the cooptations--is an appeal to renege the National Committee, to deprive it of the necessary, to make it dependent in its decisions on the agreement of the minority, and thereby to paralyze its work. To combine such an understanding with pious expressions about the desire for unity in the organisation and a "functioning collaboration in the leading committee"--is a cynical mockery. It is factionalism in the worst possible form. The League must speak categorically against it.

For or against the decisions of the Plenum--that is the way the minority puts the question in its statement. The

National Committee has no choice but to accept it, and to call upon the membership to reinforce the Plenum decisions with their approval. All the material is submitted for the discussion. The questions must be gone into deeply. They must be firmly and deliberately decided. The greatest menace to the organization will come from any sort of ambiguity, from any tendency to leave the questions undecided. From that demoralization would inevitably follow. Against that we appeal to the comrades for the firm consolidation of the unity of the League, for the establishment of discipline and the concentration of the membership on the new program of activity, on the basis of the Plenum decisions and under the leadership of the National Committee.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE
COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF AMERICA (OPPOSITION)

Program of Activities for the Communist League of America (Opp.)

The National Committee affirms its perspective of growth for the Left Opposition, and is convinced that the next period offers exceptional opportunities. This idea reinforced by the fact that at the present moment we stand before great decisive historical turns, particularly in the general world situation, with its rapidly edeveloping revolutionary potentialities. The contradictions of the Centrist bureaucracy of the various parties, caught in a vise of their own blunders, unable to lead in a forward direction, are preparing the ground for new layers of reinforcement to the Left Opposition.

These contradictions are becoming ever more apparent within the American Communist movement. In the deep economic crisis the party leadership fails to adopt the policies which will secure the party's advance commensurate with the possibilities available. The criticisms which we have made are being confirmed by the developments compelling the party bureaucrats to initiate now "turns" though always attempting to cover up their past mistakes. This increases the favorable possibilities for the League. We must prepare to take advantage of this situation, and as a beginning take the following measures:

1--From the Plenum it is necessary that we proceed immediately to consolidate our ranks in such a manner that we will be able to cope with the work which lies ahead of us. Our course is the one of drawing closer to the Party. At the same time we must aim at a more systematic intervention in the class struggle. Our past concentration of propaganda work and the education of our cadres has prepared for such a step. Every member must assume definite obligations and carry them out. The League must establish a firm discipline. Our next advance should be directed toward the organisational strengthening of our position all along the line.

2--Systematic efforts should first of all be made to develop organised Left Opposition fractions within the Party. Contacts are already available in New York, Philadelphia and Chicago. This offers a good starting point. We should therefore give these comrades definite work to perform and definite immediate objectives to be ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ realised step by step, and in and ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ these objectives.

proceed from the needs of the movement and are to be so formulated that they correspond ~~in the most practical manner~~ in the most practical manner with the position and the Party work engaged in by the comrades so as to enable them in the best possible way to fight for the Left Opposition views.

3--Our members, as far as practicable, should all become members of the Party auxiliaries and mass organisations--the I.L.D., the Unemployment movement, the T.U.U.L. and trade union left wing groups, etc.--all to enter by careful selection and preparation. Within these organisations our members should co-operate in every detail with the Left Opposition fractions in the Party, help them in their work and development, become active but careful propagandists for the Left Oppositions views and fight for the right of participation by ~~our~~ our units in all of the activities of the general movement in an organised manner. They should keep organised contact with non-party Communist elements within these organisations who are sympathetic to our views and co-ordinate their efforts in our behalf.

4--Our press must bare more of the imprint of collective efforts reflect more the life of the organisation and the problems of the American movement as a whole. We should set as a real aim of all members and sympathizers to utilize every means possible to extend and build the press and literature distribution by systematically worked out campaigns. We propose to make immediate assignments for the writing and publication and publication of several low priced pamphlets dealing with current questions of the working class movement.

5--We aim to obtain a new headquarters for the National center and to organize a central workers' school for the coming fall and winter months. To realize this aim we propose to begin a campaign, without delay, for the establishment of a "New Headquarters and School Fund". We must select an effective administration for the school to ensure a well organized basis for the undertaking and its financial income, with the political direction remaining in the hand of the NC. All of the NC members are to be available and to prepare to assume the duties of instruction. As a beginning the curriculum should include courses in: The theories of Marxism, History of the Communist International, the Communist Party and the labor movement, as well as the platform and views of the Left Opposition. Together with this school we must create a national educational department with one NC member in charge. One of the duties of this department is to work out schedules and programs of educational activities for the League branches and sympathetic workers' groups.

6--Our youth movement is yet in an extremely weak stage, necessitating particular organisational attention for the immediate future. We should ~~remember~~ bear in mind that our youth movement has a field within the broad layers of the working class youth in which the Y.C.L. is much less of a factor than the Party is within the general working class movement. Our National Youth Committee must therefore particularly concentrate its efforts for expansion in an organisational direction, for the building of Spartacus Youth Clubs, first of all in such cities, where we have League branches and where full assistance can be given by the League. At the same time, this offers also

an opportunity to utilize the members of the Spartacus Youth Clubs for activities within the Y.C.L. and its youth auxiliaries. The development of Left Opposition youth fractions within the Y.C.L. can thus go hand in hand with these general activities. But to make progress possible in this general work it is necessary that the Young Spartacus, in its character, becomes more of an elementary class struggle youth paper. This we should set as our immediate aim.

7--Unser Kampf has now been in existence for several months and gained a considerable circle of sympathetic contacts among Jewish workers. But its organizational foundation needs to be laid through the building of the Unser Kampf Clubs. Such should be the objective for expansion in this field for the coming period. We propose to assign one member of the NC to work with our National Jewish fraction committee especially to carry out the aims of securing an organized foundation for Unser Kampf.

8 8--To take advantage of the excellent possibilities at hand and to strengthen the League organizationally needs organizers. While our financial means are limited and therefore also imposing limitations upon the size of our working staff it is nevertheless possible to take some elementary steps in more utilization of voluntary field organizers. Careful selection must be made amongst comrades who can be available in this sense as well as careful selection of territory in which they are to work. As examples of the latter where such work can obtain results, we mention the Pittsburg, Youngstown and Cleveland territory, Boston Duluth and others. We also have some good contacts in the West, where League units have not as yet been organized. Real attention to these contacts will make possible of actual organization in that section that much sooner.

9--This ~~program~~ program contains elementary points which are realizable in the coming period. Therefore to secure speedy and prompt action and to properly strengthen the League for its immediate tasks the NC will assume the responsibility of a systematic campaign, of constant following up by explanations and directions to the units, of constant attention to fully realize elementary steps here proposed.

National Committee

Communist League of America (Opposition)

DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL FOR DISCUSSION.

(We are submitting herewith a series of letters and excerpts of letters from Comrade Trotsky to the National Committee as well as letters to Comrade Trotsky)

1 - Excerpts of letter from Trotsky to Shachtman under date of May 23, 1931.

Together with Comrade Frankel, we are very glad that you have halfway trespassed 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 find that I did want to bring about or hasten this split? And if not, what practical steps did you propose, in order 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 may--I say may--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 nurtured 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 the Overstaaten, and, as 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 Ligue 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 self understood that decisions must be arrived at according to the principle 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 ~~Jimmy~~ Van overstraten is a tendency--naturally an unfortunate one. But what shall we say of the Lahnruft that 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 for China, even for 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 with the foot, in order to uncover the Gentlemen concerned and represent them in Natura.

(Signed) Your L. Trotsky

2-Letter from Shactman to Trotsky under date of Dec. 1, 1931 (in full).

PARIS, December 1, 1931.

Dear Comrade Trotsky:-

I have just returned from a two weeks' sojourn in Spain, equally divided between Madrid and Barcelona. From the point of view of the Opposition, I find that its organizational strength and influence are not only good, but actually increasing, despite the fact that since the recent lost strikes led by the anarchists and the syndicalists, there has set in a certain depression in the ranks of the workers. Together with comrade Lacroix, I took a sort of a "Census" of the state of the organization, which I later verified by reading through all the correspondence which the E. C. had received for the last three months or so. From the report which I shall immediately draw up for the International Secretariat, you will be able to get a more complete picture of our Spanish section and the possibilities for growth which it has before it.

The most unfortunate aspect of the situation at the present moment is the loss of the weekly periodical, El Soviet. I made every attempt to convince the comrades of the urgency of recommencing its publication, but I must confess that their willingness is as great as that of anybody else, they were nevertheless able to draw up a financial statement of income and expenditures which demonstrated that in order to issue the weekly paper once more, and to have a full-time paid secretary -- which is at least as important--it is necessary that they have financial aid from abroad to the extent of some 1,300 pesetas per month for the coming 4-5-6 months. It is time that the Secretariat, upon the basis of pledges made by com. Molinier, has assured them that this sum will be forthcoming for the weekly and for the secretary. But the comrades--both in Madrid and Barcelona-- have gathered such a bad impression of the promises of com. Molinier (even if half of them were based on the promises made by you) and they have developed such a sharp antagonism against him, that they insisted that they would not begin to issue the paper again if the pledges for financial aid were based upon promises made by Molinier. In such a case, it is of course very difficult to verify the impression made upon comrades. The atmosphere in the French Ligue is so tainted today -- that it is almost impossible to take the word of a comrade. No two comrades have the same report to deliver about any single event of any single section. The Spanish comrades recounted to me a whole series of actions taken by Molinier. The latter, in turn, presents the affair in a totally different light. Since there are practical

question of the word, or the impression, of one comrade against those of another. On such a basis, it is impossible to form a judgement. In any case, I am convinced that with all due credit and respect for the good intentions that animated com. Molinier while he was at work in Spain, he conducted himself in such a manner as succeeded in antagonizing all the comrades there. In this sense, many of the arguments which you present in your recent letter to com. Nin (copy of which was sent me) are not entirely true. I have no doubt that, confronted with the bitterness of a retreat, the comrades may have the tendency to seek somebody upon whom to fix the blame -- and they find Molinier. But their hostility towards him does not appear to me to be founded upon that alone. I need hardly add that I do not share the exaggerated emphasis that the Spanish comrades place upon the "work of Molinier", and I am quite convinced that whatever com. Molinier did while in Spain was done with the intention of giving whatever aid possible to the advancement of our movement there.

Now however, whatever damage has been done, is done. The greatest need for the Spanish Opposition remains the weekly paper and a secretary who can give all his time to the mountain of work that is to be accomplished there. In this direction, all the comrades must exert their efforts. I am sure that if the Spanish comrades can be made to feel that the deficit a weekly would involve will be covered -- so that another retreat in the immediate future is avoided -- they will proceed with the work speedily and successfully. The organization in Spain, with all its weaknesses, is in relatively excellent condition. At the head of it stands a group of really capable revolutionists. On all the important political questions there is a gratifying solidarity among them; the difference on various questions which existed between the Executive Committee and com. Nin, are now eliminated to all intents and purposes. If this solidarity of the leading cadre can be preserved, the prospects for progress are almost limitless. But I do not want to continue here upon a subject with which I will deal more extensively in my report.

Now a few words, the results of previous information which I gained from afar -- reading the documents in New York -- and the preliminary observations of the situation which I have made on the spot concerning questions other than the Spanish.

THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT: Comrade Fraenkel has written to me: "Wir glauben es ist unbedingt noetig, dass Du bei Deinem Pariser Aufenthalt den festgefahrenen Karren des Sekretariats wieder flott machst." Unfortunately, this is now no longer possible. Rather, it would be better -- I say this after serious reflection -- to sink this "festgefahrenen Karren" formally, because it now has, and can have little else, but, a fictitious existence. Why should the present secretariat be liquidated? 1. Because it no longer has any authority in the ranks of the international Left Opposition. Regardless of any irony about the parliamentarism of its "vertrauensvotum" request, the fact remains that for a series of reasons, the principal European sections have withdrawn their "vertrauen" from the present secretariat, and its views and deeds have no authority with them. I do not now argue about the why, I merely present the fact. The Russian section has practically

broken off its connections with the I. S. The German section Reichsleitung has done practically the same. The French E. C. conducts a campaign against the secretariat and dominates it in general. Through knowledge of this situation, the Spanish section is now in conflict with the Secretariat and evidently does not take much stock in its decisions, feeling that it has little if any authority in these matters. Under such conditions-regardless (for the moment) of what brought them about - the secretariat is largely a fictitious institution. 2. For its material existence the Secretariat depends almost entirely upon the French Ligue, or, to put it less vaguely, upon com. Molinier. Between the latter and the secretary of the I.S. (Mill), there is a violent and open war. It is all the sections which should furnish the material support which makes a minimum of existence possible for an I.S.; unfortunately, the sections do not fulfill this obligation. What com. Fraenkel correctly describes as the dependence of I.S. on the Ligue, making it difficult, if not impossible, for the I.S. to intervene in the French situation in the name of the International Opposition. The responsible leadership of the Ligue speaks of the secretary of the SI as a Menshevik, as a bureaucrat, etc. (in general, terms of this sort are lightly hurled about on all sides in the Ligue), which does not make matters any better. 3. The proposal to confine the work of SI to that of an arbeitsorgan is entirely correct if it is conceived in the sense that the SI should conduct its current and general work much better than up to now. I realize its weaknesses very keenly, as a secretariat collectively and as individual members of the secretariat. But if the proposal is conceived in the sense of reducing the SI to a purely technical body, I am opposed to it. Better to eliminate it entirely than to rob it of its centralizing political character which the Bordiguists have proposed. Every leadership in the labor movement starts with a certain amount of "authority" invested arbitrarily, so to speak, in it in advance. If it fails to measure up to the authority invested in it, it should be removed. 4. The proposal for a sub secretariat in Berlin, which will have charge of the U.S.S.R., Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary, Greece, etc., is not a practical one, to my mind. The CI never had good experience with its "sub-secretariat" outside of Moscow, and the CI possessed far greater resources for centralizing its work than we. In addition I must avow frankly that the Berlin comrades have not demonstrated, in practice in our German section, such a superiority in organizing ability over the ability (and it is indeed feeble, as everybody must admit) manifested by the Paris comrades. We are not yet so great an organization that we need a division of the secretariat in to two parts for the countries of Europe.

These are some of the reasons which animate me to believe that the present secretariat should be dissolved. I have reached this opinion with a certain amount of regret, because I believe that the secretariat, as it is, could be very useful for the movement, and that it has in the past been of such use. Despite the criticisms, the just ones, and the injust ones, directed at comrade Mill, I believe that he has capacities which the International Opposition could well afford to utilize in his present position as secretary. even with my casual knowledge of the recent developments in the situation, I have no doubt that he has committed mistakes. But they are not worse than some mistakes committed by some of the comrades who are most sharply opposed to him, who have not had much better results with the organisms which they guide than he has had

with the organism he directs. I find him a devoted, honest and loyal comrade, and the Opposition would be making a mistake if it drove him out of the work he has been doing, despite its shortcomings and its own defects. Unfortunately many steps have been taken which it will be very difficult to retrace. I admit readily that I do not as yet have any proposal to make for the substitution of the present secretariat. That requires further reflection and I have not yet made up my mind on the matter. But this much I do think: as at present constituted and in the present circumambience in the Opposition, the present IS is largely a fictitious institution. We should not support or nourish fictions.

THE SITUATION IN THE FRENCH LIGUE: With a number of objective circumstances strongly in favor of our development here, the Ligue continues to decline. I cannot too strongly express my dissatisfaction with the situation in the Ligue. The internal struggle, the quarrels, the whole atmosphere of the internal life of the opposition in France are so poisoned that the whole problem of finding a way out becomes almost hopelessly obscured. Unless there is a radical change in the situation, I believe that one can have nothing but a pessimistic outlook for the immediate future.

The personal relations between the various comrades do not improve by a single iota, on the contrary, they become worse every day. It is impossible to conduct any objective discussion. No sooner does a discussion commence than it immediately degenerates into a disgraceful personal quarrel during which the most violent epithets, the most irresponsible and light-minded accusations are hurled about the room. In the United States, we have had a vast experience in factional struggles, good and bad, principled and unprincipled, groups and cliques. But never, for the more than ten years that I can remember, has there been such an atmosphere in the American party as there is today in the French Ligue. I do not even know of "French" precedent for such an atmosphere. The closest analogy I can find for it are the violent factional quarrels and fights in the post-revolutionary Hungarian emigration, in the battles between Kuhn, Landauer, Pepper, Rudas, etc. etc. If I may borrow a term from Smeral, the Ligue is being "Oesstreichisiert". I do not, ~~see~~ moreover, see clearly a sufficiently principled or political foundation for the internal struggles and for the alignment of forces, and certainly not for the violence with which the disputes are conducted.

Still further complicating the situation is the fact that the present leadership of the Ligue (coms. Molinier and Frank) have lost the bulk of their support in the ranks of the organization. In the already greatly reduced ranks of the Paris Region, for example - and Paris is practically the only functioning unit of the Ligue in all of France - we have the impossible situation where a great majority of the membership is actively opposed to the leadership. Even the most correct leadership cannot exist, at least in the Left Opposition movement, when it has arrayed against it the clear majority of the membership. And it is plain to me that the present leadership is far from the most correct. What must inevitably happen under such circumstances? Either the leadership gains or regains for itself a majority (so that it can function smoothly), or else the membership gains or regains for itself a leadership. I can think of no other alternative.

I have deliberately refrained from intervening personally in the Ligue, from speaking at a single one of the meetings, or even from communicating my point of view wholly to any of the comrades. It is impossible to do this under the circumstances. I know that anything I say publicly in the Ligue at the present moment would be the subject for immediate distortion by one side or the other. It has reached a point here where the essence of a question is rarely discussed; the thing that serves as the axis for every dispute appears to be a word here or a word there, a sentence here or a sentence there, more frequently than not torn out of its context. Besides, I tell you frankly that there is no possibility of settling the question - that is the point it has already reached - without your direct intervention.

What "solution" do the comrades here present? At the last meeting of the EC a resolution was presented by coms. Molinier, Trient and Marc (supported with reservations by Frank) which declared that following a discussion which is to be opened immediately in the Ligue, a split should take place. As the authors of the resolution explain, it is their intention to split the Ligue into two parts: themselves and their adherents, and the "liquidators", i.e., the supporters of the so-called Jewish group, which forms the majority of the Paris region. What does this step signify? In practice, it means the expulsion from the Ligue of a majority of its active effectives. Even such a radical step might be taken under discussion if there were serious enough political basis for it, i.e., if the Jewish group were really composed of well defined liquidators. But this has yet to be proved; it has not been proved to my satisfaction, at least. Is it true that among some of the Jewish comrades there is a tendency to emphasize or even to exaggerate the revolutionary possibilities of Centrism? I think it is true. I think, also, that the Jewish comrades have committed more than one blunder (for instance, their letter to Rosmer). But it is also true that even if their position on this or that question is wrong, they are the type of comrade whom a wise leadership should be able to convince. At bottom, they are a splendid type of comrade, revolutionists, devoted for a long time to the cause of the Opposition, and people who are capable of taking a position and fighting for

it intelligently. It is possible that under artificial pressure, under incitement under provocations, they may slowly and even unconsciously be driven to a liquidationist position. The history of the post-Lenin period in the CI is replete with such cases, where excellent revolutionists were driven out of the movement and even into the camps of the enemy by constant provocations. But we in the Marxian wing should be careful that we do nothing that would start such a system in our own ranks. That is not our system. It is the system of Zinoviev, of Stalin. In France, it was the system of the Trient-Girault regime. Consciously or not (that is not the important question at the moment), Trient is transferring this system into the Ligue in the fight against the Jewish group. It is not by chance that he is the inspirer of the "splitting declaration", that he and his old time supporter Marc, are the majority of the signatories to it. That is not astonishing. But why should a com. like Molinier become a party to such a step?

If it proves to be necessary, I am not at all against a split. But, I repeat, it must be conducted upon clearly defined political divergences, so that everybody understands the reason and necessity for the split. Otherwise the present confusion will be worse confounded. And if we proceed from this point of view, I do not believe that it can be said that the divergences are clearly enough defined, or deep-going enough to warrant a split in the sense envisaged by the "declaration" of Molinier-Trient-Marc. What does it mean? The kernel of the leadership (com. Molinier) is prepared to split with the Jewish group and to maintain a unity with com. Trient? I do not understand the political logic, the justification for such a step. Are the complaints against the inactivity of some of the Jewish comrades sufficient ground for labelling them "liquidators" so lightly, a label applied originally and principally by com. Trient whose political anschaung would really liquidate the Opposition? (A propos, how does it happen that com. Trient is elected to the C.E. the same day that he gives his adhesion to the Ligue?) Is the present leadership of the Ligue so correct in its political estimations that it can afford to discard a whole group of comrades? I am not at all sure that this is so! On some points, it is event the contrary. For example: on the trade union question, the comrades of the Jewish group (resolution of Felix) is, I find much more correct with regard to the situation created by Jouhaux's resolution at Japy than the position of Trient-Molinier, which envisages a speedy liquidation of the CGTU and a "reentree en bloc" into the CGT, a position very much analogous and - in France - less justified than the position of the Lovestone group in the United States.

My principal point in all these remarks is this: none of the groups in the Ligue has such a preponderatingly superior political position on the disputed questions, none of them is so free from blunders, as to justify a secession, or to justify an absolute monopoly of the leadership by any single group. I appreciate the capacities and value of com. Molinier at their real worth without exaggerations. But I do not believe he had given a sufficient display of knowing the art leadership. Only a short time ago, he had with him the clear majority of the Ligue membership. Now he has lost it, and lost it among those comrades who made it possible to institute a new leadership in the Ligue. That is no credit, I must say, to com. Molinier's direction. The same may be said about the National Conference of the Ligue, which was very, very bad. The conference was a victory for the Bordiguists, not for the Opposition. The Bordiguists monopolized the whole political part of the conference. The conference ended with an organizational victory for the group of com. Molinier, but the victory was gained at the same time that the conference failed to adopt a single important text: neither the political theses nor the trade union theses were even discussed. In this respect, is there a real difference between the French national conference and the national conference organized in 1930 by Landau? You once wrote to me that one must not always look at the programs and the platforms, but one should "auf die finger schauen". You wrote this concerning Landau and Co., and it proved to be correct. Does a conference organized in France, which gives the same results as Landau's conference, deserve greater credit?

I have spoken about most of these questions personally with com. Molinier and Frank. I did not find agreement with them on the

matter. On the question of Trient, it is true, com. Frank declared himself to be rather of my opinion. As I said above, I have not intervened in the French situation because of the terrible atmosphere which makes an objective discussion impossible at the moment. But I do have certain opinions, not on all the questions, but on some of the most important ones. The main problem, as I see it, is to constitute a leadership in France which not only has a generally correct line, but which has the confidence of the comrades, that is, which is a position to have its decisions carried out in the work and life of the Ligue. At present, this is not so. I do not propose to turn the leadership of the Ligue over into the hands of a "direction Naville", or a "direction groupe juif", or a "direction Molinier". I believe that the only practical solution under the circumstances is a sort of "concentration". Not an artificial "parliamentary coalition", but a working committee in which no group dominates the E. C. From what I can gather of the sentiments of the membership (at least in the Paris Region), this represents what they feel is best for the Ligue. Allow me, further, to say that this step would have been taken some time ago by the regular channels of democratic procedure if it were not for the fact that most of the comrades feel that you, com. Trotsky, are intransigently partisan of a "direction Molinier" and the comrades do not want to engage in an open conflict with you. These are the facts and I feel that no leadership in the Opposition can maintain itself successfully on such a basis.

This letter is already over-long. It is sketchy, an outline, and could undoubtedly be reformulated in many respects. But the essential points are there. Com. Molinier is leaving for Kadikoy and you will of course discuss the question. I am anxious to learn the results; also ~~write~~ your views on my remarks above. I will deal with other matters (England-thanks for the material you sent-) in a letter to follow.

Warmest salutations to you and the other comrades,

Max Shachtman (Signed)

3.- Letter from Trotsky to National Committee under date of Dec. 25, 1931 (in full).

Kadikoy, December 25, 1931.

To the National Committee of Communist League of America, N.Y.

Dear Comrades:

In a few days you will receive a circular from me to the National sections which speaks of our successes and failures. In this letter, we also deal with an American comrade who delivered a scandalous report on Russia. This American is Miller. It was reported to me as if he had had a recommendation from an American Opposition comrade. I consider this out of the question and would be very glad if you wipe out this misunderstanding.

In my letter, I also had to take a position against our friend Shachtman. The reasons for this will be clear to you from the enclosed copy of my letter to comrade Shachtman himself. My efforts to find a common language with him in the most disputed European questions were never crowned with success. It always appeared to me that Comrade Shachtman was and still is guided in these questions which were somewhat more remote from America, more by personal and journalistic sympathies, than by fundamental political considerations.

I understand very well that from America it is not easy for you immediately to understand the internal European struggles in the Opposition and to take a precise position on them. Nor can anybody demand it of you. You will, however, have to understand that it is not taken very pleasantly here when comrade Shachtman at the acutest moments, adopts a position which completely counteracts the struggle which the progressive elements of the Opposition have been conducting for a long time and upon the basis of which a certain selection took place, and which appears to be covered by the authority of the American section. It naturally does not occur to me to deprive comrade Shachtman of the right to intervene in the European ~~xxxxxx~~ affairs as much as wants, according to his standpoint or his disposition. But yet it must be clear in this connection that it is only a question of one of the leading American comrades, but not of the American League as an organization.

Do not take these considerations in bad part, they are dictated by the interests of the cause.

With best Communist greetings.
Yours, L. TROTSKY.

4.- Excerpts of letter from Trotsky to Shachtman under date of Dec. 25, 1931.

Kadikoy, December 25, 1931

Dear comrade Shachtman:

It's a good thing that at least a small beginning has been made in England. Let us hope that you will have more luck than Naville, who messed around the English question for more than a year without having made the slightest headway, as moreover, also in every field.

Unfortunately, you have answered nothing to my objections to your conduct in Europe. In the meantime, I had to take a position against you also openly, without, at all events, calling you by name, in a circular to the sections. I must establish regretfully that you have drawn absolutely no conclusions from the bad experience, beginning with the international conference of April, 1930. The difficult situation in the French Ligne is, to a certain degree, due thanks also to you, for directly or indirectly you always supported those elements which acted like a brake or destructively, like the Naville group. You now transfer your support to Mill-Polix, who have absolutely not stood the test in

any regard. At one time you published in the Militant (so did the Verite!) two scandalous correspondences by Mill from Spain which misled the whole International Opposition. These correspondences demonstrated that Mill was incapable of finding his way correctly in the fundamental political questions. After a year of struggle against Rosmer and Naville he suddenly began to fasten himself on to them. In your letter you half-cooly call this stupid. For a fifteen year old boy that might still hold. But for the full-time secretary of the International Secretariat one must seek sharper and more political designations.

Your conduct in Spain also, as is evident from your letter, was false. The Spanish comrades, especially Nin, committed all imaginable mistakes wasted very much time and would now like to find a scapegoat for their own weaknesses and mistakes. Lacroix, who, as it is maintained, has very good qualities, is absolutely undisciplined in his thoughts and actions and to support him in his outbursts is a crime.

What you say about the German Opposition sound like an echo of your old sympathies for Landau, which the German comrades do not want to forget and rightly so. In the struggle which we led here against the accidental, burned-out or downright demoralized elements, you, dear Shachtman, were never on our side and those concerned (Rosmer, Naville, Landau and now Mill) always felt themselves covered in high measure by the American League. I by no means believe that the American League bears the responsibility for it, but I do find it necessary to send the copy of this letter to the American National Committee so that at least in the future our European struggle may be less influenced by your personal connection, sympathies, etc.

5.- Letter from Trotsky to the National Committee under date of Jan. 5, 1932. (in full)

Kadikoy, Jan. 5, 1932

To the C. C. of the C.P.A. --N.Y.

Dear Comrades:

In No. 36 of the Militant which has just arrived here. I find an article from France on the C.G.T.U. Congress, signed by Felix. It is quite possible that the article found a place in the paper purely by accident without the editorial board having had the possibility to distinguish the fine points and the insinuations from far off. I fear, however--I must say this quite openly--that the article appeared through the medium of Comrade Shachtman. If I am mistaken, so much the better. If not, then it complicated the matter to the highest degree. The article is directed against the leading group of the French Ligue, not openly and clearly, but as said through insinuations and pin-pricks. This fits in completely with the spirit of the author. Insofar as I was able to observe comrade Felix, at first with Paz, where he played the hotspur against us, then in the Ligue, where he changed his positions but not in the manner of the

struggle which unfortunately is not the best, it appears to me that he represents a species like Weisbord, above all in the complete sterility of his criticism, in its spuriousness, its constant personal accentuation, etc.

Comrade Felix has his own views on the trade union question in France which run counter to the official policy of the Ligue. Naturally, the Militant, like every paper, has the right to allow the views of the minority also to receive expression. But this must take place quite openly and clearly. Felix should then have said quite openly against which tendency in the Ligue he is polemizing, in the name of a definite minority. I doubt if this was indicated. It would perhaps be better to conduct this polemic in the International Bulletin. But if it were, then as we said in a thoroughly clear, open and unambiguous form. In this case, the polemic might contribute something to the ~~education~~ education of our cadres. In this spurious, I might almost say underhanded form, the polemic only serves the ends of international intrigue.

I would be very glad if the whole matter is of a purely accidental nature and has no connection with comrade Shachtman, for in the contrary case it would only accentuate the great dissatisfaction which comrade Shachtman evoked against himself among those Opposition elements in France, Germany, also here in Kadikoy, whom I hold to be the best ones. My concern becomes still more heightened by the fact that comrade Shachtman has not replied to the letters and warnings on my part and on the part of my closest friends and that Comrade Glotzer too who promised me to call comrade Shachtman to order a little did not take up this matter by a single word. I had the impression that both of them, Shachtman and Glotzer, stood under the impression of the small Jewish group in Paris and completely overlooked the perspectives of the Opposition movement in Europe.

In a word, clarification of the situation on your part is absolutely necessary!

With best Communist greetings,
Yours,
(signed) L. Trotsky.

The National Committee answered Comrade Trotsky that Comrade Shachtman had nothing whatsoever to do with the publishing of the article, that it came through the mail and was printed in routine form without the consciousness of the editorial board of its indirect polemical character.

6.- Letter from Comrade Trotsky to Shachtman under date of Feb. 10, 1932 (in full).

Prinkipo, Feb. 10, 1932

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

Although you have not yet answered my last letter I nevertheless felt duty bound to write you once more. As I notice from the documents received you propose to

give up post as editor of the Militant. I hope that before these lines reach you that this matter has already been straightened out. How could it be otherwise? Your resignation would mean a blow not only for the American League but also for the International Opposition. The National Committee by vote has once more expressed its confidence in you. As far as I am concerned I certainly hope that despite the important differences of opinion that our collaboration in struggle and friendship in the future will remain unshakable. In every respect it is absolutely necessary that you remain at your post.

(signed) L. Trotsky

7.- Excerpt of Letter from Comrade Trotsky to the National Committee under date of May 19, 1932.

"I am very glad you have taken a firm position on the international question

On the internal dispute in the American League I do not as yet take a position because I have not 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 in all the international questions, almost without exception. On the other hand, however, it is not easy to assume that one can be correct in the most important national questions, when one is always wrong in the most important international questions."