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COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF AMERICA (OPPOSITION)

INTERNAL BULLETIN NUMBER ** 8 **

FOR MEMBERS ONLY, CONFIDENTIAL.

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Run off January 28, 1933.

To the Leadership of the German Left Opposition.

Dear Comrades:

The crisis in the German section called forth by comrade Woll and his group makes it necessary to make the following communication in order to clarify the matter.

When I met comrade Senin in Copenhagen he stated that comrade Woll complained that I corresponded only with his opponents and not with him. I was completely surprised by this news since the interruptions - numerous of our correspondence always came from comrade Woll and made their appearance each time when I made some critical remark or did not agree with him on one question or another. In agreement with comrade Senin I then addressed a letter to comrade Woll to clear up the "misunderstanding", in the question of correspondence. The purpose of my letter was, this time to contribute to the alleviation of conflicts within the German Left Opposition, those conflicts which in my opinion were mostly called forth by comrade Woll without sufficient ground.

As proposed in my letter to call a calm, harmonious conference of action, without having a suspicion of the differences of opinion recently formulated by Woll. That a policy based on principles is the best as Lenin said and Woll quoted, is correct. Besides, Lenin always supported himself on the necessity for a policy based on principle. But Lenin also taught us to shove aside the other, the secondary differences, at a critical time. From Woll's letters, conversations and many articles, in any case, I have long ago seen that he takes a pretty vacillating position on many questions. I have often insisted that comrade Woll formulate his misgivings, replies, etc. in a precise manner. He has never done this. I have formulated the question of Thermidor and the dual power in the form of a letter and a dialogue. (published in our German press). Woll never went into this question. Since they have an importance which may effect the whole future, I must assume from his persistent silence that he still has not gone beyond the stage of doubt. And political experience a hundred times has shown my comrades who vacillate as long as they live but still "come along" more or less.

That the vacillations of Woll have been condensed into an explosion surprises me all the more since comrade Senin, who occupies more or less the same standpoint, assured me in Copenhagen of complete agreement and in the course of a two hours discussion we went through practically through all the important questions. Since then from my whole experience with Woll (Landsau question, French question, Mill question, Spanish question) I have become convinced that he is unfortunately much too inclined to put purely personal factors in the foreground at the expense of political and principled ones. I have tried to propose to him that in this most acute situation he should not disturb the activity of the German Opposition and the harmony of the coming conference through insufficiently thought out ideas and premature actions. But since then I have found out that Woll's vacillations in the past three years have taken on obviously under the influence of the "successes" of the J.P.G. that pathological form which we must describe as the urge to capitulate. All the symptoms, "ideas" and forms of expression repeat in stereotyped form the analogous pathological symptoms of many others from 1925 to 1932. Naturally because of this my proposal to call a unified conference became out of the question. On the contrary the most determined struggle is needed. What Woll is now putting in the foreground in nothing else than the right to existence of the Left Opposition. He, Woll, thinks everything will go well enough even without Bolshevik-Leninists and that between Stalin and the Kremlin and Tiflis and Barnaul there exists little misunderstandings because both

of them failed to understand his, Well's, ideas. Because of the same misunderstanding the G.P.U. killed Butoff, Blumkin, Sillof, Rabinowicz, and others.

Actually I do not believe that a fruitful "discussion" can arise on this basis since I have said, before, Well only repeats what Zinoviev, Radek and others- the/ formulated more thoroughly in the past at a certain stage of their retrograde development. But the mood of course, cannot be tolerated in the ranks of the Left Opposition. Whether comrade Well personally will learn better and make a turn, I do not know. For my part I would only welcome such a turn. But what the German Opposition needs is a leadership which is made up of workers who are firm in their convictions and which is not subject to the changing mood of eternal political nomads, that, it seems to me, the recent experience has in any case proven.

With best Communist greetings,

Leon Trotsky

Prinkipo, December 28, 1932.

ON THOSE WHO HAVE FORGOTTEN THE A. B. C.
(Against Roman Well and Others)

The protest of several German comrades against the article "With Both Hands", can be interpreted in two ways: first, as a search for a suitable excuse to capitulate, second, as a principled error of a confused but honest oppositionist. I leave aside the first variation, it has no theoretical interest. The second case deserves to be examined.

The article "With Both Hands" warns that Stalin's policies in the most important questions have approached decisions which may become irrevocable. The article recalls the fact that the Stalin faction had adhered to the Kellogg pact and the American disarmament program. There were never any differences of opinion among us as to the evaluation of these exceptionally important transactions. The article cites the scandalous conversation of Stalin with the American Campbell, which glaringly illuminates the road on which Stalin has entered.

"But do you really believe that Stalin is capable of treachery?" comes the objection. An astonishing argument, which proves that many a comrade, in spite of his AGE has reached the point of forgetting his Marxist A.B.C. Do we then estimate policies as depending on a previous decided confidence or distrust with respect to this or that person? The political line results from the pressure of class forces and the objective conditions, and develops its own logic.

In the year 1922 the Soviet Union went through a severe economic crisis. At the November plenum of the E. C. Stalin and others adopted a resolution which essentially abolished the foreign trade monopoly. How shall we characterize such a resolution? As betrayal, or not as a betrayal? Subjectively, it is certain that Stalin did not desire to betray the Socialist future. But the abolition of the monopoly, in its inevitable and moreover immediate consequences is in no way different from the abolition of the nationalization of the means of production. Not for nothing, in the first years of the Soviet regime, did the whole capitalist world exert every effort to obtain an "allowation" of the foreign trade monopoly. Objectively the resolution of the Plenum of November 1922 was an act of betrayal of Socialism. Subjectively, it was possible because of the fact that Stalin and the others did not possess a sufficient power of resistance

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theoretical and political, against the pressure of the economic crisis.

The historical example of the foreign trade monopoly best illustrates the present dispute. Since then we have been able to observe Stalin's policies in a whole series of the most important historical developments. How shall we describe his policy in China, that is, his alliance with Chian-Kai-Shek against the proletariat. We have always described it as one of betrayal. In this case, the right zig-zag of bureaucratic Centrism was carried to its ultimate logical consequences. Or can we find a single oppositionist to de that Stalin's policy in China served the bourgeoisie against the proletariat? Let us/call- ro/ the fact that Stalin supplemented this policy by crushing those Russian Bolsheviks who wanted to help the Chinese proletariat against the bourgeoisie. What is this but betrayal?

Since November 1922 more than 10 years have passed. The economic situation of the U. S. S. R. has reached a period of exceptionally sharp crisis. In the world situation, too, there are not a few dangers which can suddenly come to a head with a further sharpening of the internal difficulties. The criminal policy of collectivization to the limit and of the adventuristic tempo of industrialization has finally landed up a blind alley. As long as one stays within the framework of bureaucratic-Centrism there is no way out. The only possible- thing is a search for allitives and post-ponements. Foreign credits could undoubtedly bring about an alleviation of the internal crisis. America says, it is not prepared to give up its claims on war debts without compensation", It demands compensation for now credits too. The program of its demands is sufficiently well-known to us from the past- recognition of the pre-war and war debts, "alleviation" of the foreign trade monopoly; a break in effect with the Communist International; support of the American policy in the Far East, etc.

Certain concessions(with respect to the debts for instance) are completely permissible. But this is precisely the form of compensation which interests the United States least. But how do matter stand with the Comintern for instance? For the fifth year now no Congress has been called. Is that an accident? Undoubtedly one of Stalin's motives is the thought- there is no reason to irritate Hoover, the international proletariat vanguard will get along somehow without a Congress. But what remains then of the Comintern in Moscow? Miserable Plerums under the leadership of Manuilsky, who value Stalin well knows. Would it be difficult to give up these "remains"?

The foreign trade monopoly as a "compensation" represents more difficulties. But even here there can be no question of any absolute guarantee. If ten years ago, when Soviet industry was in a state of utter decay, Stalin was willing to make the greatest concessions in this question to foreign capital, now we must fear all the more a surrender of this position, since industry has grown considerably. "We are strong"; the apparatus will tell the workers "that we can afford an alleviation of the foreign trade monopoly". The capitulatory weakness toward world capitalism, in this case as in many others, will be concealed under an appearance of strength.

In point of fact, upon what do the confused protesters base their objections? On their faith in the good intentions of Stalin? On that alone and nothing more. "After all", they say or think, "Stalin has not yet betrayed the Soviet Republic" What remarkable profundity. In the first place we answer, one of the reasons that have forced Stalin to stop half-way with his policies has consisted in the energetic actions of the Left Opposition, which never dribbled with celestial confidence, but on the other hand called upon the workers in every critical moment to be alert and determined; second, after all Stalin's policy in China has been developed to its utmost possibilities and has led to a complete collapse of the second Chinese Revolution.

Here the hope lessly confused protestor, caught at a *dis* advantage, will take up a new position. "All these are your suspicions he will say, " cannot prove them". That is correct: in order to prove them one must wait for the events, i.e., the collapse of the Soviet fatherland, as the result of carrying out to its logical conclusion the policies of bureaucratic Centrism.

If the apparatus stood under the control of the party, if the workers could test the questions of policy and the executive organs we would have serious guarantees that policies would be consistently carried out, but that is precisely what is lacking. No one outside the narrow and ever-narrowing circle of Stalin knows what measures are being prepared to get out of the crisis. Can one take a serious attitude to that "revolutionary" who, in a situation like this, where powerful historical factors are at work, builds up his perspective on psychological guesswork or on the moral estimation of this or that person? When Ustrialov expressed the hope that the Nep would lead the Bolshevist party to the bourgeois regime, Lenin said, "Such things as Ustrialov speaks of are possible. History knows overturns of all kinds; to depend on conviction, devotion, and other similar excellent spiritual qualities, is in politics anything but a serious attitude". Lenin said this about the party in the year 1922; what shall one say now?

Many of the protestors, in connection with our article, conjure up the ghost of Urbahns; it would appear allegedly, that we have approached his estimation of Stalinism. It is painful to have to analyze such an argument at the end of December, 1932. Between Urbahns and us, the quarrel turned on the nature of the Soviet State. Everything depends on the degree, on the relation of the opposing forces; on the stage which the contradictory development has reached. Bureaucratic Centrism weakens the Proletarian Dictatorship, puts obstacles in the way of its development, undermines like a disease its bony framework, the proletariat. Such a disease is not yet death. Sickness can be cured. But Urbahns declared the Dictatorship liquidated, while we fought for the revivification and strengthening of the dictatorship, living, still existing, even if badly undermined by Stalinist Centrism.

But what shall we say about those unfortunate oppositionists who conclude, from the existence of the proletarian dictatorship, that we have confidence in bureaucratic Centrism, which has undermined this dictatorship? What shall we say about those "doctors", who unexpectedly discover that the best thing for the welfare of the patient is to overlook the symptoms of his disease, to palliate his situation, and instead of systematic treatment, content themselves with the hope that with the help of God the sick man will get well by himself?

Our protestors reveal as profound a lack of understanding of the reciprocal relations of the Soviet State and bureaucratic Centrism as Urbahns. Only, they color their lack of understanding with a different dye than his.

Only the terrifyingly low level which the Stalinist bureaucratic keeps the Communist movement can explain the most disturbing fact that comrades, who have learned for many years in the school of the Opposition, can fall into such wretched and compromising errors. Nothing to be done! We will waste a few hours repeating the A.B.C., if that does not help, over those who obstinately remain behind we shall stride onward and forward.

Leon Trotsky

To the International Secretariat and to all
of the International Left Opposition (Bolshevik Leninists.)

Dear Comrades:

Through an accidental and unfortunate chain of circumstances it is only to-day, January 4th. that I have come into possession of the Protocol of the International Secretariat of Dec. 15th. I hope that all the sections have read attentively the statement of Well and answers of comrades Vitte, and Kin. (for lack of time Baur could only join himself to their statement) but I find that comrades Vitte and Kin have spoken far too mildly and have not drawn the necessary conclusions from their analysis.

Exactly what did Well say? Let us enumerate his statements.

1. That the leading group of the German Left Opposition which stands on the standpoint of the International Left Opposition is a clique.

2. This "clique" (which means in fact the International Left Opposition) is distinguished by the fact that it maliciously minimizes the "successes" of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

3. "Baur gave Trotsky lying and slanderous information" Exactly the same statement was made by Landau before the split, by Mill and the others before their capitulation. The worst information about Well was always given by Well himself. In his letters. I declare that comrade Bauer in all his communications was most objective, conscientious, and careful, in complete contrast to comrade Well, who always appeared in a vicious, personal and disloyal manner.

4. Well protests against the political accusation against Stalin, because we consider his international policy anti-proletarian. Well becomes a defense lawyer for Stalin who, after all, in addition to his main occupation, is an executioner of the comrades who share our views.

5. Well is against the theory of Bonapartism.

6. Well is against the theory of Thermidor.

7. Well declares the forthcoming cleansing of the party to be a step forward. This cleansing begins and ends however with the oppression of the comrades who share our views and with the destruction of all criticism and all Marxist thinking within the Party.

8. Well states that nobody talks any more about the second Five Year Plan, which is his own discovery.

9. Well states that no one talks any more about "social-fascism", which however, is in frightful contradiction to the decisions of the 12th. Plenum of the E. C. C. I.

10. Well proclaims, "We must get closer to the Party". By that he means the Stalinist bureaucracy and this getting closer he purchases by giving up all Marxist thinking.

11. He states on top of that that the Five Year Plan was "most realized".

12. He states that the Russian opposition no longer exists.

13. He distributes the statement of the Stalinists that Zinoviev and Kamenev voluntarily chose the hole in which Stalin stuck them.

14. In the statement which he originally signed and which brings his real thoughts to expression without concealment, Well states that the leadership of the Russian Opposition in the article on the Stalinist foreign policy capitulates to " Urbans, Korsch, Saprnov, and other enemys of the Party and the Comintern ". Capitulation to the enemys of the party means the same thing as stepping over into the camp of counter-revolution.

I hope this enumeration will suffice. Zinoviev, Radek and the others too, twenty-four hours before their own capitulation, accused Trotzk of capitulation to Saprnov, That those just mentioned brought forward their accusation more cleverly and more decently as to form, is hardly an extenuating circumstance for Well. While accusing to organ of the Russian Opposition of passing over into the camp of the enemys of the party, he declares Stalin's proletarian policy to be above all suspicion, and actually above all criticism, He is against the theory of Thermidor. What then is he for? In his enumeration of the points which sharply separate him from the International Left Opposition, Well has forgotten only one thing, namely, to mention those points which still connect him with the Left Opposition. One needs only to imagine for a moment--- if the thousands of imprisoned, exiled, persecuted, Bolshevick-Leninists in the Soviet Union had Wells speech before their eyes, what could they think or say about it? Only one thing--- " Well is an outspoken enemy, a Stalinist agent". We can hardly speak here of a mask, since he carries his Stalinist wisdom quite unconcealed. The question which imperitively arises reads: " If we are engaged in the bitterest fight with the Stalinists who persecute us through there diplomacy and the capitalist police of all countries, can we tolerate Stalinists of a second kind in our ranks?" I do not think so.

It was no secret that Well is most confused in his opinions. All attempts to help him to a clearer insight in innumerable letters were in vain. The confusion in his case finally crystallized into a completely Stalinist-form. And no accident. Contrism after all is nothing but crystallized confusion but precisely because of his clear and open formulation of Stalinism, Well has proven that there is no basis for further discussion. And in that in my opinion, consists the mistake of the International Secretariat. It is not sufficient that two members express their opinion and a third member joined them. It was their duty at once as the Secretariat, as the highest institution to declare that the present views of Well are incompatible with membership in Left Opposition. And it was this decision not only the protocol, which the International Secretariat should have laid before all the sections for examination and confirmation.

I for my part do not hesitate for a moment, in the name of the Russian Opposition, which in spite of all the Stalinist lies, exists, grows, struggles and gains in influence, to declare, " If Well hold on the opinions which he expressed in the protocol of Dec, 15, he must not stay in our ranks another twenty-four hours". That is the formal proposal which I made to the international Secretariat and to all the sections.

With Communist Greetings
G. Gourov
January 4, 1932.

TO THE SECTIONS.

DEAR COMRADES:

For your information as to the tendencies of the cell group, we are sending you a copy of an article, "The party in danger", which comes from a member of the Wall group who also belongs to the signers of the "statement" against the article "with both hands" and in addition to that is also a member of the German National leadership.

Publication of the article in the columns of the "Permanent Revolution" was refused.

Copy

THE PARTY IN DANGER.

"But I also wish to leave no doubt in the minds of the Communist movement, which is hostile to the State, of the fact that the imperial government will not shrink from draconian measures and exceptional regulations against the Communist Party".

(Chancellor Von Schleicher in his radio speech).

The economic and political difficulties of German capitalism have been enormously sharpened. The B.V.C. strike signalized the fact that the working class for the first time in years has gone over from defense to attack. The elections showed the National Socialists that their speculation on a revolt had failed. In spite of all his resistance, Hitler will have to enter in a bourgeois coalition, in order to take at least a step toward power. The State apparatus, in spite of the profound economic and political crisis has shown itself to be strong, because reformism has a strong influence in the camp of the working class and because the C.P.G., on account of its past mistakes has been unable to break this influence. The Schleicher Cabinet is in position to permeate the underpinning of the state apparatus with embryonic fascist tendencies. The developments in Germany---- if the working class does not prevent in time---- approaches with rapid steps to the condition of Pilsudski's Poland. The "Rote Fahne" to-day is right in pointing to the wrong attitude of the Polish Party in connection with the Pilsudski insurrection period. This episode is the best pedagogical example for the German Party.

The S. P. G. is approaching the stage of the S.P.P. before its capitulation to Pilsudski. In practice it is already capitulating to the "the social general" and the present chancellor Von Schleicher. Loipart, as he himself says, has always gotten along well with the "the social general".

In such a situation in which the Social Democracy no longer wants to fight even in words, but is ready to capitulate to a Bonapartist regime with Fascist tendencies, the policy of the Communist Party becomes more difficult. To demand of it to-day the United Front from above too, is to weaken it and make it easier for the reformists to carry through their betrayal. But only counter-revolutionaries can desire this.

Against the threat of illegality there must stand a Communist Party which is firmly anchored in the trade unions, shops, and the unemployed benefit offices. It deserves to be recognized that today the party has completely given up the mis-

take of delay in work within the trade unions, even under the blow of events. Through the present correct attitude of the party in the "free" trade unions it will succeed in winning the determining influence in the shops and the unemployed benefit offices.

Before such a party Chancellor Von Schleicher would stand as before a granite rock. But the present situation also puts the party again before the question for the reintegration of the excluded communists. We declare ourselves ready to support the Communist Party with all our powers.

H. S.

(Horst Sprengel)