

MILITANTS AGAINST THE APPARATUS: THE COMMUNIST
OPPOSITION IN FRANCE, 1923-1932

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	1
CHAPTER ONE: THE INTERNAL PARTY OPPOSITION, 1923-1924	4
CHAPTER TWO: REGROUPMENT OUTSIDE THE PARTY, 1925-1928	59
CHAPTER THREE: LEGACY OF DEFEAT: THE OPPOSITION FRAGMENTED, 1929-1932	131
CONCLUSION	182
APPENDIX ONE	186
APPENDIX TWO	191
BIBLIOGRAPHY	195

"It will all be quite useless. We are bound by party discipline, and so are you."

I flared up: "One can leave a party."

They replied, cold and serious: "A Bolshevik does not leave his party. And anyway, where would you go. You have to face it there is no one but us."

Victor Serge - Memoirs of a
Revolutionary

"The engineer Akin was a Trotskyite; his faction had been crushed. His birthplace, his town--it was clear to him now-- was no longer any use to him; he had set aside this week for thought. He should have been thinking about the fate of the Revolution and of his party, of his own fate as a revolutionary--but these thoughts would not come. . . . The horses lurched and came to a halt. The driver struck the horses with his whip--the horses pulled, but did not budge. All around was deep mud, the tarantass was sinking deeper and deeper in the middle of the pool--up to the lynchpin of the left front wheel. The driver braced himself on the box and booted the shaft horse on the rump--the horse jerked and fell on top of the shaft, then sank up to its collar into the mire. The driver lashed the horses until he realized that the shaft horse could not get up; then he waded into the mud to unharness the horse. He took a step and sank knee deep into the mud. . . . he was stuck And the old man burst into tears--bitter, hysterical, helpless tears of rage and despair--this man, this specialist in handling cows and bulls. The Trotskyite Akim missed the train, as he had missed the train of time."

Boris Pilniak - "Mahogany"

". . . I pondered all these things, and how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name. . . ."

William Morris - "A Dream of
John Ball"

PREFACE

Few questions have provoked more bitterness or controversy in Marxist circles than the question of Stalinism. For 40 years the central issue has been: was Stalinism a natural, inevitable and logical outgrowth of Leninism? Or was it the outcome of emergency measures taken in response to a prolonged crisis situation, rather than a central ideological drive? An understanding of Stalinism can only be properly achieved by returning to the formative years of the international Communist movement before 1930 when the Stalinist die was not yet firmly cast. These were the years when the young idealists who flocked to the banner of Leninism in the revolutionary upsurge of 1917 were slowly being transformed into the hardened functionaries of the party apparatus and the international movement as a whole carefully molded into an appendage of the Soviet state. The writing of a comprehensive history of the Stalinization process of the international Communist^{movement} would be an inviting and fruitful task, but unfortunately well beyond the confines of an M.A. thesis. The present study will attempt to deal with this question on one restricted level: the emergence and development of the anti-Stalinist Opposition in the French Communist movement during the years 1923-1932. The historian has a certain privilege of being arbitrary in the time limits of a study and for this reason I have accepted 1923 as the conceptual starting point largely on the basis

of the beginning of the Russian crisis and Souvarine's first warnings in December of that year; and 1932 for a closing point insofar as the imprint of Stalinism appears irrevocable at this date and the Opposition increasingly encapsulated in its own orthodoxy and sectarianism. With Hitler's accession to power in 1933 the international Communist movement also enters a new stage of its development in which an entirely new set of questions are posed.

In attempting a study of this nature several awkward problems of arrangement have presented themselves. The Opposition represents considerably more than an undifferentiated and static movement and for this reason it becomes necessary to disentangle a wide ranging set of theoretical, organizational, tactical and personal questions and organize them into an effective whole. Three possible methodological formats exist: (1) A chronological presentation. (2) A presentation developed along organizational lines. (3) A presentation centered around various theoretical and tactical perspectives. Neatness and conceptual unity seem best achieved by attempting to synthesize the above into distinct phases of the Opposition's development. Three broad phases of the Opposition's institutional evolution can be distinguished, each shaped by the changing set of circumstances confronting the Opposition: (1) The essentially intra-party Opposition of 1923-1924. (2) The first attempts at regroupment outside the party from 1925-1929. (3) And the sectarianism and fragmentation extending from 1929 on.

Conceptually, the study will proceed on two levels: (1) A standard narrative political history of the emergence and development

of the various Opposition tendencies and personalities. (2) An attempt to sort out the underlying theoretical, tactical, and strategic criticisms that emerged during the course of the debates.

THE INTERNAL PARTY OPPOSITION, 1923-24

Prelude to Conflict

The Opposition movement in the French Communist Party developed slowly, almost unconsciously, throughout the winter of 1923-1924 before suddenly bursting forth into open political conflict in the spring of 1924. Its origins are directly tracable to events unfolding within the Soviet Union and to a series of specifically French conflicts within the P.C.F. that occurred throughout 1923. While the eventual outcome of the struggle was determined largely by the intrusion of the Russian conflict the specifically French elements are not without significance.

The French occupation of the Ruhr on January 11, 1923 set off a new train of events for the internal life of the P.C.F. Out of the turmoil in the party that followed these events there arose an important debate between loosely defined groups centered around two leading militants of the party, Boris Souvarine¹ and Albert Treint,² which was instrumental in giving rise to the factional groupings that emerged the following year. In the months that followed differences between them arose over a wide variety of questions confronting the international Communist movement.

The occupation of the Ruhr presented the international

Communist movement with an unprecedented opportunity for directed, coordinated action between two member parties, and the Comintern immediately ordered both the German and French parties to embark on a program of joint action. In both countries Communists approached Socialists with proposals to form a united front over the Ruhr crisis.³ But only in Germany where a small group of left Social Democrats agreed to cooperate was this proposal successful. In France the S.F.I.O., still embittered by the split of Tours and the continuing attacks in the Communist press, completely rejected any form of collaboration. Consequently, the Communist led "week of protest," while producing sensational acts of fraternization between German and French troops (and subsequent arrests of prominent French Communists), achieved little in the way of a mass mobilization. Even within the ranks of the P.C.F. indifference prevailed and the full possibilities for revolutionary propaganda and activity remained unfulfilled.⁴

Souvarine, in assessing the reasons for the party's failure, however, could only assail the S.F.I.O. for its failure to cooperate and repeat the charge that reformists were incapable of acting in behalf of the interests of the proletariat.⁵ Treint--who had been one of the party leaders imprisoned--charged that Souvarine's attacks on the Socialists only provided them with further pretexts for non-cooperation.⁶ Souvarine responded by charging Treint with being too soft on reformists and suggested that he saw the matter as a question of "old friends voluntarily separated by differences of a secondary nature."⁷ The way for Communists to utilize the united

front tactic, Souvarine argued, was to use it as an instrument to expose the treacherous nature of Social Democracy to the masses.

The conflict between Treint and Souvarine was further exacerbated in March of 1923 when Treint coined the slogan "workers' imperialism" and foresaw the possibility of a European wide revolution being carried out by the Soviet army. The Soviet army, Treint argued, was not a national army but an instrument of the international working class movement, and what was involved was a kind of class or "red imperialism."⁸ Souvarine, however, argued that imperialism was strictly a capitalist social phenomenon and that in any case revolution was not something to be exported.⁹ Treint thereupon wrote an extended reply attempting to justify and define his conceptions further, but Souvarine only exacerbated matters by refusing to publish it in Bulletin Communiste. Souvarine's position was greatly reinforced in July when Zinoviev issued a statement declaring that Treint's slogan of "red imperialism" and views on the united front did not conform to the best interests of Communism.¹⁰

A third conflict developed around Treint's bureaucratic and over-centralized leadership methods. When Treint was appointed joint secretary of the Party, along with Louis Sellier,¹¹ he immediately usurped many of the functions of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee, and numerous complaints began to arise against him. In June Amadée Dunois¹² attacked his heavy handed leadership methods and Treint threatened to resign. At this point Jules Humbert-Droz,¹³ the Comintern representative in France, began to voice serious misgivings about Treint's leadership. In a long and blunt letter to

Zinoviev dated June 14 Humbert-Droz accused Treint of embracing "a completely mechanical conception of discipline," of using "authoritarian methods" and pronouncing on important questions without consulting the proper party organs.¹⁴ Humbert-Droz's comments were amplified a week later when he wrote the "danger of having Treint continue as Secretary General of the party . . . who despite the friendly and private warnings that I have given him on the subject of his authoritarian and brutal methods, continues to lead its party as if it were a regiment."¹⁵

In order to save his position Treint responded with a set of proposals for reorganizing the party which were approved by the Central Committee. What Treint proposed was to create a network of regions and regional delegates. Each region would have its own leadership, press and propaganda center and would be in direct contact with the party leadership.¹⁶ In practice this arrangement, rather than furthering decentralization, only strengthened Treint's control of the party at the expense of the federations. In early September Humbert-Droz charged that the regional delegates had become little more than "veritable prefects of the political Bureau, having great authority over the federations." The only solution, Humbert-Droz felt, was to remove Treint from his position as Secretary.¹⁷

Souvarine Struggles Alone

The political disputes that flared up over the question of the united front, "workers imperialism" and Treint's centralized leadership had at first no direct connection with the growing rift within

the Bolshevik party. During 1923 the Russian dispute did not surface as a factor in the quarrel between Treint and Souvarine, but for Souvarine, who was on the Presidium of the Comintern in Moscow at the time, the dispute did not go unnoticed.

Boris Souvarine was an unlikely candidate to lead an Opposition faction within the French Communist Party. Until 1923 Souvarine had been considered by many as an "apologist without reserve for the politics of the Russian Central Committee and the Executive of the International."¹⁸ Souvarine's initial attitude on the Russian conflict was governed in large part by his personal fondness for Trotsky. Like others in the French Communist movement Souvarine had a strong sentimental attachment to Trotsky: "Trotsky is the one who produces the strongest impression on French readers . . . he is undoubtedly one of the greatest forces in the Russian and world revolutionary movement."¹⁹ Unaware of the full implications of the Russian conflict, Souvarine at first expressed no alarm and approached the dispute only in the most indirect manner. When Trotsky proposed his solution to Russia's economic crisis at the Twelfth Congress Souvarine expressed his full and unqualified approval.²⁰ Noting in August that "counter-revolutionary" newspapers in the West were speaking of "so-called differences" between Lenin and Trotsky, Souvarine expressed hope that unity within Bolshevik ranks would prevail, since a split would only impair the prospects for world revolution.²¹ In September 1923, Souvarine contrasted Trotsky's carefully formulated solution to the reparations question with Treint's "erroneous, inopportune and anachronistic" sloganeering on the same issue.²²

If any date and event can be considered as the beginning of the Opposition in France it is perhaps Souvarine's return from Moscow in November, 1923. Because of his extended stay in Russia, his fluent command of the language, and his position as editor of Bulletin Communiste, Souvarine was in a unique position to explain the full implications of the conflict to his French comrades. The "new course" controversy was brought to the attention of French Communists by Souvarine in an article in Bulletin Communiste in early December, 1923. Only the most tepid and implicit criticisms of the triumvirate were ventured, and its real significance lies largely in the fact that it represented the first systematic description of the Russian discussions for French Communists. In suggesting that "French Communists are obligated, as those in Russia and elsewhere, to profit from revolutionary experience, for the affairs of the Russian Communists are also our affairs," Souvarine did, however, raise the fundamental question of the relationship of the International and its component parties to that of the dominant Russian party.²³ Theoretically, at least, all parties of the International were equal and thereby had the power to intervene in the Russian dispute.

Souvarine's warnings were amplified the following week when he sided openly with Trotsky on his solution to the economic crisis and on his warnings about "bureaucratic degeneration." At this point Souvarine was still optimistic about the eventual outcome of the conflict. In ominously noting that the party was attempting to determine its orientation for the first time without Lenin's guidance, Souvarine suggested that if Lenin were not ill he might address the

party in the following terms: "Comrades, during the past year we have committed many errors, which was inevitable. . .but with the help of our dearly acquired experience we are going to learn how to correct our errors." Souvarine also hoped that the discussion would not merely be used as a "safety valve" for channeling discontent, but would be prolonged until it yielded "positive results."²⁴

Throughout December Souvarine's chief concern was for an "active exchange of views"²⁵ within both the Russian and French parties. To this end he called upon readers of Bulletin Communiste to express their views on the Russian conflict prior to the upcoming Congress of Lyon. When by late December only three letters had arrived Souvarine expressed dismay: "We say simply that we have received only three letters, all three from the provinces. . .and in our opinion that is not many."²⁶ By early January the flow of letters had increased and most took a favorable view of Souvarine's efforts to bring the dispute to French readers. One reader wrote that the P.C.F. was no longer "content with generalities about the Soviet Republic" and was grateful to Souvarine for "getting down to specifics."²⁷ Another wrote that the "problems being discussed in the Russian party should be of as much interest to the French as our own national problems."²⁸ While still another waxed more enthusiastically: "What lessons these discussions hold in store! How much we have yet to learn! How small we seem in comparison to the Russians. Are we worthy of these great tasks?"²⁹ Numerous other readers expressed a variety of similar views. As a result of Souvarine's coverage of the Russian conflict the Federation of the Pas-de-Calais decided to make a subscription

to Bulletin Communiste mandatory for all its members.³⁰ Throughout December Souvarine continued to supply his readers with translations of critical documents from the Russian press, including on December 27 Trotsky's "new course" letter.

Following the direct attacks upon Trotsky by Stalin and Zinoviev Souvarine's efforts took on a more partisan tone. Stalin, Souvarine charged, was now bringing personal differences into the conflict and digging up old issues such as Trotsky's "Menshevik past." Trotsky on the other hand was only "expressing the truths of Communism." By way of warning Souvarine bluntly added:

We are all familiar with Stalin and know what his merits are and of his role in the history of the party. We know too that Stalin represents frankness almost to the point of brutality and we can therefore say to him straightforwardly: Anyone who thinks he can separate the names of Lenin and Trotsky in the eyes of the world proletariat is deceiving himself!³¹

Souvarine, by now fully mindful of the nature of the crisis, was not content to confine his activities solely to France. On January 6, 1924 he addressed a personal letter to Zinoviev strongly protesting the attacks on Trotsky.³² Zinoviev responded by accusing him of waging a "factional struggle" and of supporting an "Opposition which represents no more than one per cent."³³ Souvarine, incensed, countered with a long letter declaring:

I cannot accept your arbitrarily imputing to me a "factional" point of view What I disapprove of is the war being waged against Comrade Trotsky and all those who are suspected, rightly or wrongly of "Trotskyism." I do not consider that there is anything to be gained by my assuming the role of defender of such a comrade as Trotsky who knows very well how

to defend his own point of view, nor have I become a "Trotskyite" because an active French party member has quite enough to do in his own party and in the activity of the International without, in addition, meddling in a factional dispute within the Russian party. But it is my opinion that the blows directed at Trotsky are injuring not Trotsky but the party itself, the revolution and the International.³⁴

Souvarine's developing views on the Russian conflict coincided with an internal struggle within the P.C.F. against Treint's leadership. Despite the fact that a central issue in the conflict was the question of "bureaucratic degeneration" the question of Treint's leadership was, at this point, in no way connected with the Russian dispute. By December, 1923, nearly all segments of the party had come to resent Treint's heavy handed methods.³⁵ Many, however, who opposed Treint feared that to have Souvarine resume active leadership would turn the cause for Treint's demotion into a personal feud. Souvarine, nonetheless, launched a series of sharp attacks on Treint in January of 1924. At the same time he called for letters on the Russian dispute, he asked also for letters on internal problems confronting the P.C.F. Numerous letters poured in denouncing Treint's leadership on the grounds of bureaucratization and "excessive centralism."³⁶ When Treint submitted a lengthy report on the party's activities for the preceding year, which was largely a paean to his leadership, to be placed in Bulletin Communiste, Souvarine published it with a sharply worded polemic of his own. Dismissing Treint's report as little more than a collection of "useless details" and "unimpressive information," he proceeded to make a through-going critique of Treint's leadership for the past year. Treint,

Souvarine suggested, was responsible for the party having "not done in the past year all that it might have been able to." Taking note of Treint's boast that he personally "directed" the Political Bureau, Souvarine remarked: "It is for the Political Bureau to direct Treint and for the Central Committee to direct the Political Bureau." Treint, he charged, represented the "incarnation of bureaucracy" in the P.C.F. Among other faults Treint was also guilty of convoking the Congress of Lyon on too short a notice to have active internal discussions.³⁷

The Congress of Lyon opened in an atmosphere of latent crisis on January 20, 1924.³⁸ The Russian crisis did not surface as an issue during the Congress and continued to remain unconnected to the struggle against Treint's leadership. Zinoviev and Treint, aware no doubt of Trotsky's popularity in France, were apparently still hesitant to use it as an issue in the affairs of the French party. The Congress represented a near total victory for the anti-Treint forces. Delegates one by one rose to condemn Treint's leadership for its sectarianism, "excessive centralism, exaggerated discipline [and] stifling of discussion."³⁹ These condemnations were later formalized in the final resolutions, although in the interests of party harmony no names were mentioned. The main blow against Treint fell on January 25 when, at a meeting of the new Central Committee, the arrangement for having joint secretaries was ended, and the position of General Secretary handed to Sellier. When a new Political Bureau was appointed Treint was not included.⁴⁰ The internal crisis was apparently over and Souvarine's position appeared secure. A new factor, however, had intruded with Lenin's death a few days earlier

on January 21.

In the six weeks following Lenin's death the conflict, at least superficially, abated as the pages of Bulletin Communiste were filled with testimonials to Lenin. On February 5 the Central Committee met to debate the Russian question. In the meantime, however, the triumvirate had sent two emissaries--A. L. Lozovsky, the leader of the International of Red Trade Unions, and an unnamed German--to France to lay the groundwork for a base in the French party.⁴¹ Souvarine, however, triumphant from his victory over Treint, still possessed the upper hand. What resulted from the meeting was the approval by an overwhelming vote of 11-3 of a resolution drafted by Souvarine proclaiming neutrality in the Russian dispute. Significantly enough the three votes against were by members of Treint's depleted following, Treint, Suzanne Girault,⁴² and Pierre Sébard.⁴³ In certain respects the resolution represented a more cautious approach to the Russian conflict than Souvarine had taken in early January. Rather than directly siding with the minority the resolution was concerned largely with legitimizing the role of the Comintern in intervening in the dispute. Factionalism, the resolution noncommittally proclaimed, had not developed in the Russian party and the various "tendencies" that emerged during the controversy had been "equally motivated by the need to realize the historic task of the proletarian party and animated by an equal desire to work for the glory of the Russian Revolution on a world scale." The resolution concluded by expressing hope that the Comintern would be called upon as the final arbiter in the dispute.⁴⁴

Souvarine was less successful, however, in destroying Treint's base in the crucial Federation of the Seine. When the federal congress met in mid-February Souvarine made an appearance to attack the Federal Bureau headed by Treint's ally Suzanne Girault, demanding that half of its members be replaced and accusing it of ignoring the resolutions of the Congress of Lyon. "The comrades of the Federation of the Seine," Souvarine angrily charged, "are conducting a bitter campaign against the leading militants of the party."⁴⁵ This time, however, Treint's faction prevailed when Souvarine's proposal was narrowly defeated.

While these events were in progress a new source of conflict was slowly emerging. Still suffering from his chastisement at Lyon, Treint was for the moment reluctant to make any direct moves but was carefully watching the trend of events from the sidelines eager to seize the appropriate opportunity for a comeback. A new and unexpected--though largely bogus--issue provided him with such an opportunity. On January 23, 1924 the British Labor Party headed by Ramsey MacDonald came to power in England.⁴⁶ Several days later the British Communist Party requested the Central Committee of the P.C.F. to send an open letter to the Labor Party on the situation, and Alfred Rosmer,⁴⁷ the P.C.F.'s authority on British affairs, was assigned the task of drafting the letter which was subsequently approved by the Central Committee on February 5, 1924, with only Treint and Girault opposing. The intended aim of the letter, as Souvarine later noted, was to lay the foundation for a future united front between the British Communist Party and the Labor Party.⁴⁸

As such, it was concerned largely with enunciating a program of critical support for the Labor Party. The Labor victory, the letter argued, represented a victory of the British working class "over the two factions of the ruling class . . . who have until now alternately shared power." The British working class has "broken resolutely with the past and affirmed the will to take power into their own hands." Having been placed in power by the working class, the Labor Party was invested with a responsibility to meet the needs of this class and live up to its program. Such measures, however, could not be undertaken without posing a major challenge to the social order. To resolve this dilemma it was proposed that the Labor Party . . . admit into its ranks the British Communist Party, "the genuine avant garde of the working class movement . . . small in numbers but great in the valor of its individual militants."⁴⁹

In approving the letter, however, the Central Committee chose to ignore the views of the triumvirate's emissary Lozovsky which had been published several days earlier in l'Humanité, in which he had strongly rejected any form of critical support. Arguing that the Labor government was devoted to serving the bourgeoisie by disorganizing strikes and preventing direct action, Lozovsky claimed: "It is not a socialist victory but a victory of the bourgeoisie over socialism We have no illusions."⁵⁰ Several days after the letter was approved Rosmer responded to Lozovsky's arguments by distinguishing between the leaders of the Labor Party and their followers, claiming that in regard to the leaders he had "no illusions" but that millions of British workers did. The continued use of "revolutionary verbalism" and

denunciations of the Labor Party leadership, he argued, would serve no other purpose other than to completely isolate the British Communist Party.⁵¹ Finding himself under mounting criticism within the P.C.F. Rosmer modified his position somewhat the following week by declaring himself "fundamentally in accord" with Lozovsky, though he felt the latter had posed the question "too summarily, too simplistically, and therefore too dangerously."⁵² By this time Souvarine--perhaps sensing the underlying power struggle behind the issue--had joined the debate echoing Rosmer's claims that it was not the Communists who were suffering from illusions but the English workers.⁵³ The British Communists, Souvarine argued, must not appear as "wily enemies of the English workers, but must sustain them in their struggle." This was directly opposed to "those who demand that we approach the Labor Party with a thick rope and gallows."⁵⁴

Open Political Conflict

While the open letter in the end was never sent⁵⁵ the debate had repercussions extending well beyond the issues directly involved. The phase in which ideas rather than organizational power played the dominant role was rapidly drawing to an end. In the last two weeks of March the heavy cloud of controversy, tension and uncertainty which hung over the Party throughout the winter of 1923-24 suddenly gave way to open political conflict. The history of this severe party crisis in which Treint was unexpectedly restored to full political power still contains many obscure elements but the main outlines can be well documented. For the P.C.F. these short few weeks

represented a major turning point in its development as the party was molded into the new shape in which its destinies were to be cast throughout the course of the coming decade.

In late February Souvarine, perhaps sensing that Treint with the aid of Zinoviev was rapidly regaining lost ground, began to give a sharp personal twist to his polemics. In defending Rosmer on the Labor Party question Souvarine had suggested that only "rogues" and "incorrigible simpletons" could attack the open letter on the basis of "reformist illusions."⁵⁶ And when Treint and others began attacking his position on the Russian conflict he responded by calling them "idiots" and "dishonest men."⁵⁷ "Any French Communist," wrote Souvarine, "who permits the defamation of Trotsky in France is either irresponsible or a rascal."⁵⁸

As a result of these remarks the Political Bureau on March 6 formally requested that Souvarine cease his attacks on Treint. The same, however, apparently did not apply to Treint. For the March 14 issue of Bulletin Communiste Treint had prepared an article on the Labour Party question in which he made a sarcastic reference to Souvarine.⁵⁹ Souvarine thereupon inserted a cutting rejoinder of his own but the Political Bureau, inspecting the proofs before the issue went to press, ordered it removed. Unintimidated, Souvarine removed his rejoinder but added another which bitterly noted that he was forbidden to comment on Treint's remarks and that he planned to appeal the decision to the upcoming party assembly. Almost as an afterthought he added: "Those who fear Communist criticism disqualify themselves."⁶⁰

Consequently, on March 13 the party Secretariat acted by removing Souvarine as editor of Bulletin Communiste and demanded that he return to Moscow to take up his seat on the Comintern Executive. Still undeterred, Souvarine responded with an open letter to the subscribers of Bulletin Communiste attempting to define and justify his position. Claiming that he had said nothing he need apologize for and that he had exposed without fear, Souvarine stated he could place his "revolutionary conscience" above the "intrigues and vulgar preoccupations" of certain comrades. The real reason for his demotion, Souvarine maintained, was not "personal disagreements" as had been claimed, but his position on the Russian question. Declaring that he was presently "disarmed and deprived of all means of expression and defense" Souvarine declared his intentions to re-enter the ranks in order to disseminate his opinions. To facilitate this he called upon his readers to decide whether or not he should start a new review by sending a subscription "without delay."⁶¹

The full implications of Souvarine's removal and Treint's unexpected comeback only became clear in the weeks that followed as the conflicts within the French Party became irrevocably fused to those within the Russian Party. For the Russian Opposition the months following Lenin's death represented a period of low ebb. The Thirteenth Bolshevik Party Conference in January of 1924 had put an end to the free discussion that had shaken the party in December and fully solidified the authority of the triumvirate. In the ensuing months the Opposition's base was further weakened as Zinoviev skillfully utilized the Comintern apparatus to bring member parties into line,

starting first with Brandler in the German Communist Party.

Two main reasons can be found to explain Treint's sudden and successful counter-coup. In purely organizational terms there was Treint's base of support in the crucial Federation of the Seine and his knowledge of how to utilize the resources of the party apparatus. The Opposition leaders, intellectuals for the most part, had no federation base and were disorganized, confused and uncertain in regard to the type of strategy and tactics to be pursued. But if any factor can be considered the prime mover behind Treint's efforts it is Zinoviev's direct intervention in the affairs of the P.C.F. Starting with Lozovsky in late January a series of envoys had been dispatched to France to build up support for the triumvirate in the P.C.F., a party hitherto noted for its close ties with Trotsky. Shortly before returning to Moscow Lozovsky had presented the "Bolshevik point of view" on the Russian conflict at a meeting of the Central Committee, but succeeded only in provoking a sharp response from Rosmer.⁶² In mid-February Lozovsky was succeeded by two emissaries from the Comintern Executive, a German named Kirsch and the Russian August Guralsky (alias Klein and Lepit). It appears likely that at this point Treint had extended discussions with the two representatives and became fully aware for the first time of the opportunity before him for it was at this time that Treint and Girault voted against the resolution proclaiming neutrality in the Russian dispute and began immediately afterwards to organize section and federation meetings to denounce Souvarine for partisanship in presenting the Russian conflict.⁶³ Sometime in March a third representative, the Russian leader Maluilsky, was dispatched to aid in Souvarine's

isolation.⁶⁴

It was against this backdrop that the Central Committee met on March 18, at Treint's urging, to re-evaluate the party's position on several questions confronting the international Communist movement. Treint, with invective similar to Zinoviev and Stalin, had prepared a set of theses that condemned the French and Russian Opposition with demagogic labels such as "Menshevism", "liquidationism" and "confusionism."⁶⁵ Treint's theses, however, proved to be too extreme even for many who might otherwise have supported him and a second resolution was proposed by the Fédération de Jeunesses Communistes and supported by Sellier.⁶⁶ To avoid an open fight a special subcommittee was created to combine the two sets of theses and came up with a compromise resolution entitled: "Thèses sur la tactique du P.C.F. et sur les problèmes posés devant l'Internationale Communiste."

At the heart of the theses was a call for intensified revolutionary activity based on what was perceived as a new conjuncture of social forces since the Congress of Lyon. Tactically, however, all that could be offered was the creation of a new electoral bloc to compete with the Bloc des Gauches. On the Russian question the P.C.F. was now declared to be "fully in accord" with the Russian majority.⁶⁷

Sourvarine in response presented a set of counter theses which denied a changed set of circumstances since Lyon but could offer little other than abstract calls for a "genuine united front," the creation of factory cells and a revitalized internal party life. On the Russian dispute Souvarine once again argued that the role of the International

was not to accentuate the conflict but to create "better conditions for collaboration between the momentarily divergent currents." "One must not forget that the comrades momentarily in disagreement on certain questions are all artisans of the Russian Revolution and the Communist International . . ."⁶⁸

It was at this point that Pierre Monatte⁶⁹ first formally entered the struggle with a short declaration which constituted one of the most throughgoing criticisms of the party's internal life yet made. The party, declared Monatte, is "gravely sick" both at the top and at the base. Noting that the party leadership had examined major questions without consulting the membership for over a year, Monatte charged: "They wish to spare them the pain of thinking. Mechanistic centralism benefits neither the leadership nor the membership." One aspect of this "sickness," Monatte argued, was that party organs such as the Labor Commission have come to exist only on paper without an active internal life of their own.⁷⁰

Monatte's declaration had little effect, however, as the theses were accepted overwhelmingly with only Souvarine and Monatte voting against and Rosmer abstaining.⁷¹ Treint lost no time in capitalizing on his victory and in two decisive texts within the next month launched a devastating verbal assault on the newly emergent Opposition. Treint's first attack came in a March 28 article entitled "Dans la voie tracée par Léniné," which was an attempt to place into theoretical perspective the events of the past few months. Even prior to Lyon, Treint noted, discord had developed over such issues as the Ruhr crisis, methods of implementing the united front, the trade union question, the

Russian conflict etc., but the conflict had managed to "remain in the shadows." After Lyon events moved rapidly as a set of "pre-existing tendencies" was defined and enlarged. "One was soon able to discern in the party a Right, a Center and a Left." "The Right represented by Rosmer, Souvarine and Monatte," Treint maintained, "took a clear position on the Russian and English questions," favoring, "under the guise of neutrality," the Russian Opposition. The Left, however, of whom he was the leader, had developed, a correct line from the beginning, pursuing the very policies that were supported by the International. The Center had at first vacillated, supporting initially the policies of the Right, but in the end recognized its errors and shifted towards support of the Left. As for Souvarine Treint had a blunt warning: "he is moving in a dangerous direction." In concluding Treint introduced a new slogan: "bolshevization." "Our slogan is clear," he wrote, "no debolshevization of the Russian party; but on the contrary bolshevization of all Communist parties."⁷²

Three weeks later, in a crude piece of sophistry entitled "Contre la droite internationale," Treint amplified his charges of a "Right" tendency in the French party. Speaking of a "grande péril de droite," Treint maintained that the French "Right" was unusual in the sense that it developed out of the left, contending: "Our Opposition is truly an Opposition of the Right, of liquidationism, of pessimism, of revolutionary defeatism." This time Treint added to his charges the accusation that the French "Right" was in reality only part of a larger "international Right" existing in "most sections of the International." Having, in his opinion, firmly established the existence of a Right,

Treint proceeded to discredit its principal leaders, Souvarine, Monatte and Rosmer. The three, he charged, were seeking only to "discourage the party and spread within its ranks the same demoralizing doubts which have affected them." Monatte, Treint found, was "guilty" of wanting to "limit and weaken Communist action in the factories" by seeking to create a network of labor commissions independent of the party. This, Treint charged, was tantamount to creating "a party within the party . . . a dualism of action among Communists." Against Souvarine, Treint raised the charge of partisanship in presenting the Russian dispute, claiming it took him 20 days to publish major Opposition texts in comparison to two or three months for majority texts. For Rosmer, Treint was more charitable, suggesting that he was guilt of "Right errors" not so much by his intentions as by the consequences of his intentions.⁷³

As the tempo of Treint's attacks mounted the Opposition did not remain inactive. The first direct confrontation came at an assembly of the Federation of the Seine on April 2, 4 and 11. Souvarine opened the debate on the evening of April 2 by attempting to define the terms "Right" and "Left." In contradiction to Treint, Souvarine argued that the distinguishing characteristic of the Right in all countries was its "bureaucratic cretinism." As for the crisis in the French party Souvarine declared that it had been artificially imposed by Treint and that the party should not, and must not, divide itself into factions on the basis of the Russian, German and English questions since information was always bound to be insufficient.⁷⁴ On April 4 Treint made his accusations, claiming he was defending a union of the Left and Center, "on

the basis of Bolshevism," against an "opportunist Right." Responding to criticisms of his undemocratic leadership, Treint maintained that democracy in the party had always been subordinated to the interests of revolutionary struggle.⁷⁵ On April 11 Monatte, Rosmer and Souvarine again took to the floor to defend their views, restating, for the most part, their earlier positions.⁷⁶ A second confrontation took place on April 6-7 at a conference of federation secretaries when both sides again presented their positions. Once again the Opposition received a stunning blow when 59 federations voted confidence in the Central Committee with two votes against and 18 abstentions.⁷⁷

In mid-April Souvarine exacerbated the situation further by publishing, with the aid of Rosmer, Monatte and several others, a collection of Trotsky's most important articles on the Russian conflict in the form of a brochure entitled Le Cours nouveau. Introducing the brochure was a nine page preface by Souvarine in which he attempted to justify the Opposition's cause both in France and in Russia. Carrying his analysis several steps further than in previous statements, Souvarine charged that power in the Russian party had come to be invested in a "hierarchy of secretaries," and that following Lenin's death a "Lenin cult" had emerged, giving Communism the earmarks of a religion. Trotsky's stature, Souvarine wrote, could not be diminished "without at the same time diminishing the Russian Revolution and the International to which Trotsky has given his best."⁷⁸

On April 22 and 23, in the midst of the party's electoral campaign, the storm once again suddenly broke when Monatte, Rosmer, Charbit,⁷⁹ Godonnèche,⁸⁰ Antonini⁸¹ and Chambelland⁸² unexpectedly

resigned from their positions on l'Humanité in protest over Treint's policies. Up until this point l'Humanité had been the Opposition's chief trump card and their action came as a shock to many. Denying that they had any connection with Souvarine's Le Cours nouveau, the six nonetheless stated their solidarity: "If it is a crime to have published Le Cours nouveau in France then we are as guilty as Souvarine." As to the question of factionalism: "You know very well that there is a faction in the party, and that it is constituted by Treint and his friends." As a consequence, the party was paralyzed by a state of "complete confusion." Since they were "resolute adversaries" of Treint they maintained that they no longer felt comfortable in their posts in a party dominated by his faction but would "remain in the ranks where it will be much easier to defend our point of view" Once in the ranks their intention was to work for a party based on what they felt were five essential features: (1) A party where the workers are not merely "figurines" but the motive force. (2) A party which understands the nature and importance of labor work. (3) A party in which "mechanical centralism" is replaced by "animating centralism." (4) A party which will banish the artificial crises of leadership which demoralize and detour the militants from their works. (5) A party which has the heart to be a true section of the International.⁸³

The reaction within the party to these events, meanwhile, was varied and uneven, with the Opposition retaining at least a residue of--if greatly diffused--support among the rank and file. Perhaps symbolic of the feelings of many are a series of letters

sent to Souvarine by a youthful and inexperienced militant named Maurice Thorez. Late in March in response to Souvarine's open letter to the subscribers of Bulletin Communiste Thorez wrote him to assure him of his full support in founding a new Marxist review and enclosed 40 francs for this purpose.⁸⁴ Two weeks later Thorez was even more explicit in his support:

I am resolved to put my name beside those comrades who approve the [Souvarine's] theses . . . I approve of your attitude on the Russian question. I agree with you on the artificial nature of the French crisis. I consider the use of classifications such as "Right, Left and Center," which have been applied to militants with no other explanation, as completely arbitrary . . . I do not think one can talk of things such as optimism, bolshevization etc. by the use of meaningless words and phrases and denouncing as pessimists those who call for reason, study and work.⁸⁵

Four days later, in sending payment for a copy of Trotsky's Le Cours nouveau, Thorez requested advice on what position he should take within his local federation.⁸⁶ In early May Thorez observed: "All our sections are aware not only of the problems, but also of the positions certain people have taken on the problem. Of these the majority are in agreement that Trotsky is not a Menshevik and that the real Rightists are not those presently being termed as the party's Right."⁸⁷

Despite the apparent support for Treint's policies opinions continued to be diverse. Some such as Vaillant-Couturier,⁸⁸ and the Fédération des Jeunesses Communistes favored formulating a new set of theses in order to restore party unity.⁸⁹ Others, such as a number of militants in the Federation of the Seine, took a position of "neither Treint nor Souvarine."⁹⁰ Many more spoke of the need

for understanding, mutual concession, unity etc.⁹¹ Even among Treint's nominal supporters enthusiasm and support was not always firm. Louis Sellier, in a polemic attacking the Opposition, observed:

We did not discover today that Comrade Treint thinks, and thus speaks and writes, in a highly personal manner. His ideas contain a certain number of historical formulas which are not always the most well chosen . . . some of the abrupt judgements he utters could be a little better thought out. . . . Comrade Treint's methods have at least one advantage insofar as his ideas can be more easily combatted than those who are presently in the wrong".⁹²

Another Treint supporter noted: "We don't treat Treint kindly when he is at fault" ⁹³ For many the issues provoked only confusion and bewilderment, feelings which usually worked to the benefit of Treint's faction. A "modest militant from the provinces," noting that the party was only a "recent ideological formation," maintained that "the bulk of our adherents and sympathizers are incapable of assimilating. . . theoretical discussions and taking a position, and if this group gains the impression of leadership rivalries it will have disastrous consequences for party discipline. That is why we are in accord with the Central Committee which has condemned the indiscipline of Souvarine. . . ." ⁹⁴ Another militant writing to Monatte perhaps summed it up best when he wrote: "What does all this mean? What is this bomb which has exploded in the midst of battle?" ⁹⁵

Throughout the month of May the polemics continued unabated as both sides struggled for positions at the upcoming National Congress. Despite the intensity of the struggle the debate at this point still did not reflect fundamental strategic differences but only different degrees of

fidelity to Moscow. Treint, as in the two preceding months, continued to strike blindly, reaching new heights of fantasy. Souvarine's main aim, he charged, was twofold: to create "a base of agreement between the Russian Opposition bloc and the Central Committee," while at the same time "embarking on a program of revisionism" and "clear-obscure confusionism."⁹⁶ Others in Treint's faction also hammered with relentless efficiency on the theme of alleged ties with the Russian Opposition. "To support the Central Committee of the Russian party and the Russian party itself," wrote Sellier, "is to defend the future fortress of the French and world revolutions. . . . We request that the French party avoid making the gesture of Pontius Pilate in the face of a problem as grave as this. We ask you not to fall for the cleverness of Comrade Souvarine who covers his political errors and acts of indiscipline with the thought and personality of Comrade Trotsky."⁹⁷ "Henceforth," declared Roger Rieu, "the P.C.F. will be on the side of the Russian party in its struggle against the petit bourgeois deviations of the Opposition."⁹⁸

These attacks, sustained as they were, failed, however, to blunt the edge of the Opposition's criticism. Responding to Treint's charge of factionalism, Monatte noted: "There is nothing more sterile than official optimism There is nothing more stupid than wasting an interminable amount of time trying to decide what is 'Right' and what is 'Left' Treint's geography is fantasy." As to his own factional position Monatte could only state: "If one must absolutely have factions in the French party I ask for the liberty of being classified in neither the Right, Center or Left, but only to be

placed in the small, but hopefully growing corner, which might be termed the Gauche ouvrière." For Monatte, working class militant par excellence, the real and abiding concern was with the non-proletarian composition of the party and the failure to establish a firm foothold within the working class. In Monatte's view this shortcoming was traceable at least in part, to the party's labor policies. What was at fault, Monatte argued, was the party's unwillingness to allow its labor commissions, the special organs that had been created for trade union work, to function properly. The commissions existed largely on "paper," Monatte contended, primarily because Treint preferred silence and inaction to "living" organs expressing their own opinions drawn from day to day experiences. The solution, he felt, was largely a matter of giving the "paper commissions" a "real life."⁹⁹

Because of his growing fears that the "spirit of working class communism" was rapidly being replaced by the "spirit of politicians," Monatte gradually came to express doubts about the reorganization of the party on the basis of factory cells. While conceding the necessity of transferring the base of the party from street sections to factories, Monatte counseled against hasty and ill-prepared action. In citing some of the problems that had arisen with the creation of factory cells, Monatte observed: "Such a beginning is worse than inaction." To remedy matters, while at the same time insuring the proletarianization of the party, Monatte proposed that provisions be made for membership in both street and factory cells which would insure the double representation of working class elements at party gatherings.¹⁰⁰

The dust had hardly settled from the resignations from l'Humanité when the Opposition received another stunning defeat at the National Council meeting of June 1 and 2 when the Central Committee theses were approved by an overwhelming vote of 2,353 to 3 with 10 abstentions.¹⁰¹ The discussion of issues at the meeting indicated that most of those retaining power in the party were aware of the fundamental identity of interest between the Russian and French conflicts and the speeches were therefore little more than paeans to the inspired leadership of Treint and the Russian triumvirate. Sellier noted that at the Congress of Lyon everyone had been uninformed because Souvarine had furnished only partial information and had kept hidden certain documents intended for the party's use. Souvarine, Sellier also charged, was guilty of printing Le Cours nouveau in a clandestine manner.¹⁰² Pierre Séward echoed Treint's charge of an "international Right" with headquarters in Russia and a branch in France.¹⁰³ Another delegate affirmed that although he had been introduced to Communism by Trotsky, great revolutionaries could be mistaken.¹⁰⁴ August Guralsky, the Comintern delegate, after a strong condemnation of the Opposition, was fulsome in his praise of Treint: "He has a remarkable flair for discovering reformists, " and always "sees far and clear."¹⁰⁵ Following the proceedings a telegram was sent to the Communist International proclaiming full solidarity with the Russian majority on all points.¹⁰⁶

Defeat Before the International

Following the culmination of the Opposition's long series of

defeats at the National Council of St. Denis, the Opposition's main focus of activity shifted briefly to the Communist International with the convening of the Fifth World Congress in Moscow on June 17. For Zinoviev it was crucial that each member party bring with it a condemnation of the "international Right" and statements of support for his own policies. When the Federation of the Seine-Inferieure passed a resolution suggesting that the P.C.F., because of insufficient information, should go to the Congress uncommitted, Zinoviev was prompted to intervene.¹⁰⁷ In order to insure a "monolithically Bolshevik" French delegation to the Fifth Congress Zinoviev utilized the services of his two emissaries to the French party, Kirsch and Guralsky. Of the two the most important was Guralsky, whose work ultimately proved crucial in the outcome of the struggle.¹⁰⁸ Guralsky's work methods were always indirect. He chose never to appear at Central Committee meetings but always to meet secretly with one or with several leaders at a time.¹⁰⁹ During the period immediately preceding the Fifth World Congress much of his time was devoted to working within provincial federations where his position carried even greater weight.¹¹⁰

Shortly before the opening of the Congress Treint had recognized an opportunity to strike a decisive blow against Souvarine. On June 12 at a preliminary meeting of the Comintern Executive a motion was made in the name of the French delegation to deprive Souvarine of his seat on the Executive. "Souvarine," the resolution charged, "no longer represents the opinion of the French party." Among the charges leveled against him were the following: (1) He

refused to follow in Bulletin Communiste the line adopted by the party. (2) He attempted to discredit the party leadership and sought to found a new Marxist review in his open letter to the subscribers of Bulletin Communiste. (3) He refused to transmit to his successors the necessary materials for the proper functioning of Bulletin Communiste. (4) He published against the will of the party Trotsky's Le Cours nouveau and added his own "tendentious" preface which discredited the leadership in the eyes of the militants.¹¹¹

Souvarine, caught unaware by Treint's maneuver, responded by decrying the "pogrom atmosphere" in the party, suggesting: "It is less a question of my indiscipline than of obtaining the unanimity which has become à la mode in the International . . . It is difficult to express opinions without becoming immediately suspect." Noting that when he was a soldier he was once punished with four days confinement by a corporal only to have it raised to eight by a captain, to 15 by a colonel and to a month by the commanding general of the regiment, Souvarine asked: "Will an analogous method be employed here?"¹¹² Zinoviev responded by charging that "Souvarine has always been his own worst enemy," and that his words had an "anti-Communist ring." "Is it wrong," asked Zinoviev, "that unanimity should reign in the party?"¹¹³

A special commission was set up to resolve the Souvarine question with Stewart of the British party as chairman. Souvarine, however, refused to legitimize the commission by attending any of its sessions. Even so, Souvarine still had some support within the commission. Guy Jerrame, Ercoli (Togliatti) and Bordiga pleaded

for the recognition of extenuating circumstances, maintaining that discipline in the P.C.F. was relaxed at the time and that the party was characterized by personal polemics. Jerrane maintained that many in the French party would not understand the expulsions, and in any case the demand had not been clearly formulated and discussed. Sellier responded by maintaining that the case had been sufficiently discussed at all levels and that Souvarine had already been severely censured by the Central Committee. Souvarine, he charged, had acted in a "most insolent and malicious manner" against the definite instructions of the Central Committee. "That which we could never forgive a simple worker we could still less forgive him."¹¹⁴

Following the discussions the commission found Souvarine guilty of "grave acts of indiscipline" which, by putting "personal susceptibilities above the interests of the party," are an indication of a "petit bourgeois spirit." As a penalty Souvarine was to be expelled from the International and the P.C.F. with the provision that he could apply for readmission if he demonstrated his loyalty during the coming year.¹¹⁵ Only the five Italian members of the commission had voted against the measures.

The Congress itself, meanwhile, opened on June 17. In spite of the fact that it was to be Zinoviev's gathering from the start Trotsky's entrance was applauded with cries of "Long live the Red Army!"¹¹⁶ Of the three major Opposition leaders only Monatte was absent despite urgent appeals from Zinoviev and Lozovsky to make the trip.¹¹⁷ Rosmer, writing from Moscow upon hearing rumors that he and Monatte would be asked to resume their posts

and that Treint and Souvarine would be kept in Moscow, was able to express a note of cautious optimism: "On the whole the situation remains about the same as it has always been though aggravated by an unrelenting and hypocritical persecution of the Opposition."¹¹⁸

Zinoviev, in a four hour opening statement, set the tone of the Congress by laying down a new set of tactics for the international Communist movement. At the core of Zinoviev's analysis was the belief that a new revolutionary situation was rapidly approaching. The "democratic-pacifist era," he maintained, was drawing to a close. To meet this challenge a "world party of Leninism" was required. What this meant for the individual parties Zinoviev, expropriating Treint's phrase, argued, was "bolshevization," which he defined as:

The inflexible will to achieve the hegemony of the proletariat; it is a fiery hate of all bourgeois counter-revolutionary Social Democratic leaders, of the Center and Centerists, of the semi-Centerists and pacifists, of all bourgeois ideology. Bolshevization means the formation of a strongly centered, monolithic, centralized organization that eradicates in a friendly manner all differences in its ranks as Lenin taught us to do. Bolshevization is Marxism in action, it means devotion to the ideal of the proletariat, to the ideas of Comrade Lenin.¹¹⁹

The slogan of the coming period was therefore to be: "To the masses by means of the bolshevization of the party."¹²¹

Despite the apparent unanimity given to Treint's policies several important divergences were manifested in the French delegation. Monmousseau and Sémard, a contemporary claimed,

were "arch-hostile" to Treint because of his sectarianism. Some such as Sellier and Cachin favored a return to parliamentary methods and sought to avoid conflicts in the delegation. Others favored placing greater emphasis on anti-militarist activities.¹²²

Bolshevization

To a casual observer the P.C.F. during the summer months of 1924 might have appeared to have returned to a state of relative normalcy. Unlike the preceding six months no controversies graced the pages of Bulletin Communiste. Beneath the surface, however, the mood was not one of tranquility. It was during these months that the full implications of the Fifth World Congress became clear as the P.C.F. underwent a major organizational revolution. These changes can be summed up in one word: bolshevization. The rough outlines of bolshevization were first laid down on January 21, 1924, which by a strange coincidence was the day Lenin died, when the Executive of the Communist International published a general plan for the reorganization of Communist parties. In June and July the Fifth World Congress reaffirmed these plans, multiplied their application and codified them systematically. In defining bolshevization the theses on tactics adopted by the Congress listed five essential characteristics:

- (1) The party must become a real mass organization by maintaining close liaison with the workers and expressing their aspirations.
- (2) The party must have tactical flexibility.
- (3) It must be essentially revolutionary and Marxist.
- (4) It must be centralized and monolithic, allowing no factions within it.

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it must devote itself to systematic anti-military work.¹²³

Organizationally, the main thrust of bolshevization within the F. was threefold. The first concern was with altering the relation of the party's membership by substituting the factory for street section as the basic unit. In theory this was expected to induce a qualitative transformation of the party by giving it a more proletarian character and destroying electoral opportunism. In practice the shift brought endless complications. Historically, the decision to reform the P.C.F. on the basis of factory cells was first made at the meeting of the Federation of the Seine in May of 1923 at which a report stated: "The principle action of the party . . . must be to create new organizations for its members based on factories and workshops."¹²⁴ Of the party federations only the Federation of the Seine pursued the task systematically but even so managed to create more than a dozen cells.¹²⁵ On August 12, 1924 a directive was sent to all federations and sections calling for immediate reorganization setting a deadline of December 21, 1924.¹²⁶ Progress, however, was often slow and haphazard at best. Many of the problems which retarded the creation of viable factory cells were structural in origin, arising out of the differences between large and small scale industry, type of work, the manner of work organization, mobility, etc. The aggressive action by employers and the easy vulnerability of party members also contributed to making the cells unattractive to the average worker. When operative cells were created they often proved out to be quite fragile and the departure of a few militants could easily provoke their collapse. And even in the most viable

cells activities were often largely confined to the publication of a factory newspaper.¹²⁷

A second organizational element of bolshevization consisted of destroying the traditional autonomy of local party organs in favor of absolute centralization. An important aspect of this centralization process was the enlargement and internal hierarchization of the Central Committee itself. Party publications, local and national alike, were subjected to an unprecedented degree of control.¹²⁸ A third aspect was the creation of a specially groomed cadre of leaders and the development of a tight network of functionaries. In September of 1924, Guralsky, addressing a conference of federation secretaries, observed: "The armor of a revolutionary party must consist of a vast network of professional revolutionaries."¹²⁹ In creating this network old militants could not be relied on and a new cadre, specially educated from the beginning, had to be carefully molded. To accomplish this task a special Communist educational structure was set up extending from local party night classes to the Lenin school in Moscow. The key institution in this network was the Leninist school at Bobigny which was started in the fall of 1924 with a class of 60 and had as one of its main instructors the Comintern representative Guralsky. So important was this school in the bolshevization process that party members often referred to bolshevization as "Bobignization."¹³⁰ Bolshevization had its more ludicrous aspects as well when party terms often become Russified. The word "cell," for example, is a translation of the Russian word iatcheika and its use during the early 20's often had pejorative connotations signifying jailbird. Other Russified terms

frequently used included agit-prop, orgs-office, nucleus, and rayon.¹³¹ It was during this period that the name of the party theoretical journal was changed from Bulletin Communiste to Cahiers du Bolchévisme.

Defeat Before the Party

While these changes were taking place the Opposition, badly chastized, remained relatively quiet but not inactive. During this lull certain divergences arose between members of the Opposition. Monatte favored an immediate and direct offensive while Rosmer counseled caution, believing that any bad or premature action would only strengthen Treint's hand.¹³² Instead, Rosmer preferred to wait until the "grumblers in the corner" spoke up, in the meantime gathering written data for a well prepared counter-attack against the "so-called Leninist Left."¹³³ Rosmer's strategy was to prevail.

Several small scale confrontations did, however, develop in August and September. Early in August at a meeting of the Central Committee a fiscal retrenchment plan was announced which called for closing down the Nîmes and Strasbourg editions of l'Humanité, a number of other specialized publications such as La Voix Paysanne, l'Avant-Garde, l'Ouvrière and most of the provincial weeklies, as well as a major cutback on the staff of l'Humanité. Several Central Committee members protested vigorously and Rosmer viewed it as an attempt to purge "undesirables," fearing that it would lead to a "general demoralization."¹³⁴ Forced on the defensive the party leadership felt compelled to call a special assembly of information for the Federation of the Seine for August 17. To insure that the gathering would be

carefully manipulated only written questions were allowed and consequently most controversial issues were avoided. In spite of these precautions a question managed to get through to Suzanne Girault about rumors of Lenin's testament, to which she responded: "Yes, comrades, there exists a testament of Lenin: he has left us twenty volumes."¹³⁵ Rosmer speaking of the refusal to allow questions from the floor succinctly noted: "For the new party ignorance is evidently the first Communist principle."¹³⁶

A turning point of sorts came with the conference of federation secretaries held in Paris on September 22-23 for the purpose of hearing reports from the French delegation to the Fifth Congress. Once again only written questions were permitted. Monatte, however, to the surprise of many insisted on the verbal question period that had always been customary at party gatherings. When his demand was unexpectedly granted he took the floor to defend Souvarine and attack the party leadership. The secretary from the Vendée, Gauillou, seconded Monatte's criticisms by calling for re-opening of the Souvarine case and raised again the question of Lenin's testament. Another delegate took the floor to express astonishment that Trotsky's name had not been mentioned, while yet another attacked the party's financial management.¹³⁷ Drama was injected into the proceedings when a member of the Treint faction pointed his finger at Monatte and Rosmer and declared: "You who are almost outside the party"¹³⁸ The conference ended on an ominous note with a resolution against factionalism demanding that they "comply clearly with the ideas and slogans of the International" and mandating the Political

Bureau with the authority to take "all necessary measures" to secure this compliance.¹³⁹ The handwriting was now clearly on the wall.

It was at this point that Treint, in Moscow at the time, apparently decided upon a course of action that would lead to Monatte and Rosmer's expulsion and began to lay the necessary groundwork. Treint's first act was to write Monatte with a request that he write an article condemning the Swedish Communist leader Höguland. Monatte's response was to ignore the letter. Sometimes after this the Political Bureau sent formal letters to Monatte, Rosmer, Delagarde¹⁴⁰ and Rieu¹⁴¹ demanding that they state their opinions on the following: (1) If they were prepared to submit to the decision of the Fifth World Congress and conference of federation secretaries. (2) If they were prepared to undertake political and organizational tasks for the party. (3) Their position on the Swedish question.¹⁴² Rieu immediately capitulated, declaring: "The line adopted by the Fifth World Congress is the only line which follows the teachings of Lenin." His own opposition, he maintained, had been completely different from that of the others. Feeling himself insufficiently degraded, Rieu gratuitously added that he felt the present party leadership had done more in the past few months than the preceding leadership had done in the past few years.¹⁴³

On October 5 Rosmer, Monatte and Delagarde issued their response in the form of an open letter which was to be the first round of the Opposition's long awaited counter-attack. Speaking of themselves as "militant Communists from the first hour, more disciplined and devoted than any of those accusing us," the three recounted their activities since 1914. "At no moment," they declared,

"did we work against the decisions of the Fifth World Congress . . . not even the heavy sanctions imposed on Comrade Souvarine." As to specific changes they asked: "How have we manifested our desire to injure the party, to break it up, to distort it? You have failed to say. We have done exactly the contrary and are not ashamed to prove it." Little doubt was left as to where they would stand in the future: "No one will succeed in passing us off as saboteurs of the party and of the efforts to prepare the proletariat for revolution."¹⁴⁴

On October 7 the first blow fell when Maurice Chambelland was expelled after having accused a member of the Treint faction of having stolen 14,500 francs from the party treasury.¹⁴⁵ Treint's efforts to expel the Opposition leaders gained added momentum with a new outbreak of the Russian crisis brought on by the publication of Trotsky's Lessons of October, which was a direct attack on the revolutionary credibility of Zinoviev and Kamenev. Treint lost no time in exploiting the issue. The Russian Opposition, he charged in a November 21 article, had joined the Second International and the bourgeoisie in an attempt to destroy the Russian Revolution. With an eye to the French party he observed: "The party is not an instrument for rewarding past services of its militants however large they may be; the party is an instrument for preparing, by incessant day to day struggles, for the revolutionary future of the proletariat . . . Homogeneous ideology, homogeneous policies, homogeneous structure, homogeneous leadership; we shall make our party into a block of steel which nothing can penetrate."¹⁴⁶ A week later Treint followed up his attack by introducing a resolution at the Central Committee meeting condemning

Trotsky for re-opening the conflict and for embracing a "distorted Leninism."¹⁴⁷

It was at this point that Rosmer, Monatte and Delagarde decided to cross the Rubicon and issued on November 22 what was intended to be the first of a series of open letters on the general situation in the party. Like most of the debate thus far the content of the letter did not reflect a sharp dividing line over fundamentals and no new criticisms were advanced. "A grave sickness," they contended, "had overcome the International since the death of Lenin" and the retreat brought on by it was "all too visible." In defining their position the three made clear their solidarity with Trotsky and the Russian Opposition: "We believe that at the moment it is Trotsky who thinks and acts in the genuine spirit of Leninism and not those who are presently attacking him while draping themselves with the mantle of Leninism. . . We know very well that if tomorrow Trotsky rallied to the majority in the Russian Communist party the same French Communists who are now labeling us petit bourgeoisie and counter-revolutionary would be the first to adulate him and to find us insufficiently Trotskyite."

Internally, the party leadership was criticized on four grounds:

- (1) Of running the party without consulting the Central Committee.
- (2) Of destroying l'Humanité.
- (3) Of placing the party in a state of acute financial crisis.
- (4) Of bureaucratizing the party.

On this latter charge the letter concluded with the following:

From top to bottom in the party there has flowed a cascade of slogans which must be obeyed without understanding them and especially without muttering anything other than the sacramental "Captain, you are right!" A barracks room mentality is in the process of being formed in the party and the morals of non-commissioned officers have become the norm . . . Soon the bureaucratization of the party will be worse than that of the French state . . . Only Communist parrots can speak of the unity of the French party without laughing The French party risks becoming like a South American Republic where there is a coup d'état every three months. 148

Treint's faction lost little time in responding to the challenge.

On November 30 l'Humanité published a short notice by the Political Bureau declaring that it had received word of "a brochure and certain other materials" being diffused within the party by the "Right." The Political Bureau, it was announced, would attempt to verify the reports, and: "If these facts are true immediate expulsion will be imposed." 149 The conference was composed of the Central Committee and one representative from each federation and rayon. Speaking in behalf of the three, Rosmer read a short declaration restating their earlier criticisms. No new tactical conclusions, however, were derived for the future, but only the admonition:

To those who also find the party distasteful and desire to follow us we can say only: "Comrades, remain within the party and drive out those who have banished us. Remain inside and carry out the primary task of reorganizing the party on the basis of factory cells and help make those cells living . . ." For our part, even though expelled from the party, we do not at present envision the creation of another party, but intend only to remain within the great mass of communists outside the party who will one day doubtlessly constitute a real communist party . . . As we declared in our letter of October 5 we shall return to from where we came. There were only a handful of us to save internationalism in France in 1914; to spread the slogans of the

Zimmerwald movement in 1915; to defend the Russian Revolution in 1917; to adhere to the Third International in 1919; to defend the tactics of the United Front in 1922.¹⁵⁰

The result was a foregone conclusion. The motion of expulsion passed nearly unanimously with only one abstention. The three, a declaration of the Political Bureau later stated, were guilty of defending Trotskyite errors against Leninism," and of conducting themselves "as enemies of the party and the International."¹⁵¹ Treint was not content to let matters rest here. Throughout December attempts were made to get federations and rayons to fall into line by passing resolutions condemning the three Oppositionists, and a campaign of vilification against them was launched in the party press. The three, it was alleged, were "declared enemies of the International, Russian and French parties," and in fact were "worse than Souvarine".¹⁵¹ The expulsions, however, had at least one unintended consequence for Treint. According to reports from Moscow Zinoviev was taken by surprise by the expulsions, demanded an immediate explanation, and took at least preliminary steps to secure their immediate reintegration. Treint was shortly called to Moscow and warned against further expulsions.¹⁵²

The first phase of the Opposition's activity had now drawn to a close. While opposition within the party would occasionally resurface--sometimes with great momentum--the main efforts of the Opposition's activity would henceforth be directed toward developing a strategy of regroupment outside the party.

The party crisis of 1924 began as a minor outbreak of discontent by Souvarine over the situation in the Russian party.

In the ensuing debate new issues were continually raised but the most significant feature of the discussions continued to be their polemical character. The actual differences between the Opposition and the leadership were more a matter of emphasis rather than principle and underlying issues of a theoretical and strategic nature were rarely raised. Both sides accepted the basic premises of Leninism and the tactical and strategic analysis laid down by the Communist International. The tendency of both groups to oversimplify the world situation, and to cast their aspirations in the form of a few uncompromising formulas was perhaps best exemplified by the British Labor Party dispute. Only one internal issue of any lasting significance was raised throughout the controversy; that of the question of bureaucratic leadership, the relationship between "top" and "bottom" in the party. Concurrent with this polemical debate was the elaboration and perfection of the institutions of party organization and control. Of key importance in this process was the close ties between the party leadership and the Russian majority. While organizational power determined the outcome of the controversy the Opposition compounded their weakness in this regard by their divisions and by a series of tactical blunders, the most damaging of which was the failure to struggle on an offensive basis.

Notes

¹For a short biographical vignette of Souvarine see appendix one. For an extended analysis of Souvarine's political career see Clarence Brown, "Boris Souvarine and the French Communist Movement" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1966). On Souvarine Victor Serge has made the following observation: "Boris Souvarine, a Russian Jew by origin but a naturalized Frenchman, had no Socialist background; he came to us at the age of twenty five from the world of left-wing journalism rather than from the working class movement, with an amazing zest for knowledge and action. Slight and short, his eyes masked by lenses of unusual thickness, speech lisping slightly, manner aggressive and often quick both to offend and to take offense, he had a habit of coming out suddenly with awkward questions; he would deliver mercilessly realistic verdicts on French personalities and events, and amuse himself by deflating swollen heads by short pinpricks of his own devising All the time he showed a magnificent facility for analysis, a lively grasp of realities, and an aptitude for polemic that was designed to leave a trail of indignation wherever he went Souvarine despite his expulsion from the Comintern in 1924 was for some ten years one of the most trenchant and perceptive brains of European Communism." Victor Serge, Memoirs of a Revolutionary (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 143-144.

Several works deal with the formative years of French Communism. The two most indispensable are Robert Wohl, French Communism in the Making 1914-1924 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), and Annie Kriegel, Aux origines du communisme français 1914-1920 (Paris: Moulton, 1964). Also useful are George Lichtheim, Marxism in Modern France (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966); Christian Gras, Alfred Rosmer et le mouvement révolutionnaire (Paris: Maspero, 1971); André Ferrat, Histoire du Parti communiste français (Paris: Bureau d'Éditions, 1931); Gérard Walter, Historie du Parti communiste français (Paris: Librairie Somogy, 1948).

²For a biographical sketch of Treint see appendix one. See also Roger Hagnauer, "Albert Treint: Des souvenirs presque déconcertants," La Révolution Proletarienne, January, 1972. Robert Wohl has described Treint in the following terms: "Treint had joined the S.F.I.O. in 1910, but his Socialism . . . bore the imprint of the War. A schoolteacher by profession, he had emerged from the War with the rank of captain and the honorific title of Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur--which earned for him in the party ranks, the nickname 'Captain Treint'. This epithet summed up his character. A man of extremes with a mind that leaped over obstacles rather than working its way through them and a suspicion of others that verged on paranoia, Treint was a storm trooper of the Revolution, a man who applied to Socialist politics the methods of an army camp." Wohl, op. cit., pp. 214-215.

³See Walter, op. cit., pp. 125-138; Wohl, op. cit., pp. 314-331. Other useful information on the Ruhr crisis can be found in Julius Braunthal, History of the International 1914-1943 (Bristol: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967), pp. 273-284.

⁴See the letters from Jules Humbert-Droz to Zinoviev, April 3 and June 14, 1923. In Jules Humbert-Droz, L'Oeil de Moscou à Paris 1922-1924 (Paris: Julliard, 1964), pp. 190-193.

⁵Souvarine, "Les social traîtres et le front unique," Bulletin Communiste, March 1, 1923, "Le courage de la lâcheté," Bulletin Communiste, March 15, 1923, and "L'Occasion manquée," Bulletin Communiste, March 23, 1923.

⁶Treint, "Souvarine exorcise des fantômes," Bulletin Communiste, September 30, 1923.

⁷Souvarine, "Quelques problèmes internationaux," Bulletin Communiste, August 23, 1923.

⁸Treint (pseudonym "Bertreint"), "Discussion sur l'imperialisme et le capitalisme ouvrier," Bulletin Communiste, March 29, 1923, and, "Sur l'imperialisme ouvrier," Bulletin Communiste, April 12, 1923.

⁹Souvarine, "Remarque à propos de l'imperialisme," Bulletin Communiste, March 29, 1923.

¹⁰Zinoviev, "Sur l'imperialisme," Bulletin Communiste, July 5, 1923.

¹¹For biographical information on Sellier see appendix one. On Sellier Robert Wohl has written: "Louis Sellier was another Jauressian. An elegantly upturned mustache gave him a look that could be interpreted as affable or slippery; close associates found him both. Sellier's talents lay in the direction of administration and vote getting rather than journalism." Wohl, op. cit., p. 214.

¹²See appendix one. Wohl has described Dunois as follows: "Dunois was a soft and mild man who had made his way to Socialism by way of anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism. A lawyer by education, he earned his living writing for left-wing journals, among them l'Humanité, of which he became editor in 1918. From the beginning he devoted himself to the problem of relations between the syndicalists and the party, on which he could bring to bear the advantages of his connections with the Vie Ouvrière group." Wohl, op. cit., pp. 213-214.

¹³See appendix one. For further information on Jules Humbert-Droz see in particular his memoirs, De Lénine à Staline: Dix ans au service de l'International communiste, 1921-1931 (Neuchâtel: Editions de la Baconnière, 1971), and J. Gallienne, "Jules Humbert-Droz" La Revolution Proletarienne, November 1971.

¹⁴Humbert-Droz to Zinoviev, June 14, 1923. In Jules Humbert-Droz, Origines et debuts des Parties communistes des pays Latins, 1919-1923 (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel publishing Co., 1970), pp. 480-492.

¹⁵Humbert-Droz to Zinoviev, June 23, 1923. Ibid., pp. 492-493. In this letter Humbert-Droz also presciently noted: "The formation of a party of the elect within the party could have grave consequences someday."

¹⁶Treint, "La Reorganization du Parti," Bulletin Communiste, July 12, 1923.

¹⁷Humbert-Droz to Zinoviev, September 10, 1923. In Humbert-Droz, L'Oeil, op. cit., pp. 204-209.

¹⁸"Une mise au point nécessaire," Contre le Courant, June 28, 1928.

¹⁹Souvarine, "Une brochure de Leon Trotsky," Bulletin Communiste, April 19, 1923.

²⁰Souvarine, "Le XIIe congrès du Parti bolchevik," Bulletin Communiste, April 12, 1923.

²¹Souvarine, "L'Anniversaire de l'attentat contre Lénine," Bulletin Communiste, August 30, 1923.

²²Souvarine, "Les Etats-Unis d'Europe," Bulletin Communiste, September 6, 1923.

²³Souvarine, "Les tâches du Parti bolchevik," Bulletin Communiste, December 6, 1923.

²⁴Souvarine, "Le XIIIe congrès du Parti bolchevik," December 13, 1923.

²⁵Souvarine, "Notre congrès," Bulletin Communiste, December 20, 1923.

²⁶Souvarine, "Notre congrès," op. cit.

²⁷Letter of Peri, "Ce que disent les militants," Bulletin Communiste, January 11, 1924.

²⁸Letter of Merrant, "Ce que disent les militants," Bulletin Communiste, January 4, 1924.

²⁹Letter of Monsarrat, "Ce que disent les militants," Bulletin Communiste, January 11, 1924.

³⁰Letter of Carron, "Ce que disent les militants," Bulletin Communiste, January 18, 1924.

³¹Souvarine, "Le 'cours nouveau' du Parti bolchevik," Bulletin Communiste, December 27 and January 4, 1924.

³²This letter is mentioned in Branko Lazitch, "Two Instruments of control by the Comintern." In Drachkovitch and Lazitch, The Comintern: Historical Highlights, Essays, Recollections, Documents (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 56.

³³Quoted in ibid., p. 56.

³⁴Quoted in ibid., p. 56.

³⁵Jules Humbert-Droz, for one, feared that the Congress of Lyon might turn into an open free-for-all between Treint and Souvarine. See Humbert-Droz to Zinoviev, December 8, 1923 and January 2, 1924 in L'Oeil, op. cit., pp. 215-220, 223-227.

³⁶These letters can be found in the "Ce que disent les militants" column of Bulletin Communiste for January 4, 11 and 18, 1924.

³⁷Souvarine, "Les congrès de Lyon," Bulletin Communiste, January 4, 1924. Jules Humbert-Droz also criticized the report in terms similar to Souvarine. See Humbert-Droz to Zinoviev, January 2, 1924. In Humbert-Droz, L'Oeil, op. cit., pp. 223-227.

³⁸For an account of the Congress of Lyon see the issues of l'Humanité from January 21-26, 1924. The resolutions passed by the Congress are contained in the January 26 issue.

³⁹Quoted in Brown, op. cit., p. 115.

⁴⁰See "Procès verbal du Comité directeur, séance du 25 janvier," l'Humanité, January 27, 1924.

⁴¹See "Lozovsky nous parle des choses de France et de Russie," l'Humanité, January 30, 1924.

⁴²See appendix one for a biographical sketch of Suzanne Girault. A contemporary described her as a "second rate Catherine the Great, brutal, vulgar, ferociously ambitious." Dunois to Humbert-Droz, February 2, 1925. In Humbert-Droz, L'Oeil, op. cit., p. 227. And Robert Wohl: "Of all the Communist leaders she was the least attached to any ideology. A political manipulator rather than a working class militant, she was almost certainly an agent of the G. P. U." Wohl, op. cit., p. 428.

⁴³See appendix one.

⁴⁴"Résolution sur la question russe," Bulletin Communiste, April 4, 1924.

⁴⁵l'Humanité, February 18, 1924.

⁴⁶Details of this victory and its implications are to be found in R. W. Lyman, The First Labour Government, 1924 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1957); G. D. H. Cole, A History of the Labour Party from 1914 (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1958).

⁴⁷For biographical information on Rosmer see appendix one. A full account of Rosmer's life and political development can be found in Charles Gras, op. cit. Also useful is Charles Hagnauer, "Alfred Rosmer un révolutionnaire des temps difficiles," La Révolution Proletarienne, May 1964. Rosmer's partial autobiography for much of this period is contained in his, Lenin's Moscow (London: Pluto Press, 1971). Victor Serge has described Rosmer in the following terms: "Beneath his half smile Rosmer incarnated the qualities of vigilance, discretion, silence and dedication." Serge, op. cit., p. 104. And Robert Wohl: "A civil servant by occupation, Rosmer was a thin stooped man, friendly, sincere, self effacing and absolutely dedicated to the liberation of the working class. Forty years later the brittle fire of his spirit could still be glimpsed through sparkling eyes. Consistent in a way few men dare to be, he made his entire life a revolt against the hypocrisy of bourgeois society. Honesty not power was his aim. Without personal ambition, Rosmer moved in the shadows of more self assertive men." Wohl, op. cit., p. 216.

⁴⁸Wohl, op. cit., p. 374.

⁴⁹"Lettre ouverte au Labor Party," Bulletin Communiste, April 4, 1924.

⁵⁰A. Lozovsky, "Pas d'illusions," l'Humanité, February 2, 1924.

⁵¹Rosmer, "Illusions Réformistes," l'Humanité, February 9, 1924.

⁵²Rosmer, "Réponse de Rosmer," Bulletin Communiste, February 15, 1924.

⁵³Souvarine, "Londres et Moscou," l'Humanité, February 14, 1924.

⁵⁴Souvarine, "Le Labour Party au pouvoir," Bulletin Communiste, February 22, 1924.

⁵⁵Wohl, op. cit., p. 374.

⁵⁶Souvarine, "Le Labour Party au pouvoir," op. cit.

⁵⁷Souvarine, "Nos crimes," Bulletin Communiste, March 7, 1924.

⁵⁸Souvarine, "Le cinquieme anniversaire de l'Internationale communiste," Bulletin Communiste, March 7, 1924.

⁵⁹Treint, "Communistes et travaillistes," Bulletin Communiste, March 14, 1924.

⁶⁰Souvarine's rejoinder appended to Treint, "Communistes et travaillistes," op. cit.

⁶¹Souvarine, "Lettre aux abonnées du Bulletin Communiste," Bulletin Communiste, April 4, 1924. In replying to his letter the Central Committee asserted: "The working class members of our organization who, for their part scrupulously respect party discipline will be unable to comprehend how the most highly ranked militants benefit from favoritism . . . We are sure we reflect the unanimous opinion of the party." Central Committee rejoinder appended to ibid.

⁶²This meeting was mentioned by Treint in "Contre Trotsky: sur la question des perspectives révolutionnaires," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, November 28, 1924.

⁶³Wohl, op. cit., p. 377. Early in March a vote of censure was secured against Souvarine in Treint's Federation of the Seine.

⁶⁴Lazitch, op. cit., p. 48.

⁶⁵Quoted in Sellier, "Tout le Parti autour de sa direction," Bulletin Communiste, May 2, 1924, No record of the theses exists.

⁶⁶"Les jeunes dans la crise du Parti," Bulletin Communiste, May 2, 1924. The main objections to Treint's theses centered around its "false analysis of French capitalism," "revision of the united front" and "attacks against the party leadership." The theses, it was claimed "mechanically transposed" many of the aspects of the German and Russian conflicts to France.

⁶⁷"Thèses sur le tactique du P.C.F. et sur les problèmes posés devant l'Internationale communiste," Bulletin Communiste, March 28, 1924.

⁶⁸Souvarine, "Résolution sur la situation générale et l'Internationale communiste," Bulletin Communiste, April 11, 1924.

⁶⁹For biographical data on Monatte see appendix one. Robert Wohl has described Monatte in the following terms: "Like his friend Rosmer, a déclassé, Monatte had made his way from Blanquism to revolutionary syndicalism, the doctrine to which he remained faithful throughout his life. A rarity in a country noted for its opportunists,

Monatte dedicated his life to the working class movement, yet always remained in its wings, preferring the role of conscience to the position of leadership that could easily have been his. Though he was a journalist rather than an organizer, his prestige in syndicalist circles was immense. To many he seemed to symbolize the coming revolution." Wohl, op. cit., p. 215.

⁷⁰ Monatte, "Déclaration de Monatte au Comité directeur du 18 mars 1928," Bulletin Communiste, April 4, 1924.

⁷¹ Wohl, op. cit., p. 378. Amadeé Dunois, a Central Committee member in Moscow at the time, later stated that had he been present he would have joined Monatte and Souvarine in voting against, Dunois to Sellier, April 8, 1924. In Pierre Monatte, Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme: les archives de Pierre Monatte (Paris: Maspero, 1968), pp. 375-376. Another French Communist, Mahouy, who had voted in favor of the theses later retroactively declared his opposition, claiming that Treint's later commentaries had modified the sense of their meaning. Sellier, "Tout le Parti autour de sa direction," Bulletin Communiste, May 2, 1924.

⁷² Treint, "Dans la voie tracée par Lénine," Bulletin Communiste, March 28, 1924.

⁷³ Treint, "Contre la droite internationale," Bulletin Communiste, April 18, 1924.

⁷⁴ "La vie du Parti: L'Assemblée fédérale de la Seine," l'Humanité, April 4, 1928.

⁷⁵ "La vie du Parti: L'Assemblée fédérale de la Seine," l'Humanité, April 6, 1924.

⁷⁶ "La vie du Parti: L'Assemblée fédérale de la Seine," l'Humanité, April 14, 1924. A participant later suggested that the majority attending the assembly were essentially uncommitted, with about one third listening, one third expressing an opinion (of whom a majority favored the opposition). Letter from a certain "Leon" to an unknown correspondent. Rappoport papers. Quoted in Wohl, op. cit., p. 380.

⁷⁷ Mention of this conference is made in l'Humanité, April 11, 1924. No account of the proceedings is given.

⁷⁸ Leon Trotsky, Le Cours nouveau (Paris: Librairie du travail, 1924). Souvarine's preface is found on pp. 3-12.

⁷⁹ For information on Charbit see appendix one.

⁸⁰ See appendix one.

⁸¹See appendix one.

⁸²See appendix one.

⁸³Antonini, Chambelland, Charbit, Godonnéche, Monatte, and Rosmer to Sellier. Undated. Published under: "A propos de quelques démissions," Bulletin Communiste, May 23, 1924.

⁸⁴Thorez to Souvarine, March 25, 1924. Reprinted in "Faits and documents," La Révolution Proletarienne, November 10, 1937.

⁸⁵Thorez to Souvarine, April 11, 1924. In ibid.

⁸⁶Thorez to Souvarine, April 15, 1924. In ibid.

⁸⁷Thorez to Souvarine, May 2, 1924. In ibid.

⁸⁸For information on Paul Vaillant-Couturier see appendix one.

⁸⁹Sellier, "Tout le Parti de sa direction," op. cit.; Roger Rieu, "Un peu de clarté," Bulletin Communiste, May 16, 1924.

⁹⁰Rieu, op. cit.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Sellier, op. cit.

⁹³Rieu, op. cit.

⁹⁴Marcel Bresson, "L'Opinion des militants," Bulletin Communiste, April 18, 1924.

⁹⁵Florinond Bonte to Monatte, March 28, 1924. In Monatte, Syndicalisme revolutionnaire et communisme, op. cit., p. 375.

⁹⁶Treint, "Le plus grand danger: contre tout confusionisme," Bulletin Communiste, May 9, 1924.

⁹⁷Sellier, "Le cours nouveau et la Parti francais," Bulletin Communiste, May 9, 1924.

⁹⁸Rieu, op. cit.

⁹⁹Monatte, "Première réponse à Treint," Bulletin Communiste, May 9, 1924.

¹⁰⁰Monatte, "Seconde réponse à Treint," Bulletin Communiste, May 16, 1924.

¹⁰¹"Le conseil national du Parti," l'Humanité, June 2, 1924. Another defeat had been sustained two weeks earlier at the congress of the Federation of the Seine when the theses were approved 124 to 15. l'Humanité, May 19, 1924. On the National Council vote it was later noted: "The National Council marked the defeat of the Opposition. One could witness even notorious Opposition partisans abandoning their current and voting in favor of the majority, theses . . . The almost unanimous nature of the vote stems from two principle causes. First of all, a very deep seated attachment to the International which instinctively pitted itself against those opposing it, and secondly a certain amount of political passivity," Souzy, "Reflexions sur le conseil national," Bulletin Communiste, June 20, 1924.

¹⁰²"Le conseil national du Parti," op. cit.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵"Le conseil national du Parti," l'Humanité, June 3, 1924.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷This motion is mentioned in Rieu, op. cit.

¹⁰⁸Guralsky was described by a contemporary as ". . . a veritable virtuoso of the dialectic. Excessively shrewd, devoid of all scruples and sense of morality, he permitted himself to perform every imaginable political pirouette . . . we named him the juggler." Henri Barbé, "Souvenirs de militant et de dirigeant communiste." Unpublished manuscript in Hoover Institution of War, Revolution and Peace, p. 75.

¹⁰⁹Lazitch, op. cit., p. 50.

¹¹⁰Wohl, op. cit., p. 387.

¹¹¹Cinquième congrès de l'Internationale communiste. Compte rendu analytique. (Paris: Libraire de l'Humanité, 1924), pp. 341-342.

¹¹²"Le cas Souvarine devant l'Exécutif," Bulletin Communiste, June 27, 1924.

¹¹³Cinquième congrès, op. cit., p. 342.

¹¹⁴Ibid. Another account of the proceedings is contained in a letter from Rosmer to Monatte, July 16, 1924, in Monatte, Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme, op. cit., pp. 390-393. In it Rosmer notes: "Kleine [Guralsky] was active in the corridors and wanted to avenge himself for the scornful manner in which S. [Souvarine] had treated him publically."

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 464. It appears that Zinoviev had at first been unwilling to go this far but Souvarine had exacerbated matters by taking up Trotsky's defense at the Thirteenth Congress of the Russian party on June 20. The name of Trotsky, Souvarine argued, was of great international importance and it was wrong to discredit it. In view of the lies and calumnies being made against Trotsky he felt it incumbent to defend Trotsky in an energetic and brusque manner despite the dangers it posed to his own position. Only cries of "Shame" greeted his remarks. "Discours prononcé par le camarade Souvarine au 13^e Congrès du Parti communiste russe," Bulletin Communiste, June 20, 1924.

¹¹⁶Cinquième congrès, op. cit., p. 5.

¹¹⁷Lozovsky to Monatte, May 7, 1924. Zinoviev to Monatte. Undated telegram. In Monatte, Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme, op. cit., pp. 387-388. Monatte chose not to make the trip on the grounds that he was not in accord with the party leadership and was therefore returning to the ranks: "I am returning to the workshop to re-enter the ranks where I can better serve the communist International by becoming one of the most devoted soldiers of the second rank," Monatte to Zinoviev, June 16, 1924, Ibid., pp. 288-289.

¹¹⁸Rosmer to Monatte, June 6, 1924. Ibid., pp. 289-90.

¹¹⁹Fifth Congress of the Communist International; abridged report of the meetings held at Moscow June 17 to July 18, 1924. (London: Communist Party of Great Britain, 1924), p. 129.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 130.

¹²¹Barbé, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

¹²²Cinquième congrès, op. cit., pp. 381-382.

¹²³Quoted in Jederman, Le bolchévisation du Parti communiste français (Paris: Maspero, 1971), p. 37. Additional information on the bolshevization process within the P.C.F. is to be found in Wohl, op. cit., pp. 396-422; Annie Kriegel, The French Communists: Profile of a People (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 187-233; Walter, op. cit., pp. 162-183; Ferrat, op. cit., pp. 124-167.

¹²⁴Jederman, op. cit., p. 37.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 38. For a copy of this directive see "Les réorganisations du Parti sur les cellules d'usine," Bulletin Communiste, September 26, 1924.

¹²⁶Kriegel, The French Communists, op. cit., p. 83. A representative sampling of factory newspapers can be found in the André Marty papers, Harvard University.

¹²⁷Ibid., pp. 238-239.

¹²⁸Quoted in ibid., p. 195.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 267.

¹³⁰Ibid., pp. 114-115. Bolshevization also had another unintended consequence. During the first eighteen months of reorganization membership turnover reportedly reached a staggering 70 per cent. Ferrat, op. cit., p. 144.

¹³¹See the letter from Marzet to Monatte, August 20, 1924 in Monatte, Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme, op. cit., pp. 398-399.

¹³²Rosmer to Monatte, August 26, 1924. In ibid., pp. 402-403.

¹³³Rosmer to Monatte, August 11, 1924. In ibid., pp. 394-396.

¹³⁴Quoted in a letter from Marzet to Monatte, August 20, 1924, op. cit.

¹³⁵Rosmer to Monatte, August 11, 1924, op. cit.

¹³⁶"La conférence des secrétaires fédéraux," l'Humanité, September 23, 1924.

¹³⁷Quoted in Wohl, op. cit., p. 413.

¹³⁸"La conférence des secrétaires fédéraux," l'Humanité, September 24, 1924.

¹³⁹For biographical information on Victor Delagarde see appendix one.

¹⁴⁰See appendix one.

¹⁴¹See Roger Rieu, "Contribution à la vérité" Cahiers du Bolchévisme, December 5, 1924.

¹⁴²Rieu, "Déclaration de Rieu au bureau politique," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, December 5, 1924.

¹⁴³This letter is reprinted under "La lutte contre du droite," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, December 5, 1924.

¹⁴⁴Wohl, op. cit., p. 414.

¹⁴⁵Treint, "Congrès de bolchévisation," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, November 21, 1924.

¹⁴⁶"Thèses sur le situation internationale," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, November 28, 1924. In spite of these charges Treint could still admit: "Trotsky is a revolutionary organizer of the first magnitude and he struggles with an admirable temperament." "Contre Trotsky: sur la question des perspectives révolutionnaires," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, November 28, 1924.

¹⁴⁷"Lettre aux membres du Parti communiste," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, December 12, 1924.

¹⁴⁸"Mise en garde", l'Humanité, November 30, 1924.

¹⁴⁹"Réponse du bureau politique à la lettre de Monatte, Rosmer et Delagarde aux membres du Parti communiste," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, December 12, 1924.

¹⁵⁰This declaration is reprinted in Monatte, Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme, op. cit., pp. 413-416.

¹⁵¹"Réponse du bureau politique du sabotage du Parti," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, December 12, 1924.

¹⁵²See the letter of Herclet to Rosmer, January 3, 1925; and Herclet to Monatte, January 12, 1925. In Monatte, Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme, op. cit., pp. 418-424.

II

REGROUPMENT OUTSIDE THE PARTY, 1925-1928

The period from 1926 to 1928 might properly be described as one in which the Opposition was forced to confront the dilemma of Communist activity outside the party. In confronting this dilemma several varying responses emerged.

Communist Syndicalism: La Révolution Prolétarienne

The first formal attempt at regroupment outside the party came with the launching of the review La Révolution Prolétarienne in January 1925. Although an outgrowth of the Communist Opposition and intended as a forum for dissident Communist opinion its commitment to the principles of Leninism remained tenuous and short-lived. Several important divergences characterized the group from the onset. Some such as Monatte tended to view the group's function as one of creating a new revolutionary movement within the working class. Others such as Rosmer remained loyal to the Leninist concept of the party and sought to stimulate reform of the party from outside until the day they could rejoin. This division first came to a head over the question of the publication's name. When after a long discussion the majority supported the name Octobre to demonstrate attachment in the Russian Revolution, Monatte objected, claiming: "In choosing Octobre we are emphasizing the political character of the revolution,

the seizing of power, at the expense of the economic character. . ."

To resolve the conflict a second meeting was called whereupon, after heated discussion, Victor Godonéché proposed as a compromise the name La Révolution Proletarienne, maintaining that it was synonymous with the Lenin period of the international Communist movement.¹

Organizationally, what was envisioned was a "small intellectual cooperative" intended to stimulate fresh ideas and criticisms on major questions confronting the international working class movement rather than a parallel party.² In addition to the three expellees, Rosmer, Monatte and Delagarde, the initial editorial "nucleus" consisted of eleven other militants recently expelled, disenchanted with the party, or active in the labor movements.³ In attempting to define their political position a new political phrase was coined: Syndicalist-Communist.⁴ Little effort, however, was made to attach a precise meaning to the term, though it was suggested that just as syndicalism once represented the "healthy current of socialism," Communist-Syndicalism represented the "healthy current of Communism."⁵ Considerable pains were taken to deny that they represented a specific Trotskyite tendency, claiming there was no such thing as Trotskyism, and that what was termed such had actually been invented by Trotsky's enemies in the Russian party to discredit him.⁶

Still hopeful of inciting some form of reform within the party, the "nucleus" directed its first efforts toward publishing a second open letter to members of the party which attempted to justify their past behavior and define a set of strategic and organizational differences with the Treint leadership. These differences, they maintained,

arose over three basic questions: (1) The internal state of the party. (2) Revolutionary perspectives. (3) The meaning of Leninism. On the question of party administration Treint and his faction were charged with providing weak external leadership and of undermining the party internally by their heavy-handed methods. The P.C.F., they maintained, was made up of the "intimidated" and the "accomplices". Because of the leadership's preoccupation with "commanding," the party was "incapable of self criticism" and party activities often had the character of "recitations from a catechism" instead of attempts to build class consciousness. Consequently, "the French Communist Party is neither the avant-garde nor the elite of the proletariat." The shift to factory cells was also severely criticized on the grounds that most such cells existed only on paper: "If the party still has no factory cells and street sections no longer exist what remains of it?" On the question of revolutionary perspectives the group challenged Treint's assumptions about an approaching revolutionary period. Instead of the impending revolutionary upsurge predicted by Treint, American capitalism was attempting through the Dawes plan to bring the western European countries into its orbit, stifling in the process the revolutionary advance of the proletariat. By its continued sectarianism the party leadership was also "sabotaging" labor unity and isolating itself from the bulk of the working class. Through its loose talk of "social fascism" the leadership was also guilty of charging that everything that was not Communist was fascist. As to the nature of Treint's Leninism, the letter noted succinctly: "Leninism without Lenin we fear." Under Treint's brand of Leninism the party had undergone an unprecedented

decline throughout the preceding year. "Treint and Suzanne Girault, " they maintained, "are characteristic products of the petite-bourgeoisie and have nothing in common with the working class. . . . They arise from the commanding classes and live as parasites."⁷

The hope for reform within the P.C.F. was not without at least some foundation. At almost the same moment the excluded were regrouping around La Révolution Proletarienne a new Opposition was already coalescing within the P.C.F and was to make its first appearance at the Congress of Clichy, January 17-21.⁸ While the Opposition made a spirited appearance, the substance of the proceedings of the Congress was less a debate than a spectacle in which delegates were paraded one by one to the platform to shower abuse on those who expressed thoughts at variance with the Treint leadership. Dunois opened the attack for the Opposition by protesting vehemently against the expulsion of Monatte, Rosmer, Delagarde and Souvarine and by charging that the party was isolating itself from the masses with its slogans. Dunois also directed criticism toward the crude appearance of l'Humanité and toward the prevailing ouvrierist tendencies in the party which were being manifested in anti-intellectualism: "The party needs intellectuals, but genuine Communist intellectuals capable of aiding the party in the tasks of mass education and reorganization." A motion was then made and approved declaring his discourse to be out of turn and suspending discussion of it.⁹ Fernand Loriot¹⁰ then took the floor to express solidarity with Dunois, declaring: "At the present moment there exists a formidable dictatorial apparatus over the party." Treint countered with a full-scale attempt to "majestically

unmask" the "international Right," charging them with seeking to provoke a split in the party and of aligning themselves with the enemies of the Russian Revolution. To buttress his accusations Treint read a letter from Souvarine to Rosmer on the Russian question which stated that "salvation will come when a major crisis puts the Revolution in danger. Then the whole party will turn toward Trotsky."¹¹ Charles Rappoport,¹² speaking on the second day, added several more criticisms, though he took pains to disassociate himself from Loriot and Dunois. Rappoport's particular concern was with the weakness of the party in the provinces. When he began to speak on the Russian question Suzanne Girault interrupted to charge that at certain times he had stood between Lenin and Martov and even on occasion had actually sided with the Mensheviks. "You know better the old party than the party of today," she noted bitterly.

Treint's leadership also came under attack from several other unexpected quarters during the period. Speaking to the Congress the delegate from the International maintained the urgency of "normalizing the party in order to go to the masses." Bolshevization, he argued, presupposes a strong party of the masses, and it is "the union of the party with the masses that decides the victory or defeat of the revolution." The delegate also made special note of the slowness of the Paris region (Treint's stronghold) in transforming to factory cells.¹⁴ Earlier at a meeting of the Comintern presidium on January 10, 1925 Zinoviev had set the tone for this policy of normalization by declaring: "The party must be told: the period of crisis is at an end, the purging process has been carried out; steady work, feverish organizational

activity, steady continuation of agitation and propaganda work are necessary."¹⁵ Humbert-Droz too--never an admirer of Treint--had his criticisms to make, citing differences with Treint on the application of the united front, recruitment methods in the Federation of the Seine, excessively personal leadership, and went as far as to suggest the possibility of a specifically Treint crisis on the party.¹⁶

As the year progressed the paramount concern of the "nucleus" became the question of party and class. The Leninist party was first formally challenged by Robert Louzon¹⁷ in February, 1925 in an article entitled: "Le rôle du Parti." Central to Louzon's argument was a distinction between the military and non-military aspects of revolution. Noting that "insurrection is a military fact," Louzon raised the question of whether a "militarized organization" such as the party which is "excellent for insurrection" is indispensable for its success and whether it is capable of preparing an entire class for revolution. "Is an organization of this type capable of developing class consciousness? Is it capable of rendering the working class sufficiently confident of its own capacity for creating the will to revolution?" Still accepting the necessity of a Leninist party for "military" reasons, Louzon called for its subordination to the "civil aspects of working class organization." "Cannot the proletariat resolve what has already been resolved by the bourgeoisie? . . . The proletariat will take an immense step forward to the day it establishes an appropriate relationship between its civil society, the syndicats, and its military organization, the party."¹⁸

A further step on the return to syndicalism came in May,

1925 when an "anonymous correspondent" called for the formation of a ligue syndicaliste. The function of such an organization was viewed as different from both a party and a faction and would consist of establishing a network of contact between revolutionaries active in the labor movement.¹⁹ In July another "anonymous correspondent," noting that "the crisis of the International has destroyed the illusions about the possibility of an authentic Communist Party in France," seconded this proposal by calling for the formation of such a ligue to unite those in the two C.G.T.'s who desired to be free from both government and party.²⁰ In October these proposals were formalized on by Maurice Chambelland--undoubtedly the "anonymous correspondent" of the preceding months--in an article entitled: "Pour un ligue syndicaliste." What Chambelland envisioned was an organization operating in both C.G.T.'s and concerned with disseminating syndicalist principles and building labor unity. Such an organization was urgently required, he believed, to prevent the exodus of a large number of comrades from militant activities. "If it succeeds in reviving the labor movement it will mark a major step forward. It will provide the greatest service to the Revolution and prevent the essential lessons of October from being lost."²¹ Reaction to this proposal within the "nucleus" was mixed. Monatte, in spite of his growing disillusionment with the party and the prospects for internal reform,²² was still mildly opposed to the formation of such a grouping. In July he noted: "I am no more convinced today than the other month of the utility of such a ligue."²³ His position remained essentially unchanged in October: "Our sole ambition is to bring clarity out of confusion in the present mixed -up

state of affairs. . . . Why is there a need for a ligue syndicaliste for that?"²⁴ By early 1926, however, Monatte's attitude had shifted completely and the concept of a ligue was now warmly endorsed in a series of articles on the labor movement.²⁵ Rosmer, while remaining steadfast to the principles of Leninism, chose, for reasons of his own, to avoid entering the debate directly.

The Ligue Syndicaliste was officially launched early in 1926 with Chambelland as secretary. According to the initial statement of principles the aims of the Ligue were to be fivefold: (1) To work for the reunification of the two C.G.T.'s and for the creation of a Labor International. (2) To create an independent, autonomous labor movement by separating one C.G.T. from governmental collaboration and the other from party control. (3) To inculcate a class spirit in the labor movement in place of the spirit of tendency, sect or party and to provide a focal point for common action against the patronat and state. (4) To promote labor education through study circles set up to examine theoretical and practical problems confronting the working class. (5) To realize the precept of the First International that the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself.²⁶ The return to syndicalism was now fully consummated.

The party leadership's reaction to La Révolution Proletarienne, meanwhile, was consistent with their earlier attitude toward the internal Opposition. Humbert-Droz opened the attack on mid-January, 1925 by charging: "With their publication Rosmer, Monatte and Delagarde have placed themselves on the side of the reformists of Quotidien and Le Peuple, and the anarchists of Libertaire. Are they to the right or to

the left of the party? . . . surely they are in the broad front of the counter-revolution?"²⁷ Treint was even less charitable, suggesting: "It is only sufficient to write to Monatte against the party and its leadership to have a letter published. And when no letters are forthcoming they can easily be fabricated Souvarine, who doesn't even qualify as a bad Communist, is by contrast a good journalist full of admiration for the procedures and honor of the large-scale press."²⁸ But the fundamental charge leveled against La Révolution Prolétarienne was that it represented a return to syndicalism, pitting once again "Proudhon against Marx."²⁹ For this reason, one writer argued, La Révolution Prolétarienne was even more dangerous than reformist publications such as Le Peuple because it "casts doubt and scepticism in our labor organizations."³⁰ Treint's campaign of vilification received an added boost when a formal condemnation of La Révolution Prolétarienne was obtained from the Comintern at the meeting of the Fifth Enlarged Executive.

Treint's major victory, however, was achieved when a formal condemnation was secured from Trotsky. The origins of this condemnation are tracable to a series of events only peripherally related to La Révolution Prolétarienne. On January 8, 1925 the American journalist Max Eastman completed, "with much critical help from Souvarine and Alfred Rosmer,"³¹ a small book entitled Since Lenin Died, which provided the first definitive information on the existence of Lenin's testament. For the international Communist movement the publication of this book on May 10, 1925 represented an unprecedented bombshell. Trotsky, caught off guard, was compelled for tactical

reasons to issue a disavowal of Eastman's book and a categorical denial that any such document existed.³² For the Central Committee of the P.C.F. this was not enough. Trotsky's response, they declared, was "even more dangerous than the book itself. . . . Comrade Trotsky appears to indicate that in the present situation one can exist outside the party and the Communist International." Using as a pretext the fact that La Révolution Proletarienne had publicized the book, the Central Committee seized the opportunity to demand that Trotsky publically disassociate himself from La Révolution Proletarienne. "A lack of response from Comrade Trotsky," it was declared, "will allow Souvarine, Rosmer, Monatte and Co. to continue to use his name to combat the P.C.F. which is struggling against the war in Morocco and facing severe governmental repression."³³ Trotsky, for reasons of his own, again complied, declaring: "This review by its character and tone justifies their expulsion. . . the path on which La Révolution Proletarienne is engaged will by its internal logic lead them to the other side of the barricades." By way of advice Trotsky could only plead: "Liquidate the review immediately; remain outside the party; appeal to the leadership of the Comintern to reconsider the affair. There is no other way."³⁸

A rejoinder written by Rosmer and Monatte was immediately forthcoming. Their expulsion, they maintained, had not been prompted by their individual actions but was part of the general policy of bolshevization, which they defined as "a rupture with the preceding politics of the Communist International and a return to Social Democracy." For this reason, it was argued, an appeal for readmission would

have little value in itself. Considerable pains, however, were taken to deny that they envisioned creating a new party: "We have never thought for a moment of creating a new party; we have, on the contrary, asked our friends to remain within the Communist Party. We who were expelled shall continue to do outside the party what we tried to do from within. To those who say it is impossible to exist outside the party and the International without combatting them we shall respond with many proofs to the contrary." The aim of La Révolution Proletarienne was defined as providing "a refuge for sincere revolutionaries who can no longer support the stifling atmosphere of the party and a defense against the sabotage of the working class movement."³⁵ While it was undoubtedly understood that Trotsky had been pressured into making his condemnation the controversy resulted in the discontinuation of communication with Trotsky for several years.

A second question which continued to draw the attention of La Révolution Proletarienne was that of the social character and historical status of the Russian Revolution. On this question the "nucleus" had the advantage of being particularly well informed through the letters of a number of correspondents residing inside the Soviet Union such as Pierre Pascal, Victor Serge, Guiheueuf Yvon, and the anonymous "Muscovite." This correspondence was to play a decisive role in shaping their own views. Throughout the period 1925-1928 four basic lines of thought on the Russian situation were gradually elaborated on in the pages of La Révolution Proletarienne. Undoubtedly, the most systematic attempt was made by Robert Louzon. In August, 1926 Louzon raised the question of the possibility of a Bonapartist regime

coming to power on the basis of the peasantry. "The present struggle," he wrote, "is nothing less than a question of whether the Russian Revolution will end as simply another agrarian revolution. . . the last bourgeois revolution or the first proletarian revolution."³⁶ By May, 1927 this peasant transformation had, in Louzon's view, become an established fact. The new regime, however, was not a Bonapartist one but a "bureaucratic state" in which the form of the "old Russian state had been totally reconstructed." The re-establishment of a bureaucratic regime could only be considered as a consequence of the return of the land to predominance. Historically, Louzon maintained, all the major bureaucratic states had been peasant states. In this case the Politburo only replaced the Czar's cabinet as the supreme organ of the bureaucracy. But: "It is in its means of repression that the present Russian state has most servilely copied the czarist state." While proclaiming the goal of saving the proletariat from capitalist exploitation the Soviet Union was now using exactly the same model to institute socialism. The soviets, once organs of power for the Russian working class, were now little more than "municipal councils" and the Soviet constitution was only a facade for a repressive state apparatus.³⁷ In September, 1927 Louzon carried his analysis a step further and suggested that the peasant based bureaucracy had been transformed into a "dictatorship of the kulak."³⁸

For Alfred Rosmer the question was viewed in terms of a possible neo-capitalist restoration. Capitalism, he felt, was gaining an increasing foothold in all domains of Soviet life due to the theory of Socialism in a single country. Socialism was possible only if there

existed "a Communist party with strong initiatives from its membership, syndicats alive and active, soviets conscious of their role as organs of power, and genuine state owned industry. . . ." As further proof of his hypothesis Rosmer cited the fact that conservative newspapers such as Le Temps and The Times had spoken favorably of Stalin and that the stock market had made gains with Stalin's victories over the Opposition.³⁹

Souvarine, in a series of articles in La Révolution Proletarienne in the fall of 1926, saw the threat of a new bureaucracy emerging which was "irreconcilably hostile to the interests of the Russian working class." Such a development, however, was not yet inevitable: "Where is the Russian Revolution going? It can still be saved or lost on the basis of whether the proletariat accepts the wishes of a sterile bureaucracy or whether it attempts to break it in order to impose its own will."⁴⁰ This was not to be an easy task since the working class was at the "point of rupture" and the party had "fallen apart." Examples of this deterioration and demoralization, Souvarine contended, were manifested most directly in widespread alcoholism, declining living standards and the general passivity of youth ("They have never had the opportunity to be revolutionary").⁴¹ Speaking of the Russian Opposition, Souvarine could, nonetheless, express a note of optimism: "The Opposition has been beaten but it has not been vanquished and it cannot be since it is the avant-garde of the working class itself."⁴²

The most radical- and pessimistic-assessment of the Russian situation was offered by Pierre Pascal,⁴³ who was residing in Moscow at the time. In social terms, Pascal saw the Soviet Union as moving

towards Americanization on the basis of a tripartite aristocracy of: (1) intellectuals, (2) rich peasants, (3) highly skilled workers. Control, he argued, was vested in a bureaucracy which was part of a larger state dictatorship controlled by a party dictatorship which in turn was under the control of a small clique within the party. Such a system, in Pascal's view, represented "Social Democratic Socialism."⁴⁴ A central question arises as to the extent of La Révolution Proletarienne's influence during these crucial years. Using circulation figures as a guideline the review's growth and diffusion might be described as steady but unspectacular. In May, 1925 paid circulation reached a total of 511, of which 285 subscribers were in the Paris region, 195 provincial and 31 foreign.⁴⁵ Its stated goal was to achieve a circulation of 2,000 by the end of the year.⁴⁶ This goal was far from realized, however, when by December the total had risen to only 635.⁴⁷ By November, 1927 the total had risen to 824, of which 425 were in the Paris region, 335 provincial and 65 foreign (among them 22 in the U.S.S.R.).⁴⁸ By November, 1927 the total had increased to 871.⁴⁹ Qualitatively, however, La Révolution Proletarienne's influence appears to have been much greater. Jules Humbert-Droz, for one, noted: "The influence of this group is large in the syndicats. Rosmer and Monatte have resumed work in the workshop as proofreaders in contrast to the careerism and struggles for position which have been occurring in the upper levels of the party. The self-sacrifice and moral propriety of Monatte and Rosmer has imposed itself on the working class."⁵⁰ No membership figures for the Ligue Syndicaliste are available for this period although a P.C.F. internal document estimated it at 200 in

1934 which is perhaps suggestive.⁵¹ Important areas in which the Ligue exercised influence included the Fédération Unitaire de l'Enseignement, the Syndicats Unitaires et confederes du livre-papier, and a number of independent syndicats in the building trades.⁵²

In spite of whatever qualitative influence it might have achieved La Révolution Proletarienne failed in its central objective of developing a viable strategy of regroupment outside the party. In seeking to stimulate reform of the party externally La Révolution Proletarienne--despite the fears it incited in the party leadership--proved incapable of affecting in any way the basic configuration of power within the P.C.F. By acting as "a small intellectual cooperative" "La Révolution Proletarienne" had greater success in turning the controversy from current policy to larger underlying issues such as party organization and the historical and social status of the Russian Revolution. The inferences drawn from this analysis, however, did not pose a new course for the future but represented a return to the past, to the principles of pre-war syndicalism.

The Opposition of the 250

Despite its growing syndicalist character La Révolution Proletarienne continued to maintain a close liaison with the Opposition inside the party, which, in spite of the defeat suffered at Clichy, continued to grow rapidly throughout 1925. With party morale at an unprecedented low La Révolution Proletarienne quickly won an audience among concerned Communists. Unable to make headway through normal party channels this new Opposition attempted to present its

case directly to the Executive in a series of open letters and theses beginning in February, 1925 with the "Letter of the 80."

Signed by 80 prominent militants, the "Letter of the 80" was largely a restatement of many of the earlier criticisms of Monatte, Rosmer and Souvarine. The main point of contention was with the internal organization of the party which they contended had placed the party in a state of severe crisis. The principle cause of this malaise, they argued, was the "suppression of all self-criticism within the party." "In the party all discussion has been abolished; expulsion is the first and last word." Consequently, the party was lacking a life at the base and the intellectual activity of the membership was at an unprecedented low. Instead, everything in the party "is inspired by the FORMALISTIC METHODS OF THE BUREAUCRACY." What this meant in practice was that the party was returning to the methods of Social Democracy: "Under the cover of the struggle against 'the Right' the real Social Democratic Right pursues its work of undermining the party. Electoralism and parliamentarianism have been installed in the party leadership." Programatically, however, the Opposition could offer nothing beyond a generalized call for an "enlargement of deliberative power" through specially created assemblies.⁵³

In March these criticisms were systematized and expanded upon in a set of theses. On Loriot's initiative new criticisms of the party's use of the united front and Treint's conception of fascism were added. The party's tactic of the "united front solely with the masses" was condemned on the grounds that it was tantamount to abandoning it. To implement the united front in practice required establishing it with

both the Social Democratic leaders and masses. On the question of fascism issue was taken with Treint's contention that "fascism is here" and his argument that "Social Democracy is the left wing of fascism." Fascism, they declared, was not presently a threat in France and to charge that it was only provoked confusion in the working class and helped solidify the middle classes in a reactionary bloc. Instead, the party's strategy should concentrate on "disaggregating" the middle classes. To charge that Social Democracy was fascist was "criminal and absurd." Such a development was a social impossibility because both movements rested on entirely different social bases.⁵⁸

By August the debate had entered the Central Committee when Lorient and several other Opposition leaders were called upon to present their case and responded with a violent denunciation of the Treint leadership and a vigorous defense of La Révolution Proletarienne.⁵⁹ In the fall of 1925 a new issue arose with the Riff War. In response to the war the party had issued a call for French soldiers to fraternize with the Moroccan rebels. Lorient, Paz⁶⁰ and Mahouy,⁶¹ however, objected to this tactic, arguing that fraternization was unworkable in practice due to the vast differences in cultural levels between French troops and Moroccan rebels. The Treint faction thereupon charged them with "sabotage" and "liquidationism" and claimed that their objections were partly based on racial grounds.⁶² When a national conference was held in early November Lorient and Paz refused to attend claiming it was in reality only a "pretended" one.⁶³ Treint responded by maintaining that the Opposition "has already morally expelled themselves from the party and the International."⁶⁴ This was to be the first round

of an intense propaganda campaign against the Opposition designed to culminate in their complete submission or expulsion.

By October, when another open letter was drafted, the 80 had become the 250 (and shortly thereafter the 280) and the crisis had begun to reverberate throughout the party as a whole. The Opposition's influence had even penetrated certain members of the Communist parliamentary delegation.⁶⁵ For many of the signers, however, the motivating impulse was a desire to find tranquility in their labor, municipal or parliamentary posts.

The "Letter of the 250" was largely a catalogue of grievances with the international administration of the party since the beginning of bolshevization and added little in the way of fresh criticism to the debate. The party, it was maintained, was in a state of "full retreat" at a time when economic and political circumstances were favorable for the propagation of its doctrines. To cure this malaise the Opposition could offer only the now standard call for free discussion, genuine democratic centralism and limitations on the party apparatus.⁶⁶

Throughout the winter and spring the campaign to "expose" the Opposition continued unabated. While admitting that there was a malaise in the party leadership--by now rapidly dividing into Treint and anti-Treint wings--^{Treint} took the position that the majority of the signers were unaware of the exact contents of the letter.⁶⁷ Organizational power was once again brought into play as numerous cells and federations "spontaneously" passed resolutions condemning the "Right." In January a special assembly of information was convoked during which the entire party leadership took the podium to attack the Opposition.

In May the debate ~~was~~ carried to the meeting of the Fifth Enlarged Executive and a resolution was secured condemning the Opposition for "serving the interests of the French bourgeoisie," and for being "allied" with La Révolution Proletarienne. The resolution did, however, concede that the Opposition was far from homogeneous and that "a good number of workers and trade union militants have rallied to the Right without accepting their program. . . ." ⁶⁸ The eventual outcome of the struggle was not in doubt and by the Congress of Lille in July the majority of Oppositionists had either been silenced, expelled or left out of frustration. Lorient had perhaps best captured the spirit of the struggle when he wrote to Monatte: "The struggle in the party is weak. Never even during the worst days of the war were things so disheartening." ⁶⁹

Throughout late 1925 and early 1926 a second internal Opposition current known as the Humberdot-Morin tendency also made its presence felt. Drawing from a base of support in several trade unions, most notably the Fédération des Métaux, the Fédération des Employés, and the Fédération du Bâtiment, this group's main concern was with the proper application of democratic centralism within the party. The P.C.F., they charged, was controlled by a "personal dictatorship of a small circle within the B.P." and was becoming increasingly animated by a "spirit of coterie and clientele," which was incompatible with the "real spirit of Communism." Such "exaggerated centralism," they felt, only isolated the party from the masses. As for the question of discipline: "We are for iron discipline which is a ~~corollary~~ ^{of} democratic centralism. But a discipline which implies the right of minorities to freely discuss their point of view on tactical and theoretical problems--

to attempt to create a "disciplinarian discipline"--will result only in the liquidation in the party of the true spirit of Communist discipline." To redress the situation a fourfold proposal was offered for instituting democratic centralism within the party: (1) Proportional representation for minority tendencies within all party organs. (2) Regular reports from the party organs to the membership. (3) Obligatory consultation and discussion at the base level on all questions not requiring immediate action until a decision has been reached. (4) Frequent elections for members of the party apparatus. Despite the similarity of many of their criticisms with those of the Opposition of the 250 the Humboldt-Morin tendency had only harsh words for the latter, claiming their defeat would pave the way for a "generally correct politics." "Any member supporting a regularly constituted faction should quit under pain of expulsion. Without that no discipline is possible." The party leadership's response was to charge them with "confusionism," "acting on behalf of the Right," and seeking "to transform the party into a permanent discussion club."⁷⁰ The tendency's existence, however, proved to be short lived. Following a spirited defense of their policies at the Congress of Lille the group rallied almost unanimously to the party leadership.⁷¹

The Opposition was not alone in the criticism of the party's evolution since bolshevization. One of the sharpest reactions came from the Comintern representative Guralsky, who in a series of articles in Cahiers du Bolchévisme took the party leadership to task for a number of serious shortcomings. "It is incontestable" declared Guralsky, "that the party has an exaggerated centralism, too little

internal democracy, often wrongly employs dictatorial procedures, engages in too little activity, the cells still do not have an active life, and l'Humanité is still poor (though better than when under Loriot's friends Souvarine and Rosmer).⁷² Consequently, the party as a whole often accepts all decisions and motions in a mechanical fashion and applies them without reflecting sufficiently or discussing them without understanding how they are to be implemented." The process of reorganization, Guralsky felt, had proceeded "too rapidly and too mechanically." "In reality," he declared, "there has never been an active and working Communist Party in France."⁷³ On December 1-2 an extraordinary national conference was held at which the Treint leadership, seeking to ward off embarrassing criticism, issued an open letter offering self criticism on three grounds: (1) application of the united front, (2) poor relations with the unions and, (3) erroneous internal administration of the party. In March, 1926 many of these criticisms and self-criticisms were formalized in a resolution on the French situation made at the meeting of the Fifth Enlarged Executive.⁷⁴

While gaining greater sustenance than the previous internal Opposition, the Opposition of the 250 and the Humbertot-Morin tendency nonetheless failed in their central aim of reforming the party. In spite of the fact that the ensuing discussion was pursued in a more systematic form it was largely a continuation of the debate of 1924. In developing specific recommendations only the Humbertot-Morin group with its program for restoring democratic centralism transcended the level of generalization. The question of why the party was in "full retreat" during a period of favorable political and

economic circumstances was never seriously grappled with. Despite of the fact that Treint's leadership was coming under intense pressure from other quarters the Opposition was unable to capitalize on it in building an effective movement from below. Indifference again prevailed in the party's ranks and organizational power became once more the dominant factor in the situation.

"Excluded but Communists": Souvarine Struggles Again

Encouraged by the growing opposition within the party, Souvarine, with financial help from Rosmer and Monatte,⁷⁵ resurrected Bulletin Communiste as his own theoretical journal in October, 1925. In spite of the obvious challenge that such a publication posed to the party leadership, Souvarine's main hopes were still pinned on readmission to the party. Souvarine's main argument for readmission was that he was still a Communist "faithful to the Marxist concept of class struggle," the "dictatorship of the proletariat," and to "the Leninist conception of the party and the International." It was not he who had changed, he argued, but the international Communist movement through the policy of bolshevization.⁷⁶ As for his activities outside the party, Souvarine made a distinction between voluntarily abandoning the party and being unjustly expelled: "If we are acting from the outside it is because we have no other alternative except to do nothing." As an example of an effective Communist acting outside the party, Souvarine cited Trotsky's early years outside the party.⁷⁷ Because of his continued fidelity to Leninism Souvarine took considerable pains to disassociate himself from the growing syndicalism of La Révolution Proletarienne, declaring:

"Ten numbers of this review have appeared and we have found nothing which justifies abandoning what they simply call 'Communism'. . . They have remained themselves but they have changed their name." Returning to syndicalism after having been Communists, Souvarine felt, was "not progress." "They are only adding to the confusion, already large, which troubles the conscience of the avant-garde of the working class." Such a return, he felt, would have been justified if the Communism of 1919-1923 had been weak. But: "It is not Communism that is weak, but its caricature, the 'Leninism' of 1924. It is not Bolshevism that is weak, but its parody the so-called 'bolshevization' . . . When the party really works in the interests of the proletariat we must be with them."⁷⁸

Although hopeful of eventual reinstatement by the Comintern Souvarine was not deterred from a series of scathing attacks on Treint's leadership. "The leadership of the party," he declared, "is little more than a collection of people without faith, without elan, without force, without life, devoid of all organizational capacity, of all spiritual elements, of all political sense, of all Communist morality, of all revolutionary sentiment; a clique of petite-bourgeois. . . a caricature of dictators. . ."⁷⁹ "This coterie has no equivalent in the history of the French working class movement in terms of its mediocrity and noxiousness. . ."⁸⁰ The Treint clique, he contended, had completely isolated itself from the membership of the party and maintained itself by "bullying the militants of the ranks, intimidating contradictors and expelling Oppositionists." "They have created two parties in the party, that of the functionaries with their clientele and that of the irreconcilable

Opposition with their secret sympathizers who remain silent out of fear of sanctions." One effect of this was to reinforce "scepticism, distrust and suspicion of all party politics by revolutionary workers."⁸¹

"The immense majority of the working class," declared Souvarine, "sees the Communists as incompetents, irresponsibles, blunders, adventurers or at the very best deranged utopians."⁸²

The Treint leadership was also held responsible for a number of serious tactical errors. The most important of these centered around the perennial question of the united front. The party in this instance was guilty of destroying it by labeling common action by workers of different political tendencies as opportunist. The party's most pressing task, he felt, was building mass support by means of the united front.⁸³ A second tactical error involved the repeated use of demagoguery in the party's propaganda and actions. "Demagoguery," wrote Souvarine, "has nothing in common with dialectics and historical materialism."⁸⁴ A third criticism concerned the party's tendency to use the labor unions as "objects."⁸⁵ A fourth tactical criticism was directed to Treint's approach to the question of fascism. Treint, he charged, was "irresponsible" to have affirmed that "fascism is here" when the reactionary movement had none of the characteristics of Italian fascism and conditions were vastly different. How could there be a threat of a fascist counter-revolution, Souvarine asked, when there was no threat of a genuine social revolution?⁸⁶

Souvarine's efforts to devise an Opposition strategy for Communists faced with the dilemma of action outside the party achieved little beyond the level of vague generalization and moral

exhortation. The primary task, he felt, was largely educational:

Serious Communists can accept neither the illusions of the Socialists nor the delirious prophesies of the imposters of bolshevization. We have something better to do: to study attentively the factors which have stabilized the bourgeois regimes for a longer duration than we had believed possible in 1918. . . and to prepare and organize ourselves with an eye to the future. Lenin loved to repeat the statement "study your enemies." This advice is good and we shall attempt to follow it.⁸⁷

From this educational activity a new "revolutionary elite" was to emerge which would be equipped with the proper theoretical abilities to lead the struggles of the future. In December, 1925 a declaration defining the aims of Bulletin Communiste was sent to the Comintern. The Bulletin, it was declared, was merely the continuation of the earlier Bulletin which had been the "authentic organ of Bolshevism in France." The new Bulletin was defined as "not the work of journalists but of militants with revolutionary ideas for whom the journal is only a means of serving the cause of the proletariat. It exists only to fulfill a certain task and will disappear upon accomplishing it. . . Our goal is not to exist separately, but to give life to the Communist Party. The new Bulletin, he predicted, would one day "be known as the authentic voice of French Communism. . ."⁸⁸ To stimulate the forces for reform within the party Souvarine called upon dissident party members to use Bulletin Communiste as a clearinghouse for internal criticisms of the party. Six party militants prominent in the internal Opposition soon joined the staff of the Bulletin.⁸⁹ Treint's response was to threaten to expel anyone who continued to collaborate with the Bulletin.⁹⁰ By late November, 1925 the circulation had reached

2,000 and a weekly meeting of "Friends of the Bulletin" was inaugurated and plans were made to double the circulation.⁹¹

Encouraged by the breakup of the triumvirate pact at the Fourteenth Bolshevik Congress in December, 1925, Souvarine addressed a new appeal for readmission to the Comintern Executive on December 10. "The last 18 months," declared Souvarine, "have allowed me to prove . . . that nobody or nothing can prevent me from being a Communist . . . Loyal to the party and to the Communist International, I can see no reason to remain outside its cadre."⁹²

The appeal, however, was summarily rejected on three grounds:

(1) That his re-entry would result in a factional bloc with 'Right' elements within the party. (2) That he failed to keep the terms for readmission laid down at the Fifth World Congress. (3) That he had led a "criminal," counter-revolutionary and anti-Communist campaign" against the leadership of the party and the International in the pages of Bulletin Communiste.⁹³

This setback, however, failed to deter Souvarine. When in January it was announced that the party press would be open to dissident opinion, Souvarine interpreted it as a possible sign that he might be readmitted at the March meeting of the Executive. Consequently, when the January 29, 1926 edition of the Bulletin appeared it was announced that it would cease publication in order to avoid giving a pretext for rejecting readmission. This did not prevent Souvarine from warning: "The Enlarged Executive can put an end to the crisis in the French party; if it fails to do so it will make an organ of the revolutionary Opposition indispensable. . . The editorial committee

of Bulletin Communiste on the same day that it gives to the International new proof of its loyalty extends a warning to all real Communists: when the principles of Communism are broken, the decisions of the party violated, its statutes trampled, its conscience ridiculed by those who have charge of it, then undiscipline becomes the most sacred of rights and the most imperious of duties."⁹⁴ Souvarine's hopes once again proved illusory when the Executive, meeting in March, again reaffirmed its hostility to his views. In September, 1926 the Executive again met and declared this time that Souvarine's readmission could never again be considered and forbade all members of the Russian and French parties from having any dealings with him on the pain of expulsion.⁹⁵

Shortly before his decision to suspend publication Souvarine organized a Cercle Communiste Marx et Lénine to consolidate Communist Opposition. The aim of the Cercle was threefold: (1) To create study groups. (2) To reassemble those Communists expelled from the party who were seeking to "fortify their revolutionary culture and preparation in the spirit of Marxism." (3) To sponsor a series of conferences and publications. Dedicated to a "Communist renaissance" in France and in "absolute solidarity with the Bolshevik Revolution," the Cercle was in no way conceived as a potential second party. The "Communist Party of the first four congresses" was declared to be the "organization par excellence of the revolutionary proletariat." The Cercle's justification would disappear once the party returned to these principles.⁹⁶

Souvarine's efforts to stimulate the Opposition were not always

well received in the ranks of the internal Opposition. Upon his return from Moscow in the fall of 1925 he was invited to collaborate with this group despite the fears of certain members (most notably Lorient) who felt he would be a divisive influence. Shortly thereafter he began attending meetings at which it was later alleged that he met afterwards with certain comrades to "maneuver" and "intrigue" to orient the Opposition around himself. Charges were also made that he was attempting to impose Bulletin Communiste as the sole organ of the Opposition.⁹⁷ Dunois, speaking to Humbert-Droz at the Congress of Lille mentioned the feelings of many that Souvarine had taken important cadres from them, attempted to assume sole leadership and worked to dissolve other tendencies.⁹⁸ Consequently, a letter was sent to him in November criticizing him for his individualistic activities.⁹⁹ In February, 1926 a second letter was sent by Dunois, Lorient and the Pazes charging him with being "excessively personal" and with violating a cardinal principle of the Opposition by seeking to "shift the center of gravity outside the party." "This progressive and secret crystallization around Souvarine," they declared, "has created a tendency within a tendency, a situation which could fatally lead to a split. . . ." For these reasons they declared that they could no longer cooperate with either Bulletin Communiste or the Cercle Communiste Marx et Lénine.¹⁰⁰

Incapable of bridging the contradiction between acting independently of the party while actively seeking readmission, Souvarine, during these years, was unable to devise a clear strategy of regroupment. While projecting Bulletin Communiste as an organ of a unified Communist Opposition, Souvarine, because of his individualism, was

unable to develop the personal ties that might have transformed this projection into reality. Whatever the depth of Souvarine's optimism about his eventual readmission it is clear that his feelings about the immediate revolutionary prospects of the movement were marked by growing pessimism. In calling for the formation of a "new revolutionary elite" and for sustained study of the sources of bourgeois stability, Souvarine recognized that the struggle was to be of long term duration.

Zinovievist Centerism: Albert Treint Joins the Opposition

In seeking to account for the ultimate cause of the Opposition's failure nothing affords a better clue to the forces behind this defeat than the rise and fall of Albert Treint. Treint's downfall, like his rise, was, in its essential aspects, a direct outgrowth of the conflict within the Russian party. This conflict entered a new stage with the gradual disintegration of the triumvirate pact and the development of the Joint Opposition. The first signs of an impending rupture came in April, 1925 when Zinoviev and Kamenev opposed Stalin's plans to officially proclaim the theory of Socialism in a Single Country.¹⁰¹ By the fall of 1925 an open rivalry between Zinoviev and Stalin became apparent in the election of delegates to the Fourteenth Bolshevik Congress. During the proceedings of the Congress open political confrontations developed over the issues of Lenin's testament, the kulak danger and the questions of the N.E.P. men and the bureaucracy.¹⁰²

Treint was the P.C.F.'s representative in Moscow throughout much of the so-called Zinoviev period of the Comintern. Since he held simultaneous positions in the E.C.C.I., the Presidium, and the

Comintern Secretariat he was to be marked for elimination soon after Zinoviev. Although he was never popular with the party or the Comintern leadership, Treint's fortunes began to wane rapidly in the fall of 1925. Against a rising tide of criticism Treint had attempted to strengthen his hand through the self criticisms of the extraordinary national conference of December 1-2. In the months that followed his position--like that of his mentor Zinoviev--only weakened further. Although at the Fifth Enlarged Executive he succeeded in getting a strong condemnation of both the internal and external Opposition the resolution on the French question can be read in large part as a severe condemnation of his leadership. Throughout 1925 and 1926 a new grouping of forces within the party leadership was slowly emerging which would ultimately provide the base for Treint's downfall. Treint's first major confrontation with these new elements occurred at the Congress of Lille in June, 1926. For Treint and his following this Congress represented the first of a long succession of unmitigated defeats.

The Congress of Lille opened on June 22 in an atmosphere of rivalry and intrigue, a "battle in the night," as Jules Humbert-Droz described it.¹⁰³ With Treint's downfall increasingly apparent several new groups began to maneuver openly for position. As Humbert-Droz described the situation: "There are petty rivalries and an under the surface struggle for power. Each of them is cutting out his own fief, his own springboard. Doriot in the Youth Federation, Thorez in the Nord, Monomousseau in the C.G.T."¹⁰⁴ Gradually, through Humbert-Droz's efforts these new rival elements began to coalesce into an anti-Treint faction known as the "group of the six."¹⁰⁵ In building this

alliance Humbert-Droz paid particular attention to winning over Pierre Semard who had hitherto remained neutral.¹⁰⁶ Treint, working through Suzanne Girault, Jacob¹⁰⁷ and Fromage, attempted to exert intense pressure of his own. As the Congress opened Humbert-Droz's main fear was that Treint (whom he referred to as "imbecile"¹⁰⁸), with his strong base in the Federation of the Seine, would use the occasion to provoke a "rupture."¹⁰⁹

To give his case a theoretical foundation, Treint in the meantime had formulated a set of theses to present at the Congress. Maintaining that the Comintern lacked an international perspective Treint claimed to have discovered--after a year of research--that capitalism had entered into a new phase of relative and provisional stabilization but was nonetheless becoming increasingly shaky. The most important new trend was a growing antagonism between "Anglo-Europe" and America which Treint felt would eventually culminate in war. To cope with this new configuration of forces Treint called for the development of a new set of tactics but avoided specifics.¹¹⁰ A succession of speakers then took the podium to attack Treint. Humbert-Droz charged him with overlooking all the major contradictions of capitalism and of leaving the Soviet Union entirely out of the question: "Comrade Treint! The plane on which development will take place in the future will not be your Europe against America, but the Soviet Union against America, socialism against capitalism, this is how the Comintern sees it." Humbert-Droz also utilized the opportunity to attack Treint for a variety of other shortcomings such as misapplication of the united front, steering a wrong political course and issuing incomprehensible

slogans to the masses.¹¹¹ The coup de gr[^]ace for the Treint faction, however, came when, on Humbert-Droz's instructions, Treint and Girault were removed from the Political Bureau.¹¹² As a further measure to weaken Treint's position the Central Committee was enlarged to 80 members and several Treint supporters removed.

In spite of the difficulties he faced Treint ruled out an alliance with any of the other Opposition forces. As Humbert-Droz observed: "The Zino-Trotsky alliance has produced a contrary effect regarding the two comrades. Zinovievists and Trotskists alike are unable to comprehend this strange alliance."¹¹³ Few elements, however, of the Opposition of the 250 remained active. Only the parliamentary deputy Gauthier spoke out openly, declaring that the policy of the Comintern was dominated by the interests of Russian foreign policy and demanding a free discussion of international policy.¹¹⁴ The Humbert-Droz-Morin tendency also made a brief appearance, reiterating once again their complaints about the lack of democratic centralism and the failure of reorganization.¹¹⁵

When Treint returned to Moscow shortly after the Congress he found himself facing an entirely new situation, noting sometime later: "Upon returning to Moscow I found myself confronting a veritable pogrom organized against me on the basis of a Tass wire reporting that I was leaning towards the League of Nations and based also on the fables being peddled by Humbert-Droz . . ."¹¹⁶ Treint's next major confrontation occurred at meetings of the Political Bureau and Central Committee in October, 1926. The immediate issue in both cases was a resolution on the Russian question supporting the Russian majority

and calling for Zinoviev's removal as head of the Comintern.¹¹⁷ Since Treint was in Moscow at the time the main task of opposing it fell largely on Suzanne Girault, whose position as delegate to the International was also under fire. Girault's objections to the resolution were fivefold: (1) That a position was being taken without proper discussion and the necessary documents. (2) That only a World Congress could remove Zinoviev. (3) That Zinoviev alone was not responsible for Comintern policies. (4) That the resolution was contrary to the principles and statutes of the Comintern. (5) That the Russian Opposition was correct on most points. Doriot countered for the majority by declaring that Girault had no one in the party behind her and was free to leave at any time, to which Girault replied that never had "such procedures of intimidation been employed by the party leadership." The resolutions, however, easily passed in both instances with only members of Treint's depleted following opposing. As part of the resolution it was declared that Suzanne Girault was "no longer qualified to represent the P.C.F. on the Executive."¹¹⁸

Throughout the winter and spring the internecine warfare continued unabated through a series of letters, declarations, and assemblies of information. Treint by now was willing to cooperate with the remnants of the Opposition of the 250 to the extent of joint appearances at meetings. Just how desperate his position had become is illustrated by the fact that he now sought out his longtime enemy Humbert-Droz for "cordial collaboration."¹¹⁹ In February and March several important members of Treint's faction, most notably Jacob, capitulated by agreeing to accept Central Committee discipline.¹²⁰

Treint's stay in Moscow undoubtedly did little to strengthen his optimism. A truce had been agreed on by the Russian Opposition on October 4 and the struggle was held in abeyance for the time being while Stalin quietly fortified his own position. The struggle in France was given a temporary reprieve in the spring of 1927 with the arrests of many at the top leaders of the party, including Suzanne Girault, for encouraging soldiers to disobey orders during the Riff War.¹²¹

A new element suddenly intruded upon the scene with the Shanghai massacre of April 12, 1927. Prior to this date Comintern policy in China had been premised on the assumption that the nationalist revolution spreading over China was an "anti-imperialist, bourgeois-democratic" one and support was extended to the Kuomintang as a form of the united front with the revolutionary bourgeoisie and peasantry. The Joint Opposition had condemned this policy as a break of the principles of Leninism and a veritable fall into Menshevism. Stalin and Bukharin defended the alliance as a "bloc of four classes" against imperialism and rejected the Opposition's criticism as "ultra-left sectarianism," justifying their policy with the now-familiar garnishments of truncated and selected quotations from Lenin. As an epitaph to the massacre Stalin announced on April 21 that "events have fully and entirely proved the correctness of the Comintern line."¹²² Under normal circumstances this ignominious collapse of the China policy would have meant disaster for the Stalin faction, but in the circumstances of the apparatus monopoly over the party, it served only to hasten the pace of the Opposition's destruction. Stalin tolerated no critics, least of all those who had been right. Treint first formally entered the

controversy on May 3, 1927 when he confronted Bukharin at the meeting of the Comintern Presidium. Treint's main charge was that the Stalin-Bukharin group had concealed a document sent by Stalin's handpicked Russian delegation to China. The document, of which Treint had a copy, was a severe indictment of both the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the Comintern's strategy. The mass movement, it contended, was being "braked" and "subordinated to the interests of the bourgeoisie." Treint argued that the "bloc of four classes" constituted little more than "uniting victims with executioners."¹²³

Treint reaffirmed his objections in even sharper terms at a July 22 meeting of the Comintern Executive, utilizing the occasion to launch a direct attack on Stalin. The Chinese proletariat, declared Treint, had been "ideologically disarmed" by the opportunist politics "inspired by the groupe Staline-Bukharine." Treint now saw a specific current of Stalinism which he defined as "a regime of bureaucratic stifling and administrative terror. . ." Trotsky, on the other hand, had "taken a Leninist position on the question" and for this reason "the Trotskyite danger would not reappear." "The present danger is Stalinism . . ." Treint concluded his address with the slogan: "Contre ce danger, il faut maintenant combattre sans merci. A bas le stalinisme; vivre léninisme!"¹²⁴

In the meantime Treint's position in the French party was becoming increasingly threatened. On June 1 Doriot arrived in Moscow for a series of long discussions with Stalin, Bukharin, and Molotov, at which presumably the question of undermining Treint's position was discussed. Late in June Doriot, Semard, and Thorez

met with Treint to discuss his collaboration in the central party apparatus, at which Doriot made a number of particularly insulting remarks. Treint thereupon declared further collaboration "incompatible with the procedures of intimidation, insults and threats employed by Doriot."¹²⁵ In order to salvage his position Treint made a desperate attempt to appeal to his former collaborators. To Monmousseau he wrote in early July: "The situation is serious. . . . In the name of all our old common battles I insist that you do not pronounce on the international situation . . . before having heard me."¹²⁶

As the crisis intensified Treint attempted, in the fall of 1927, to draw up a comprehensive program and analysis upon which to struggle on. At the core of this program was an analysis of the Russian situation and what he termed the phenomenon of "Stalinism." Stalinism in this instance was defined as a bureaucratic alteration developed on the basis of "anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist ideology." The social basis for this deformation was the penetration of Soviet institutions by an "ocean of the peasantry and petite-bourgeoisie." Within Soviet society two diametrically opposed social forces were struggling for social power. On one side was a "Thermidorian Right" composed of kulaks, N.E.P. men, old and new bourgeoisie, aided by state bureaucrats and imperialists, seeking to lead the Soviet Union back to capitalism. On the other were the forces desiring the construction of socialism who were led by the "Bolshevik Opposition." Between these two extremes stood a large mass of petite-bourgeoisie and middle level peasants, hesitant towards socialism and looking

toward the kulaks, but fearing imperialist aggression: "This mass finds Stalin's theory of Socialism in single country a hardy refuge for its hesitations and narrow national spirit." The groupe Staline, it was contended, was putting up increasingly weak resistance to the growth of Thermidorian forces while intensifying the struggle against the Bolshevik Opposition. In order to prevent criticisms of the policy of "Stalinist opportunism" the Stalinists had "mechanized a outrage the Russian party and the International." Theoretically, "they compromise the dictatorship of the proletariat and violate Lenin's teachings." More fundamentally: "All the opportunist errors of the groupe Staline are synthesized in the false theory of 'Socialism in a Single Country' . . . A theory this false must be ruthlessly annihilated."

Internationally, the politics of Stalinism "sacrificed the workers and peasants" in favor of "capitulation before imperialism." The dominant factor in the international situation, it was argued, was a rapidly developing capitalist offensive. Domestically, this offensive was manifested in rationalization, unemployment, depressed wages, and growing repression against working class organizations. Internationally, it found its expression in intensified colonial repression and in a growing assault on the Soviet Union, which was being aided by the forces of Thermidor from within. Inherent in this process was a major danger of a new war, either through inter-imperialist rivalries or an assault upon the Soviet Union. Stalin's opportunist policy of using the international Communist movement as an instrument of Soviet diplomacy served only to demoralize the revolutionary forces and aggravate the danger of war. The two most notable examples of Stalinist "treason" were the

Chinese revolution and the English general strike. The Comintern, in denying that war was inevitable between the U.S.S.R. and imperialism, was also guilty of "petite-bourgeois pacifism."

As to the French situation it was argued that since the creation of the Doriot-Sémard-Monmousseau leadership: "There has not been a worker's struggle that has not been badly prepared, led or braked by them." "The internal administration established by the Doriot-Semard-Monmousseau leadership, which has rapidly brutalized and chloroformed the party, is absolutely contradictory to the formation, maintenance and development of a revolutionary avant-garde." Such policies only helped "move good, sincere revolutionary workers towards the neo-anarcho-syndicalism of Monatte" and "arms the adversaries of labor unity . . .". On the united front it was argued that the party was using only "symbolic gestures" out of "fear of direct struggle of the masses." By way of practical proposals Treint could offer nothing beyond a series of generalized slogans intended to stimulate mass action. These included:

- (1) Free discussion within the party.
- (2) Immediate publication of all Opposition documents.
- (3) Struggles to reduce the workday and augment salaries.
- (4) Struggle against repression and for amnesty of all victims of capitalism.
- (5) Struggle for labor unity.
- (6) Struggle against the dangers of imperialist war.
- (7) "Hands off the Soviet Union!"
- (8) Immediate cessation of imprisonment within the U.S.S.R.
- (9) Readmission of Trotsky, Zinoviev and others to the Russian Central Committee and the Comintern Executive.
- (10) Convocation of an extraordinary world congress in early 1928.¹²⁷

Treint's program had little effect, however, on the outcome of

the struggle. When Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the Russian Central Committee in October, 1927 Treint announced his intention to bring the matter up at the upcoming Central Committee meeting and prepared an article for publication which was subsequently rejected. "Never in the history of the Communist International," declared Treint, "has there been an expulsion with such grave consequences and pronounced under such inadmissible conditions. . . . In the French party Monatte, Rosmer and Delagarde were expelled only after having had the possibility of defending their point of view before an extraordinary national conference of the party."¹²⁸ The Central Committee, however, saw an opportunity to use the Russian issue against Treint, and consequently when it met on November 9-10 Treint and his faction were absent, claiming that members were notified only a few hours before the meeting and that in reality it was a "pseudo-Central Committee." After passing a motion expressing approval of the measures taken against Trotsky and Zinoviev the Central Committee took up the question of Treint. Specifically, Treint was charged with constituting a faction, meeting with Italian Bordigaists and the Ruth Fischer group in Germany, claiming that Trotsky was "a continuator of Lenin," seeking to split the party publishing documents of the Russian Opposition, and maintaining a "coincidence of action" with the Paz group.¹²⁹ The proceedings resembled Treint's rigged gatherings of three years earlier and the motion expelling Treint from the Central Committee passed without opposition. Treint's expulsion was intended as a "supreme warning" to those in the Treint and Paz groupings "to cease all factional activity under penalty of being called

before the Central Committee for expulsion."¹³⁰ With Zinoviev and Trotsky's expulsion from the Russian party several days later on November 14, Treint's last hope vanished.

In response, Treint, under no illusions about his eventual fate, came out in December, 1927 with his own publication L'Unité Léniniste. Treint's expulsion from the Central Committee was only a prelude to what was to come at the national party conference on January 20-31. Treint, tenacious to the end, vainly attempted to present his program to an unreceptive audience while Suzanne Girault, in a long discourse on the history of the international Communist movement, sought to justify their indiscipline by citing Lenin's attitude toward the Second International during the war. In spite of the fact that the conference witnessed an unprecedented degree of opposition to the party's new "class against class" electoral tactics, Treint was unable--or unwilling--to connect it to his own opposition. After a series of long and violent attacks by Doriot, Barbe' and others a motion expelling Treint, Girault, Faussecave¹³¹ and Barré¹³² passed by 174 votes to four abstentions.¹³³ "The Treint-Suzanne Girault group," it was declared, "has nothing in common with the party and the Communist International which places them outside its ranks, and between these elements and Communism it is not a question of minority or majority, but one of class."¹³⁴ The logic of expulsion had come full circle.

Formally outside the party Treint and his faction continued as an external opposition with their publication L'Unité Léniniste, appearing in a bi-monthly basis. To supplement this publication a series of documents were also published in brochure form, the most

important of which was the La lettre de Shanghai. While devoted largely to reproducing the concealed document that Treint had mentioned at the Comintern Executive meeting, the brochure also carried Treint's harshest indictment of Stalinism yet. "The present danger," wrote Treint, "is Stalinism, that is to say, the system of bureaucratic strangulation and administrative terror in the Russian party and the International, a system designed to prevent or break mechanically every protest against the existing opportunist policy and to mitigate the bankruptcy of their policy which is becoming each day more complete and irredeemable. Against this danger we must declare a war without mercy."¹³⁵ By March, however, after twelve issues of L'Unité Léniniste "serious divergences" arose between Treint and Suzanne Girault over "appreciation of the present situation in the U.S.S.R., the decisions of the Fifteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, and our own national conference." Behind these differences was the feeling on the part of Suzanne Girault that the recent leftward turn in both the Russian and French parties was due to a renewal of Zinoviev's influence. What this meant was that genuine Communist reform was now a possibility and that consequently factional activity must be toned down. "The era of expulsions has closed. The era of reintegration must open."¹³⁶ The result was that a faction headed by Treint and Barre' resigned from L'Unité Léniniste to form their own organization, the Comité pour le redressement communiste du parti et de l'Internationale, with the publication Le Redressement Communiste. Commenting afterwards on the split, Treint maintained: "To begin to employ even against those of us in the Opposition the same methods as

Stalin represents an unconscious step toward capitulation to Stalinism. There is still time for Suzanne Girault and her friends to reconsider. There are only two paths open: capitulation or throughgoing struggle for genuine Communist reform."¹³⁷ Treint's prediction became reality three months later when in June, 1928 Suzanne Girault publically announced her capitulation and the suspension of L'Unité Léniniste.¹³⁸

In pinning his hopes on "genuine Communist reform," Treint made his attitude toward the formation of a second party quite clear: ". . . we have no desire to found a second party or a fourth International, but to reconquer for Communism our party and our International."¹³⁹ By August, however, Treint's attitude had shifted slightly. As part of a minority faction within the Comité pour le redressement, Treint had developed an analysis that saw the possibility of the formation in the Soviet Union of a "new semi-Thermidorian, anti-Communist party uniting the left elements of the bourgeoisie and kulaks with the degenerate right elements of the party." The development of such a party, Treint felt, would pose anew the creation of a "genuine Bolshevik party." We will work for reform of the party," wrote Treint, "as long as that reform appears possible, but the day when reform appears impossible we will not allow ourselves to hide the truth from the workers. To continue to struggle for reform in the cadres of the party when that reform becomes impossible would only result in capitulation before the impotent centerism that is being carried along in the wake of the Right."¹⁴⁰

Throughout the fall of 1928 difference between Treint and other members of the Comité on several matters began to mount, culminating

in a turbulent meeting on December 1. A violent controversy erupted when members of the Groupe de Paris of the Comité, claiming to speak for the majority of the membership, presented two documents condemning Treint's leadership on a variety of grounds. The fundamental charge leveled against Treint was that he was evolving toward "centerist capitulation" and was still allied with Suzanne Girault. This impending capitulation, however, was not entirely looked upon with disfavor: "We do not feel it necessary to increase our efforts to stop the evolution of Treint, Barre' and Deglise toward centerist capitulation. On the contrary, we desire to accelerate this evolution so that partisans of Communist reform will be better able to judge the nature of this type of political evolution." A second set of charges centered around Treint's internal administration procedures within the Comité. Treint, it was maintained, had monopolized the administrative and political leadership of the organization and was "following the procedures used in the party." The charges read like those made by the Opposition of 1924. Among other things Treint was held responsible for destroying all initiative at the base, of avoiding discussion on essential questions, of failure to tolerate dissident opinions, of monopolizing relations with provincial affiliates, of issuing tracts in the organization's name, and of using signatures without prior consultation. An additional set of charges pertained to Treint's past. Treint and Barre', they maintained, had not repudiated their role as bolshevists and "Zinovievist politicians." This failure to acknowledge past errors was a major factor hindering Opposition unity. Nor had Treint taken the opportunity to publically disavow the "legend of Trotskyism" that his mentor Zinoviev had been

responsible for perpetuating in 1923-24: "The insincerity of politicians caught in the Opposition by maneuvers is manifested in their refusal to take a position against the myth of Trotskyism . . ." This myth, they contended, was being used as a major weapon against the Opposition. Treint and Barre' were in the movement solely to "place themselves at the head of an Opposition bloc." To deal with these charges the group called for the convocation of a special conference to remove Treint and Barre'.¹⁴¹ Treint's position, however, apparently remained secure and several weeks later he was issuing a rather confused open letter to Trotsky calling upon him to avoid making concessions to centerism and to "hold firm to your present political line." The occasion was, however, utilized by Treint to grudgingly admit his past errors and formally repudiate the "legend of Trotskyism."¹⁴² With a basic core membership of 10-12 members (and the largest concentration of these in Lyon) the Comite' soon ceased most active political activity and continued largely as a shadow group.¹⁴³

While the process by which Treint was defeated was similar to that in which he had initially been victorious, Treint's struggle nonetheless achieved a degree of tenacity and cohesiveness unmatched by any other Opposition. In this struggle Treint's main strong point was his abilities as an "organization man", an unrestrained passion for organized leadership. While the struggle once again reproduced on a smaller scale the situation in the Russian party, Treint went well beyond the tactics being pursued by the Joint Opposition in Russia. Although the underlying dynamic propelling him rested on power motives, Treint nonetheless attempted to give his case credibility by formulating a

comprehensive--though superficial--analysis. Once outside the party, however, Treint was only able to move slightly beyond the perspective of "genuine Communist reform," and only on a rhetorical level.

Toward A New Zimmerwald: Contre le Courant

The most ambitious attempt at regroupment outside the party during these early years came with the founding of the review Contre le Courant in November, 1927. In its essential aspects this review was an outgrowth of the badly chastised remnants of the Opposition of the 250, which after the Congress of Lille had regrouped under the leadership of Maurice Paz. Throughout the 1926 and 1927 this group's activities had been confined largely to irregular appearances at party gatherings and an occasional letter to the party press. Prior to the formation of Contre le Courant the main effort had been an open letter to the party and International in January, 1927. Like the open letters of the two preceding years this letter was primarily concerned with the internal state of the party. "In the present state," it was declared, "the French party is not a mass party neither in terms of members nor in influence . . . the party is a lieu de passage . . . The majority of party members remain only a few months in our ranks with no knowledge of the history of our party and in large part totally ignorant of even the most elementary principles of Communism." New members were admitted largely on the basis of their submissiveness. The criticisms at this point were directed toward the growth of a specific apparatus rather than toward personalities. "The apparatus lives in complete isolation. It is neither selected nor controlled by the party

and rather than being an expression of the party is a cancerous parasite . . . " As for the changes in leadership they are little more than palace revolutions and the present régime signifies only the impending danger of death for the party."¹⁴⁴ This important new formulation was to be further expanded and elaborated upon in the pages of Contre le Courant. The party responded by charging that several of the signers had met with "the counter-revolutionary, Souvarine and received instructions for factional work within the French party," and by calling Paz and several others before the party control commission.¹⁴⁵ Throughout this period the Paz group also continued to maintain close relations with another Opposition tendency, the Baranton group and its publication La Tribune Libre, a small internal Opposition organ which appeared sporadically and was devoted largely to criticizing the method of democratic centralism employed in the party.¹⁴⁶

By the fall of 1927 it had become increasingly clear that fundamental reform within the party was impossible and that the focus of discontent could no longer be maintained from within. Deprived of all means of expressing themselves the group saw^{no} other alternative except to launch Contre le Courant in November, 1927.¹⁴⁷ Their expulsions followed on December 7, 1927.¹⁴⁸ Its bold founding manifesto left few doubts about where they stood:

It is impossible for us to remain silent at this moment. Behind this deadly silence imposed upon the Opposition, behind the facade of unity, and the "approbations" obtained by force, a tragic denouement is being prepared. Since the death of Lenin the Russian party has passed from crisis to crisis and finally arrived at a split. . . What is happening now in Russia is an implacable struggle between the masked revisionism of the Stalin faction and the genuine Communism

defended by the Opposition. The point of contention is the future of the October Revolution itself.

At the present moment the struggle of the faction in power against their opponents knows no limits; they have introduced into the party the regime of the bludgeon, of secret diplomacy, of fear. The truth is concealed from the party about what is happening in it. The sole nourishment offered to the party is the "official" theses, its official point of view. Whoever accepts it is a "Bolshevik" whoever discusses it is a "Menshevik," whoever opposes it is a "counter-revolutionary" or a "White Guard." And because they know all too well what an invincible power the Opposition would have if the membership were allowed to speak, they are employing terror within the party. Workers belonging to the Opposition are dismissed from their jobs, reduced to hunger, turned over to the G.P.U., searched and thrown into prison. The best Bolsheviks are expelled from the party by the hundreds. Devoted party workers are exiled after being dishonored. The heads of the Opposition are removed from their government positions and driven from the party. Their lives are already in danger . . . The rich and well-off layers of the peasantry, the petite-bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy, these are the social forces which, acting through the party apparatus, have waged a war without mercy against the Opposition . . . With this struggle of the Russian Opposition we express unreserved solidarity . . . We think that the essential and urgent task consists of struggling against the opportunism and bureaucratism which is leading the Russian Revolution to its doom . . . A Communist party in which an all-powerful apparatus imposes its dictatorship upon the party is one in which the proletariat has already suffered a grave defeat which prepares and presages other defeats. . . .

In the first proletarian state the ruling faction is pursuing a policy of sliding toward the right, both in theory and in practice. And in order to conceal this policy, it strikes at the left, employing every means available to a state power: press, police and terror . . .

The difficulties of the struggle, the tragic nature of the events, recall a turning point no less somber and no less dangerous in the history of the working class: the war. The analogy is similar. Today, as thirteen years ago, leaders unworthy of the task that has been confided to them; the masses bewildered and deceived. Today as then, confusion, lies, fanaticism. And today too, a handful of men in struggle against all calumnies and all attacks, but resolute to confront the danger.

Against the current! As stood the Bolsheviks in 1914! Against the current! With the same force as

in 1914! As the Zimmerwalds were denounced as "Boches" they will denounce us as "counter-revolutionaries." What does it matter? We await the moment when, unfailingly, the masses come to themselves. Against the current! Against the split in the party and the International! For the regroupment of Communist forces! For a left turn in the International! For a proletarian politics for the Soviet state! For the forward march of the world revolution!

All those who understand will rise up with us. And act.¹⁴⁹

Modeling itself strategically on the Zimmerwald movement Contre le Courant's approach to the dilemma of Communist activity outside the party was twofold: to serve an educational organ and as a center for Communist regroupment. Educationally, the task was defined as:

. . . the put the proletariat in possession of the facts, to permit it or react against the enormous deviation to the right (so much more dangerous because it conceals itself under the guise of Leninism) in which the Communist movement is in danger of floundering. . . We propose then to publish in this organ the documents which are concealed by the party officials from the working class, to study the great questions of the proletarian struggle, to expose the facts, to oppose the Communist point of view to the opportunist or demagogic point of view expressed in the official organs; to create, in other words, a center of proletarian redressement. This is the sole means of struggling for the party and the International.¹⁵⁰

A key element in this educational process involved the Soviet Union, which meant: ". . . instructing the working class on the real situation in the Soviet Union. By denouncing vigorously the errors of its leadership. By denouncing a politics which is becoming orientated increasingly away from the interests of the proletariat and poor peasants. By presenting Communist solutions to the problems posed."¹⁵¹

While no formal call for the formation of a second party was issued, the option was at least kept open for the future by the idea of a major Communist regroupment. For the editorial committee of Contre le Courant Communist regroupment meant utilizing the period of relative calm to develop the cadres to create "real mass revolutionary parties" during future upheavals. "The healthy revolutionary reaction has invariably been one of small minorities marching against the current."¹⁵² As an instrument of regroupment Contre le Courant appears to have had the wholehearted support of Trotsky. A document reported to have been issued by him stated that in the event of Treint and Girault's capitulation "it will be necessary to regard Contre le Courant alone as our group of real adherents." The document also stressed the need to "draw Rosmer into collaborating with Contre le Courant" and to form a bloc with the La Révolution Proletarienne group.¹⁵³

During the first months of Contre le Courant's existence the concept of the Leninist party had not been called into question. Suddenly and unexpectedly, however, in the spring of 1928 a major split on the editorial committee occurred over this question. The immediate issue was a series of articles by Lorient on the Russian experience which directly challenged the validity of the Leninist party. Denied use of Contre le Courant, Lorient resorted to publishing them in La Révolution Proletarienne, and later in enlarged brochure form. Lorient's disillusionment is perhaps representative of the demoralization that was slowly affecting many in the Opposition.

In its fundamental aspects Lorient's analysis was largely a

restatement of syndicalist formulations about the relationship of class to party. What Lorient argued was an "absolute distinction between political parties and class." The events of the past ten years in Russia, Lorient contended, called into question the role of the Communist party in the proletarian revolution. Russia, he argued, was "not a country of socialism," but one marked by a "pseudo-Communist bureaucracy," which was the political expression of a new Russian bourgeoisie and the peasantry. All economic organs of the Russian working class were now under party control and the Soviets had been reduced to a role similar to that of municipal councils in the capitalist countries. As part of this process of degeneration the Third International had been transformed into an instrument of Soviet diplomacy and was "finished" as a factor in the proletarian revolution: "The present Communist parties are at the service of the government of Stalin; their organizations, their methods, their ideology are indissolubly attached to that government." Rather than viewing this situation as an outgrowth of specific conditions affecting the Russian Revolution, Lorient saw it as stemming from an organic defect in Leninism. As for the Russian Opposition: "All of the Oppositionists denounce the dictatorship of Stalin, but these groups offer nothing else except to exchange the dictatorship of Trotsky . . ." The parties themselves, he argued, "are presently COMBAT FORMATIONS, in which the critical spirit is rigorously banished and single motive is FAITH, the organism is fit solely for the exercise of violence. Like the fascist gangs the Communist parties are INSTRUMENTS OF THE DICTATORSHIP." Lorient's fundamental proposition was that: "The political organization of the

proletariat as distinct from its economic organization is impossible." And that: "The proletariat carries in its economic organizations ALL revolutionary possibilities." The syndicats, for Lorient, were "the real political party of the working class." In Lorient's view the Communists were guilty of attempting to "subordinate the syndicats and seize their leadership." While it was necessary to support the Russian Revolution in 1917 because the Bolsheviks were the sole representatives of the proletarian revolution, the conquest of political power by a party did not in itself insure the possession of state power by the proletariat. Moreover: "The dictatorship of the Communist Party is not the dictatorship of the proletariat." As for future revolutionary strategy, Lorient felt that: "The different phases of the world proletarian revolution will be characterized by the growing capacity of the proletariat to assume leadership."¹⁵⁴

Lorient's analysis, however, did not go unchallenged. A special meeting was held on April 20, 1928 to discuss the issue at which time Lorient and four supporters were removed from the editorial board.¹⁵⁵ Maurice Paz, in the name of the majority responded: "It has not been easy for us to renounce our collective work with Lorient after several years of collaboration. The Communist Opposition does not aspire to be monolithic but it cannot accept divergences on questions of essential principles without abandoning its mission of Communist reform." Lorient, he maintained, was "obsessed with the present party with its preoccupations of a sect, its incapacity and glaring bureaucratic distortions." As to Contre le Courant's position: ". . . we have never ceased to consider the party as the instrument of the revolution and of

the dictatorship of the proletariat under the control of the proletariat."¹⁵⁶

Nonetheless the party did not escape a continuing stream of criticism. Aside from the now commonplace charges about the lack of internal democracy and the growth of a bureaucratic apparatus the main focus of criticism was now directed to the party's new electoral tactics. In the fall of 1927, under direct instructions from the Comintern and over the protests of prominent members of the party, the P.C.F. embarked on a new course known as "class against class," which was first publicized in the form of an open letter.¹⁵⁷ Theoretically, the new policy was premised on a major shift in world conditions; a period of capitalist stabilization had supposedly given way to one of capitalist collapse and heightened class struggles. In the electoral arena the new policy "completely overturned the election campaign tactics of the party."¹⁵⁸ What the new tactics meant was that the P.C.F. would no longer honor the practice of Republican discipline by continuing to run candidates on the second ballot even at the risk of electing reactionary candidates over Socialist ones. Contre le Courant, like the majority of the Opposition, was caught off guard by the sudden shift and was at first inclined to view it as merely another tactical maneuver. The formula of "class against class" itself was pronounced "excellent": "But a good formula by itself is not sufficient; it is its application that counts."¹⁵⁹ As to the party's willingness to apply it in practice Contre le Courant remained sceptical:

Can the leadership practice a new course? Is it capable of doing so? They do not want to do so. They fear to do so. The party leadership is too attached by bureaucratic channels and hidden interests to the Stalin faction, which leads the Revolution by abdication and compromise with

the bourgeoisie, to pursue a new course and to do something other than what it has already done.

On this basis it was maintained that "the revolutionary phrases and Communist vocabulary are being used only to facilitate opportunist acts . . . The 'open letter' is an internal political maneuver designed neither to reform nor to reinforce the party, but to weaken the Opposition. It is the safety valve of an Opportunist apparatus."¹⁶⁰ In spite of the declarations proclaiming electoralism and opportunism to be the "greatest danger," "electoral opportunism is escaping with a stench."¹⁶¹ The P.C.F., it was alleged, was still largely an electoral party: ". . . it is more a party of extreme opposition than a real Communist party. One votes for the party but does not join it. . . ." The leadership oscillates between an opportunism "too real" and a "gauchisme de commande." The new tactic was "ransom" for its past opportunism, "ransom paid by the proletariat." Since 1924, "the party has not taken its place at the head of the masses and has even on occasion allowed itself to follow them in struggle." In the final analysis the new tactic was only part of the larger "zig-zag politics" imposed by the Stalinist leadership of the Communist International.¹⁶²

Criticisms were also directed to the party's labor policies. The party, it was charged, had a "false conception" of trade union work, seeking to "conquer by any means" important trade union posts in order to "dominate administratively." Against this practice it was countered: "An honest and conscious revolutionary, confident in the correctness of his principles can hope that his propaganda and the course of events will sustain his ideas and win over the working class.

It is heresy to attempt to substitute ruses to gain influence, bureaucratic methods in place of serious labor work."¹⁶³ For these reasons the syndicalist leaders, despite certain "inexcusable errors," had legitimate grievances against Communist manipulation of the unions. Consequently, "without labor independence there can be no unity, no real mass actions, which are necessary for Leninists."¹⁶⁴

For the editorial committee of Contre le Courant few questions assumed greater importance than the social significance of the events unfolding in Russia. At the heart of their developing views on the Russian question was an analysis that viewed the problem in terms of a rapidly developing "new bourgeoisie" of kulaks, N.E.P.--men and bureaucrats tied to state enterprises. To contend with this rising social grouping the Right faction in the party responded by making further concessions and capitulations.¹⁶⁵ The most important and powerful--and hence most dangerous--element within this new bourgeoisie was the kulak. This group, it was contended, was "not content with symbolic gestures such as the expulsion and deportation of the Opposition," but desired to remove all obstacles to its development, and was exerting pressure by withholding their produce. Despite a cascade of slogans and administrative measures against the kulaks, Stalin was "a prisoner of a situation which he helped create." For this reason: "One can foresee a situation after the semblance of combat in which he capitulates to the Right, which is defined by the kulaks and internal and foreign bourgeoisie. If not, Stalin himself will be destroyed." To struggle effectively against the kulak presupposed the existence of "a living working class democracy," and required

the "active support of the entire proletariat and its organizations." Stalin's politics, however, had sterilized these organizations and banished "all life and initiative." Consequently, his measures against the kulak occurred in "a spirit of brutality and panic."¹⁶⁶

The political leadership of the Russian party itself was based on a form of "oligarchic centralism" which meant the "absolute predominance of the apparatus, the monopolization of all the political and economic means of expression by a leadership faction" Such a situation could lead only to "a bureaucracy, a caste of functionaries bureaucratically detached from the masses or artificially attached. . . ."¹⁶⁷ Of vital significance in this growing centralization was the development of the G. P. U. into the "sole arbiter of internal conflicts within the party."¹⁶⁸ On the question of propaganda it was contended that the leadership of the Russian party, like the European governments during World War I, was "preparing the opinions of the workers," particularly in the struggle against the Opposition.¹⁶⁹

As the deportations and repressive measures against the Russian Opposition accelerated, Contre le Courant's attitude intensified as well. The Russian Revolution at this point was now considered on the edge of Thermidor. Theoretically, the Thermidorian reaction was defined according to the following formula:

Historically, the tactics of the Thermidorians have never varied. The Thermidorians manifest themselves historically in a regime where there still exists the apparatus of a revolutionary dictatorship and represent the faction which prepares the political accession of a reactionary class already strong economically. This class arises out of the economic contradictions which persist in a backward country and find a base of support among the

bourgeoisie and petite-bourgeoisie elements . . . But deprived by the revolutionary dictatorship--the form of which can exist administratively even when the spirit which animated it at the beginning of the Revolution has totally disappeared--all means of political expression, the sole recourse of these classes coalesced against the Revolution, consists of utilizing all their forces to exert pressure on the leadership apparatus to destroy revolutionary legality in order to easily break their revolutionary power. For these reasons Thermidor in all its forms is historically the prelude to a Bonapartist coup which represents dictatorship the capitalist classes created by the Revolution require to consolidate their economic position viz-à-viz the working class.

From this standpoint Stalin was seen as the "prototype" of the Russian Thermidorian, one who "maneuvers with the working class as he maneuvers with the bourgeoisie; but in increasingly eliminating the working class from the state apparatus, disarming them ideologically, in making them believe that they have specifically Russian interests (the theory of Socialism in a Single Country), in deceiving world working class opinion through his functionaries, and in turning the Third International into an international Thermidorian agency, Stalin is preparing, just as Barère did, for the emergence of Bonaparte."¹⁷⁰ As the only force opposing this process, the Russian Oppositionists found themselves facing a "veritable terror." "The Soviet Union," it was painfully noted, "in the twelfth year of the Revolution is characterized by a state of seige directed against Communists."¹⁷¹

While representing the only serious attempt to regroup and revitalize the international Communist movement during these years, Contre le Courant found itself hampered in these efforts in several ways. Lacking an organizational vehicle of any form its ideas could never be

translated into action nor disseminated beyond a selective audience. Basically, it was addressed to the avant garde of the working class movement, intellectuals and party militants directly involved in revolutionary struggle, at a time when this movement was caught in a period of decline, demoralization and depoliticalization. On the theoretical and strategic level the line of demarcation between Contre le Courant and the other Opposition groups was not one of fundamentals. As for the split on the Contre le Courant editorial board both tendencies formulated their tactical and strategic perspectives in terms of a return to the past. For the majority it was based on constantly recurring moralistic calls for a new Zimmerwald. For Loriot and his faction the question of revolutionary organization could only be posed in terms of a return to pre-war syndicalism.

The Bordigaist Left Opposition

Among the many diverse forms that the pattern of Communist Opposition took in France was that of a Bordigaist ultra-left Opposition. Drawing its adherents largely from Italian exiles residing in France, but attracting French supporters as well, this group first attempted to formulate a comprehensive program and strategy in 1926 with its "Plate-forme de gauche" which was presented at the Congress of Lille, Trotsky, writing several years later, described this platform as "one of the best documents emanating from the international Opposition . . ."¹⁷² Based largely on the theoretical formulations of the Italian Communist leader Bordiga, the platform was concerned primarily with the nature and role of the revolutionary party. While accepting the

need for a Leninist party on the premise that the "immediate organizations of the working class" cannot develop revolutionary consciousness or struggle against "fatalism," several severe criticisms were offered on the situation in the French party. The P.C.F. since bolshevization had substituted for the political preparation of the proletariat "mechanical formulas such as unity for the sake of unity, discipline for the sake of discipline." While unity and discipline were a revolutionary necessity they should arise "spontaneously" out of revolutionary practice. The party leadership itself was largely "a dictatorship of a handful of incompetents and irresponsibles," and was based on "authoritarian hierarchization." To cope with the situation the program proposed instituting a system of "organic centralism" and restoring free discussion. "The repression of factionalism," it was argued, was "not a fundamental condition for the evolution of the party." Tactically, the leadership was also guilty of "incoherent agitation" by launching slogans and actions only to abandon them 24 hours later. Nor was the leadership providing the membership with even "the most elementary notions of struggle and defense" in the fight against fascism. All tactics, it was maintained, were reduced to continual proposals for the united front and perennial open letters to the Socialists. While laying ultimate responsibility for the crisis on "the Center" the program had little sympathy for the Opposition: "We consider the political ideas of the Right on the united front, the war in Morocco and Syria, the struggle against fascism to be a serious anti-Marxist deviation based on Social Democratic conceptions. As such we condemn them in the most absolute terms." To deal with the Opposition it was proposed that they be

"liquidated by a free ideological discussion in the press and in party meetings in which all tendencies have the right to express themselves." Souvarine, for his part, was viewed as an "agent provocateur of the police." As for La Révolution Proletarienne its ideas were "functionally erroneous and dangerous," although "much of what this group says about internal life of the party and its excessive bureaucratism and so-called centralism is correct."¹⁷³

Although claiming at this point to be "a group of comrades having similar political conceptions,"¹⁷⁴ the group split formally from the party the following year to constitute the Fraction de Gauche italienne. The activities of this group were confined largely to publicizing the writings of Bordiga, attempting to exert pressure on both the French and Italian parties, and to publishing the journal Prometeo (usually in Italian but occasionally in French) and later the French language Bulletin de l'Information de la Fraction de Gauche italienne. Late in 1927 an ultra-left faction split off to form the Group d'avant-garde communiste, claiming that "the Bordigiaists to-the-letter of Prometeo are endorsers of the fatal politics of bolshevization."¹⁷⁵ Its defined aim was to create a "solid ideological base," "reawaken the revolutionary and Communist spirit," and "develop the critical facilities and the capacity to resolve revolutionary problems within the working class."¹⁷⁶ The group's activities were limited for the most part to heavy-handed polemics in their publication Le Réveil Communiste (which later become Le Communiste and finally Le Ouvrier Communiste). Ideologically, they disassociated themselves completely from the international Communist movement, claiming that reform

from within was no longer possible, and condemning the "treason of the sycophants of Communism." Trotsky, they maintained, had only reinforced the position of the Centerists which "facilitated the activity of the reaction in Russia, and the activity of the mercenary bolshevisors throughout the world."¹⁷⁷

While the basic impulse behind the Bordigaist tendency stems from the division in the Italian party the group nonetheless injected a number of important criticisms into the struggle. In drawing up a comprehensive program the Bordigaists offered several new perspectives about the nature of party organization and spontaneous activity. While never formally challenging the concept of the Leninist party this perspective at least posed a new relationship between party and class. In attempting, however, to connect this analysis to a concrete tactical program the group proved unable to go beyond the level of generalization.

Notes

¹ Maurice Chambelland, "Notre vieille 'R.P.'", La Révolution Proletarienne, January, 1950.

² "Entre nous," La Révolution Proletarienne, February, 1925.

³ These included: Maurice Chambelland, Robert Louzan, Victor Godonnèche, Albin Villeval, V. Garnez, D. Antonini, G. Lacoste, Fernand Charbit, Georges Aivelle, J. Aufrere, L. Marzet.

⁴ In tracing the origin of this term Monatte noted Zinoviev's comment at the Fourth World Congress: "We must search for a good number of Communist elements in the ranks of syndicalism. That is to say, the syndicalists-communists." Monatte, "Ils n'ont rien appris" La Révolution Proletarienne, August, 1925.

⁵ "Entre nous," La Révolution Proletarienne, January 15, 1927.

⁶ Rosmer, "La légende du Trotskyisme," La Révolution Proletarienne, February, 1925. Rosmer also made note of the fact that Trotsky had been severely critical of their communist-syndicalist position.

⁷ "Deuxième lettre aux membres du Parti communiste: La réponse des trois exclus," La Révolution Proletarienne, January, 1925. Several minor differences over the letter arose among the three signers. Monatte, writing a first draft, tended to emphasize the undemocratic nature of the party and personal attacks on the Treint faction at the expense of broader strategic and organizational questions. A copy of this draft is contained in La Révolution Proletarienne, July 1, 1962.

⁸ An account of the proceedings can be found in the issues of l'Humanité from January 18 to 23, 1925.

⁹ "La droite internationale démasquée," l'Humanité, January 18, 1925.

¹⁰ For biographical information on Lorient see appendix one.

¹¹ "La droite internationale démasquée," op. cit.

¹² For biographical information on Rappoport see appendix one.

¹³ "Le Parti unanime avec sa direction," l'Humanité, January 19, 1925. Treint, at this point, appears to have still retained some hopes for Lorient, declaring several weeks later: "Lorient alone had the honesty and the courage to oppose the resolutions of the Fifth World Congress in general and the reorganization of the party on the

basis of factory nuclei in particular . . . Lorient is an old active fighter who, since 1914 has stood at the head of the opposition movement against the war and later at the head of the Communist movement. . . Lorient. . . withdrew from active participation and watched the labor movement and Communist movement from a distance. This voluntary retirement which loosened the ties which bound Lorient to the life of the proletariat and the International, explains his mistakes today. The whole French party distinguishes Lorient carefully from the Right and cherishes the hope that he will again return completely to active life, find his way back to union with the International and prove himself worthy of his past." Treint, "The Bolshevizing Party Conference of the Communist Party of France," International Press Correspondence, February 26, 1925.

¹⁴"Le discours du délégué de l'Exécutif," l'Humanité, January 20, 1925.

¹⁵International Press Correspondence, January 15, 1925. At about the same time Zinoviev noted bitterly elsewhere: "It cannot be permitted that while almost the whole of the Paris proletariat sympathizes with the French Communist Party our Paris organization has only a few thousand members." Zinoviev, "The Bolshevizing of the Parties of the Communist International," International Press Correspondence, January 22, 1925.

¹⁶Jules Humbert-Droz, "Mise au point nécessaire," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, January 23, 1926. Treint responded two weeks later by charging: "Humbert-Droz supports without desiring it the maneuvers of our Right. . . Humbert-Droz in his article shows that he was recognized the errors he committed while he was representing the Executive in our party and that he has not understood the development of our party since that epoch. . . he is working for a union of the center with the Trotskyite Right." Treint, "Mise au point d'une mise au point." Cahiers du Bolchévisme, February 6, 1925.

¹⁷For information on Louzon see appendix one.

¹⁸Robert Louzon, "Le rôle du Parti," La Révolution Proletarienne, February, 1925.

¹⁹"Parmi nos lettres: Une ligue syndicaliste," La Révolution Proletarienne, May, 1925.

²⁰"Parmi nos lettres: Une ligue syndicaliste," La Révolution Proletarienne, July, 1925.

²¹Maurice Chambelland, "Pour une ligue syndicaliste," La Révolution Proletarienne, October, 1925.

²²"In August, referring to his wartime opposition, Monatte noted bitterly: "During those bad years we constituted only a handful

in France, but a gloomy earnestness sustained us, we struggled against the jus 'qu' auboutistes of socialism and syndicalism, against the partisans of the union sacrée, and often against capitalism itself. . . Undoubtedly the task today is infinitely less heavy and pressing. Why has it provoked so much discouragement?" Monatte, "Ils n'ont rien appris," La Révolution Proletarienne, August, 1925.

²³"Parmi nos lettres: Une ligue syndicaliste," La Révolution Proletarienne, July, 1925.

²⁴"Parmi nos lettres," La Révolution Proletarienne, October, 1925.

²⁵See Monatte, "Quand sonnera l'heure de l'unité," La Révolution Proletarienne, January, February and April, 1926.

²⁶"La Ligue Syndicaliste ce qu'est, ce qu'elle veut," La Révolution Proletarienne, August 15, 1926.

²⁷Humbert-Droz, "Mise au point nécessaire," op. cit. These remarks notwithstanding, Humbert-Droz, perhaps seeking a counterweight to Treint's leadership, still entertained hopes about their eventual reintegration: "We know the past and the character of Rosmer and Monatte, and we are certain they did not want to become agents of the counter-revolution. But in politics it is not intentions that count but the objective results that ensue. . . We hope that Rosmer, Monatte and Delagarde, meditating on the example of Serrati, will recover very rapidly."

²⁸Treint, "La contre-révolution au travail dans le no. 7 de la Révolution Proletarienne," Cahiers du Bolchevisme, August 15, 1925.

²⁹G. Berling, "Proudhon contre Marx, Syndicalisme contre Léninisme," Cahiers du Bolchevisme, January 30, 1925.

³⁰Herçlet, "Contre les saboteurs du mouvement ouvrier," La Vie Ouvrière, September 11, 1925.

³¹Max Eastman, Love and Revolution (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 443.

³²See, "Réponse du camarade Trotsky à ce livre et résolution du C.C. du P.C.F.," l'Humanité, July 16, 1925. Eastman's response is contained in, "Ce que signifie le désaveu de Trotsky," La Révolution Proletarienne, September, 1925.

³³Ibid.

³⁴"Déclaration de Trotsky," La Révolution Proletarienne, October, 1925.

³⁵"Les réponses de 'Noyau' à deux demandes de Trotsky," La Révolution Proletarienne, October, 1925.

³⁶Robert Louzon, "Le danger Bonapartiste," La Révolution Proletarienne, August, 1926.

³⁷Robert Louzon, "Qu'est-ce qu'un Etat proletarien," La Révolution Proletarienne, May 15, 1927.

³⁸Robert Louzon, "La victoire de la koulak et ses conséquences," La Révolution Proletarienne, September, 1928.

³⁹Rosmer, "Les problèmes de la Révolution russe," La Révolution Proletarienne, December, 1926.

⁴⁰Souvarine, "Où va la Révolution russe?" La Révolution Proletarienne, August, 1926.

⁴¹Souvarine, "Avant la conférence d'Octobre," La Révolution Proletarienne, September, 1926.

⁴²Souvarine, "La défaite de l'opposition," Révolution Proletarienne, November, 1926.

⁴³See appendix one for biographical information on Pierre Pascal.

⁴⁴"Lettre de Russie," La Révolution Proletarienne, March 15, 1927. Pascal, however, had little sympathy for Trotsky: "Trotsky is evidently superior [to the others] but in the same category. If he had the power he would be even more tyrannical than the others. His economic ideas are even more reactionary than the major capitalists . . . Of what need is there to present Trotsky as a minor saint. . . ?" Pascal to Monatte, December 12, 1925. Quoted in Gras, op. cit., p. 335.

⁴⁵"Entre nous," La Révolution Proletarienne, May, 1925.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷"Entre nous," La Révolution Proletarienne, December, 1926.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹"Notre budget de 1927 et nos objectifs pour 1928," La Révolution Proletarienne, March 1, 1928.

⁵⁰Jules Humbert-Droz, De Lénine à Staline, op. cit., p. 269.

⁵¹"Les organisations et cadres de Renégats," André Marty papers, Harvard University.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³"Au Comité Exécutif de l'Internationale communiste,"
A copy of this letter can be found in the Trotsky archives, Harvard,
University.

⁵⁸"Thèses," March 23, 1925. Trotsky archives, Harvard
University.

⁵⁹See, "Déclaration de l'opposition communiste à la comité
central du 18 Août 1925." Trotsky archives, Harvard University.

⁶⁰See appendix one for biographical profile of Maurice Paz.

⁶¹See appendix one.

⁶²"L'opposition communiste et la guerre du Maroc,"
L'Humanité, October 17, 1925.

⁶³"La droite n'a pas voulu affronter le congrès," l'Humanité,
October 19, 1925.

⁶⁴Treint, "Le sens de la conférence du Parti," l'Humanité,
October 24, 1925.

⁶⁵Ferrat, op. cit., p. 174.

⁶⁶"Au Comité exécutif de l'Internationale Communiste,"
Cahiers du Bolchévisme, January 15, 1926.

⁶⁷"Comment la droite manoeuvre," Cahiers du Bolchévisme,
January 15, 1926.

⁶⁸"Contre la droite française," Cahiers du Bolchévisme,
April 15, 1926.

⁶⁹Quoted in Monatte, "Ils n'ont rien appris," La Révolution
Proletarienne, August, 1925.

⁷⁰"Lettre adressée à l'Exécutif de l'Internationale," Cahiers
du Bolchévisme, March 25, 1926.

⁷¹Ferrat, op. cit., p. 181.

⁷²A. Lepetite, "Bolchévisation de l'I.C. ou retour à social-
democratie," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, June 1, 1926.

⁷³A. Lepetite, "Courtes remarques sur les défauts de notre
travail," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, June 15, 1926.

⁷⁴See, "Résolution sur la question française," Cahiers du
Bolchévisme, April 15, 1920.

⁷⁵Souvarine, "Demerciment," Bulletin Communiste, October 23, 1925. Following his expulsion Souvarine had continued to stay in Moscow although deprived of his accommodations at the Hotel Lux. Upon leaving the Soviet Union in 1925 he was shadowed on the train by an agent of the Cheka, searched at the border, and all his papers confiscated. Lazitch, op. cit., p. 56.

⁷⁶Souvarine, "Exclus, mais communistes," Bulletin Communiste, October 23, 1925.

⁷⁷"L'Actualité politique et sociale," Bulletin Communiste, November 6, 1925.

⁷⁸Souvarine, "Exclus, mais Communistes," op. cit.

⁷⁹Souvarine, "Le mouvement ouvrier internationale," Bulletin Communiste, November 20, 1925.

⁸⁰Souvarine, "280 militant communistes proclament la vérité sur le 'desastre' du Parti et dénoncent la 'dictature intolérable' d'une vraie 'coterie de megalomanes'," Bulletin Communiste, January 22, 1926.

⁸¹Souvarine, "Déclaration," Bulletin Communiste, December 4, 1925.

⁸²Souvarine, "La crise du communisme," Bulletin Communiste, October 30, 1925.

⁸³Souvarine, "Déclaration," op. cit.

⁸⁴"Communisme et démagogie," Bulletin Communiste, November 27, 1925.

⁸⁵Souvarine, "La social-démocratisation du Parti communiste français," Bulletin Communiste, November 20, 1925.

⁸⁶"L'Actualité politique et sociale," Bulletin Communiste, December 11, 1925. "For the charlatans of pseudo-Leninism humanity is divided into two categories of citizens: the party 'apparatus' and the fascists. Everything that is not Communist or not docile to the 'apparatus' is fascist." Souvarine, "Ni Keren-skisme ni fascisme," Bulletin Communiste, November 27, 1925.

⁸⁷"L'Actualité politique et sociale," Bulletin Communiste, October 23, 1925.

⁸⁸Souvarine, "Déclaration," op. cit.

⁸⁹These six were: Mahouy, Souzy, Hairius, Marthe Bigot, Aucouturier, Barat and Gourget.

⁹⁰"Notre comité de réduction répond aux dirigeants du Parti," Bulletin Communiste, January 15, 1926.

⁹¹"Entre nous," Bulletin Communiste, December 4, 1925.

⁹²"Deux documents," Bulletin Communiste, January 29, 1926.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴"Déclaration," Bulletin Communiste, January 29, 1926.

⁹⁵Degras, op. cit., pp. 251-352. Souvarine's hopes, however, were not without some foundation. As the Joint Opposition coalesced in Russia, Zinoviev was apparently convinced by Trotsky to explore the possibility of the readmission of Souvarine, Rosmer, Monatte and Dunois and requested Jules Humbert-Droz to look into the matter. Although Humbert-Droz met with Rosmer, Monatte and Dunois nothing came of these efforts, perhaps due to Humbert-Droz's Bukharinite sympathies. Humbert-Droz, De Lénine à Staline op. cit., pp. 269-70.

⁹⁶"Cercle Communiste Marx et Lénine," Bulletin Communiste, January 29, 1926.

⁹⁷"Une mise au point nécessaire," Contre le Courant, June 28, 1928.

⁹⁸Humbert-Droz, De Lénine à Staline, op. cit., p. 269.

⁹⁹"Une mise au point nécessaire," op. cit. The text of this letter is unavailable.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Deutscher, op. cit., pp. 241-242.

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 253-256.

¹⁰³Humbert-Droz, De Lénine à Staline, op. cit., p. 271.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 268.

¹⁰⁵The "six" consisted of Semard, Thorez, Cremat, Cachin, Doriot and Monmousseau.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 272. "I have momentarily succeeded in preventing the liaison of Semard with Jacob-Suzanne; but will it last?"

¹⁰⁷See appendix one for information on Jacob.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 272.

- ¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 270.
- ¹¹⁰Treint, "Europe et Amérique," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, September 15, 1926.
- ¹¹¹International Press Correspondence, July 8, 1926.
- ¹¹²Humbert-Droz, De Lénine à Staline, op. cit., p. 274.
In spite of his victory Humbert-Droz remained pessimistic about the future of the party: "As a result of all this minor small play going on the party is being prevented from fulfilling its tasks among the laboring masses." Ibid., p. 273.
- ¹¹³Ibid., p. 270.
- ¹¹⁴International Press Correspondence, July 1, 1926.
- ¹¹⁵Ibid.
- ¹¹⁶Lazitch, op. cit., p. 57.
- ¹¹⁷See "Décisions du B. P. du C. C. sur la question russe," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, November 6, 1926.
- ¹¹⁸"La discussion russe dans le Parti français," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, November 27, 1926.
- ¹¹⁹Humbert-Droz, De Lénine à Staline, op. cit., p. 281.
"Treint comes daily to pose questions and discuss them; he has broken the ice that has accumulated over the years and has attempted 'cordial' collaboration."
- ¹²⁰Ferrat, op. cit., p. 212.
- ¹²¹Fauvet, op. cit., p. 76.
- ¹²²International Press Correspondence, April 28, 1927.
- ¹²³Treint, La lettre de Shanghai: document inédit caché par Staline (Paris: l'Unité Léniniste, 1928).
- ¹²⁴"Déclaration du camarade Treint adressée au C. E. de I. C. le 22 juillet 1927 sur la question chinoise," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, Special number, 1927.
- ¹²⁵"Une lettre de Treint au bureau politique," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, July 1, 1927.
- ¹²⁶"Le travail fractionnel de Treint," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, Special number, 1927.

127 "Pour le bolchévisme, pour le léninisme. Contre le revisionnisme Staliniste dans l'International et dans le Parti français," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, Special number, 1927.

128 "Le Travail fractionnel du Treint," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, Special number, 1927.

129 "Additif à la plate-forme des membres oppositionnels du comité central," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, Special number, 1927.

130 "Résolution sur l'opposition," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, Special number, 1927.

131 For biographical information on Faussecave see appendix one.

132 For biographical information on Barré see appendix one.

133 "Première journée des assises du Parti," l'Humanité, January 31, 1928. "Deuxième jour de la conférence nationale du P.C.F.," l'Humanité, February 1, 1928.

134 "Résolutions de la conférence nationale," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, March 15, 1928.

135 Treint, La Lettre de Shanghai, op. cit.

136 "La lutte contre le koulak exige les réintégrations," L'Unité Leniniste, March 15, 1928.

137 Treint, "Les deux voies," In Documents Edités par le Comité pour le Redressement Communiste du Parti et de l'Internationale (Paris: 1928).

138 "Adieu L'Unité Leniniste," Contre le Courant, June 28, 1928.

139 Treint, "Les deux voies," op. cit.

140 Treint, "Déclaration complémentaire de la minorité du Comité du Redressement." In Appel du Comité pour le Redressement Communiste du Parti et de l'Internationale (Paris: 1928).

141 "Déclaration du Comité pour le Redressement Communiste," Contre le Courant, December 15, 1928.

142 "Lettre ouverte au camarade Trotsky," Le Redressement Communiste, January, 1929.

143 Interview with Yvan Craipeau 7/3/73.

¹⁴⁴"Lettre à l'Internationale et aux membres du Parti," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, February 1, 1927. As to the crucial question of the party's membership decline throughout the 1920's Annie Kriegel has collected the following data:

Party Membership, 1920-1931

1920	178,372
1921	109,391
1922	78,828
1923	45,000 - 55,598
1924	57,000 - 88,127
1925	55,000 - 83,326
1926	55,000 - 75,000
1927	48,000 - 52,376
1928	36,000 - 63,000
1929	25,000 - 58,000
1930	35,000 - 40,000
1931	30,743 - 39,000

Figures include the highest and lowest reported totals or estimates. Annie Kriegel, Le Pain et les Roses (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), pp. 188-194.

¹⁴⁵"Déclaration du bureau politique relative à la lettre de droite," Cahiers du Bolchevisme, February 1, 1927.

¹⁴⁶"A propos d'un article de Baraton," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, January 15, 1927. No other information on this group is available, although a brief glimpse of Baranton's thoughts is provided in his two page article, "Les problèmes de la démocratie ouvrière dans le parti," Cahiers du Bolchevisme, December 15, 1926.

¹⁴⁷The initial editorial committee consisted of Maurice Paz, Magdeliene Marx (Paz), Fernand Lorient, Lucie Colliard, Maria Cotton, Delfosse, Leon Delsol, Rene Dionet, Marcel Hasfeld, Andre Juin, Moses, Marcel Roy.

¹⁴⁸"La vie du Parti," l'Humanité, December 8, 1927.

¹⁴⁹"La Révolution en danger," Contre le Courant, November 20, 1927.

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

¹⁵¹"Défense de la Révolution," Contre le Courant, December 2, 1927.

¹⁵²"Lettre de loin," Contre le Courant, December 19, 1927.

153 "Les documents : issues de l'Humanité, " Contre le Courant, January 30, 1927. This document was originally published in Pravda as part of the campaign to exile the Russian Opposition and its authenticity was subsequently challenged, though Contre de Courant accepted its validity.

154 Fernand Lorient, Les Problèmes de la Révolution Proletarienne: Que vaut l'expérience Russe (Paris: Libraire du Travail, 1928). A shorter version of this work was first published in La Révolution Proletarienne, March 15, April 1, 1928.

155 "Entre camarades, " Contre le Courant, May 9, 1928. The other four included: Delsol, Hasfeld, André Juin, and Albert Lemaire.

156 Paz, "Réponse à Lorient, " Contre le Courant, March 31, 1928.

157 See William Hoisington, "Class Against Class: The French Communist Party and the Comintern, " International Review of Social History, Volume XV, 1970. The slogan "class against class" itself was first coined by Jules Humbert-Droz. Daniel Brower, The New Jacobins: The French Communist Party and the Popular Front (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 14. Those opposing the new electoral tactics included Marcel Cachin, Renaud Jean, Doriot and most of the provincial leaders. At the national conference of January 30, 1928 it took all the weight of Jules Humbert-Droz to get the tactics approved. Barbe, op. cit., pp. 128-134. Barbe also raised the possibility that the electoral tactics had been imposed upon the P.C.F. in order to further Franco-Soviet economic cooperation. An electoral setback for the P.C.F., Stalin may have reasoned, would reassure French business interests and allow them to embark on major trade agreements with the U.S.S.R. Ibid., pp. 134-136. As a consequence of these tactics the party lost one-half of its parliamentary strength including the seats of many of its most important leaders such as Renaud Jean, André Marty, Paul Vaillant-Couturier, Henry Barbe and Maurice Thorez. Hoisington, op. cit., p. 39.

158 Barbe, op. cit., p. 127.

159 "Dans le Parti français: opportunisme electoral, " Contre le Courant, December 10, 1927.

160 "La Révolution en paroles, " Contre le Courant, December 30, 1927.

161 "Dans le Parti français: opportunisme electoral, " op. cit.

162 "Le Rancom de l'opportunisme, " Contre le Courant, May 9, 1928.

163 Delfosse, "Cérons la voie de l'unité syndicale, " Contre le Courant, January 22, 1928.

164 Delfosse, "Cerchons la voie de l'unité syndicale," Contre le Courant, March 6, 1928.

165 "Pour la Révolution russe: pour le proletariat international," Contre le Courant, March 6, 1928.

166 "Puissance de koulak," Contre le Courant, March 6, 1928.

167 André Juin, "L'Union Soviétique et le socialisme," Contre le Courant, December 19, 1927.

168 "Sous le signe de GUEPEOU," Contre le Courant, February 11, 1928.

169 "Pour la Révolution russe: pour le proletariat international," Contre le Courant, op. cit.

170 Marcel Fourrier, "Les Thermidoriens de l'I.C. trompent honteusement la class ouvrière!" Contre le Courant, February 29, 1929.

171 "Thermidor se déroule," Contre le Courant, February 25, 1929.

172 "Lettre du camarade Trotsky à la fraction, du 25 Septembre 1929," Bulletin d'Information de la Fraction de Gauche italienne, September, 1931.

173 Plate-forme de la gauche; project de thèses presentées par un groupe de "Gauchistes" (bordiguistes) à l'occasion du Ve congrès du Parti communiste français (Paris: Libraire du Travail, 1926). A less comprehensive statement of this group's principles is contained in "Déclaration des comarades de la gauche," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, June 15, 1928.

174 "Déclaration des camarades de la gauche," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, op. cit.

175 "Un geste nécessaire," Le Réveil Communiste, February, 1929.

176 "Nos buts," Le Réveil Communiste, November, 1927.

177 See: "La tragicomédie du redressement communiste," Le Réveil Communiste, February, 1929.

III

LEGACY OF DEFEAT: THE OPPOSITION

FRAGMENTED, 1929-1932

A new stage in the Opposition's development begins during the years 1928-1929. Defeated as an Opposition within the party and unable to work out a viable strategy of regroupment from outside, the Opposition--reflecting the stresses and strains of acting as Communists outside the party--entered the period divided and uncertain on major questions confronting the international Communist movement. With Trotsky's exile to Constantinople in January, 1929 the controversies increased in proportion to the divergences between the various groupings and soon segregated the Opposition into sharply opposed camps.

Boris Souvarine: A Conflict with Trotsky

In January, 1927 Souvarine once again resurrected Bulletin Communiste with part of the \$1,000 the New York Times paid Max Eastman for the copy of Lenin's testament.¹ This time, however, it no longer enjoyed the collaboration of dissident members of the P.C.F., its appearance was irregular, its pages fewer, and there were constant appeals for new subscriptions. Its focus had changed considerably from the Bulletin Communiste of 1925-1926. Souvarine's failure to be re-admitted into the party in 1926 represented an important turning point in his political development. When all hopes for

re-admission had vanished Souvarine embarked upon a long process of re-evaluation of his commitment to the ideology, program and tactics of the Communist International, even as they had been prior to the Fifth World Congress. Throughout 1927 and 1928 Souvarine continued to maintain formally that he was still a Communist, affirming: "Communists we were, Communists we are, Communists we shall remain."² A distinction, he argued, had to be made between "genuine Bolshevism"³ and the "pseudo-Communists" and "official Communists."⁴ The latter, he contended, had: "In place of raising the critical spirit and knowledge of Marxism they resort to cliches and ready made formulas, to religious litanys, to parroting. In place of work they agitate; in place of reasoning they insult; in place of convincing they mouth. Rather than forming new cadres they imitate the bourgeoisie with its police, army, bureaucracy, press and parliament."⁵ Souvarine by now had resigned himself to the fact that outside the formal confines of the party there was little in the way of immediate practical work that could be done. When in 1928 a correspondent urged him to "do something" he could only answer, "do what?"⁶ All that could be done now was to "act as a means of transmission for the revolutionary heritage bequeathed by preceding generations," and to "think, study and prepare ourselves to better serve the working class and to better understand the efforts of our work." "It will be very easy to maintain in this night of bolshevization a small flickering glimmer of light. Our work awaits a new generation. Ours, that of the war, has demonstrated that we cannot accomplish our task."⁷

Throughout this period the Cercle Communiste Marx et Lenine

continued to meet regularly and occasionally placarded Paris with posters. A major incident occurred in January, 1928 when at a meeting of 8,000 Communists several members of the Cercle were beaten up for attempting to distribute literature. Souvarine attempted to blame Cachin for the incident.⁸

While never projecting the Cercle as a second party Souvarine did at least suggest that such a party existed in embryonic form in France and Germany.⁹ In the spring elections of 1928 the Cercle ran 25 candidates jointly with the review Lutte de Classe in order to inform the electorate that Communism was in danger and about the Siberian deportations.¹⁰ Souvarine was also critical of the party's "class against class" electoral tactics on the grounds that the Socialist Party was still a worker's party and on the basis that there existed more than two classes. "The worst eventuality for the Communist Party," wrote Souvarine, "would be to succeed in its senseless enterprise. . . . But such a success should not be feared. The working class will not follow the counsel of irresponsible pseudo-revolutionary politicians. The majority of Communists themselves despise the orders of an unprincipled clique and understand instinctively that when the doctrines and traditions of Communism are ridiculed by their pretended guardians then disobedience is the most sacred of rights and the most imperious of duties."¹¹

Central to Souvarine's evolving political thought during this period was the situation in Russia. In the spring of 1927 Souvarine defined Stalin's politics as "a mélange of national provincialism peasant prudence, timorous conservatism, vain arrogance and

useless bluff." The U.S.S.R., he argued, was becoming "less and less proletarian and more and more bureaucratic and peasant," giving rise to "new privileged classes for which Stalin is the interpreter."¹²

Souvarine, still, however, could express cautious optimism about an eventual Communist solution to the problem. "Communism has known other defeats and it has not disappeared. The Russian Revolution has not said its last word and the new class of profiteers who have acted with insolence still have an account to be settled."¹³

By November, 1927 Souvarine's criticisms were extended to the fundamentals of Leninism itself. Souvarine now saw a correlation between the Russian crisis and the "new official ideology" of Leninism, which he defined as an "ensemble of formulas, citations and notions all designed to justify their state apparatus":

Leninism is the opium of the International. The Communist Opposition has committed an unpardonable error in recognizing this Leninism. They respect the mummification of Lenin's body and the mummification of his work. They recite the verses snipped from his complete works. They accept the dogma of Lenin's infallibility. . . . In the complexity of Leninism there is a passion peculiar to it: an immoralism that accepts political cunning as an end in itself. Everything is permitted in the name of the cause. . . .

Within the Soviet Union Souvarine felt that the party constituted "a new privileged class containing several secondary classes: a proletariat of humble militants confined to minor tasks. . . . an intellectual aristocracy or a pseudo one . . . several intermediary categories rooted in diverse levels of public administration and the economy." From Souvarine's standpoint the Opposition's Leninism was little better, though they had avoided the same level of degeneration through their

critical attitude, the persecutions and intellectual superiority of their leaders.¹⁴ For these reasons: "No renaissance of revolutionary thought is possible without breaking with Leninism, without breaking with bolshevization."¹⁵ That task, however, would have to await a "new generation of youth."¹⁶

The year 1929, however, proved to be the decisive turning point in Souvarine's retreat from the international Communist movement. The immediate occasion for this break was provided by Trotsky's exile to Constantinople in February, 1929. Upon reaching Constantinople Trotsky proceeded to regroup his international following and concentrated his efforts in France where his influence was greatest.¹⁷ Despite Rosmer's warnings Trotsky made a concerted effort to win back Souvarine.¹⁸ Throughout the spring of 1929 Trotsky and Souvarine exchanged correspondence on a number of issues confronting the international Communist movement. Major differences arose on several points. Souvarine reproached Trotsky for not taking the time to "examine, reflect and discuss,"¹⁹ whereupon Trotsky accused him of focusing on the "personal" and "psychological" aspects of the situation and suggested: "Everything you indicate is increasingly alarming. You are engaged on a path leading to the Right."²⁰ Souvarine's response was an "immense epistle, running to over 130 pages, packed with paradoxes, bon mots, odds and ends of shrewd observation and analysis, but also with incredibly muddled arguments, all advanced in the tone of venomous hostility. . . ."²¹

At the core of Souvarine's argument was the claim that:

Bolshevism outside of Russia was defeated and it was not due solely to the relationship of forces. It did not understand the character of the epoch, it did not analyze the state of capitalism, it badly underestimated the powers of resistance of the dominant classes and overestimated the consciousness and combativeness of the exploited classes and committed the fatal error of attempting to mold Communist parties into its own image. They foresaw nothing but never ceased propagandizing. Nothing came of the apocalyptic prophesies, neither the crises, the revolutions, nor the wars so confidently announced. Instead, we understood too late the re-establishment of capitalist equilibrium, American hegemony, fascism, the consequences of the occupation of the Ruhr, the Dawes plan, the new stage of the Chinese Revolution. And when there developed an insurrection in Vienna and a general strike in England they occurred without us.

These weaknesses, Souvarine argued, did not arise overnight, but were evident even before the death of Lenin and received formal codification after Lenin's death under the term Leninism which Souvarine defined as: ". . . a theory which eliminated from Marxism the dialectical method, its scientific richness, its universality in place of schemes devoid of value and without original content and a practice characteristic of religions which submits the masses to formulas, to rites which constitute at the same time both the activity of the party and the life of the state. Leninism is a mystique armed with deterministic phraseology . . . an expression of peasant ignorance coated with a varnish of Marxism."

Souvarine's tirade against Leninism did not prevent him from expressing at least begrudging respect for the accomplishments of Stalinism. Trotsky and the Russian Opposition, he argued, had only engaged in "useless heroism" and "cultivated a revolutionary

intransigence" by not attending to the "tangible necessities of the Soviet state." "There is nothing more important," wrote Souvarine, "for the entire international working class movement than the economic success of the Soviet state whose state capitalism marks the first attempt to organize production without private expropriation. State capitalism is not socialism but it represents undeniable progress over capitalist imperialism, if not in its tendencies at least in its realization." What this meant strategically was that the Russian Opposition should direct its efforts toward developing a set of tactics conforming to the interests of the Soviet state and serving it in whatever capacity possible. In this context: "One can be useful to the party without being a member of either the Politburo, the Central Committee or the party . . . The shortest road toward the renaissance of the party does not necessarily lead through the party." "I am sure," wrote Souvarine, "that Lenin would not have been inclined to romanticism and would have preferred an uncertain homage to a vague posterity; the least possibility of practical work at the service of the proletariat without retracting his ideas or renouncing his projects."²²

Trotsky responded by writing him: "I see nothing of the ties which united us over the past few years." The key to Souvarine's inconsistencies, he felt, lay in the fact that he was a "discontented and frustrated journalist." As for Souvarine's future revolutionary prospects: "I am sure you will not remain silent. You will pass to the other side of the barricade. Theoretically, you are there already."²³ Several years later Trotsky coined the term "Souvarinism" which he defined as "a disease combining the paralysis of political will with

the hypertrophy of rationalizing--without roots, without an axis, without clear aims, criticism for criticisms sake, clutching at trifles, staining at gnats while swallowing camels. . . concerned above all with the preservation of its narrow circle of personal 'independence'."²⁴

Having broken all ties--formal and informal--with Bolshevism and its Opposition variant, Souvarine soon moved on to other enterprises, launching in 1931 the review La Critique Sociale. The aim of this journal, as defined in its first issue, was to revise the tenets of Marxism in light of developments since the Russian Revolution. Reformists, Souvarine now maintained, had been "more faithful students of Marx than the allegedly orthodox, who are satisfied with cultic phrases" and revolutionary Marxists would do well to imitate them and revise their beliefs accordingly.²⁵ The Cercle Communiste Marx et Lénine had by 1932 become simply the Cercle Communiste démocratique with the emphasis on the reformist aspects of Marxism.²⁶

Contre le Courant: Failure of Communist Regroupment

Perhaps nothing better illustrates the tragic nature of the growing divisions within the Opposition than the isolation and collapse of Contre le Courant during the period 1928-1929. The irrevocable divisions within the Opposition were first highlighted when Contre le Courant issued a call for a national conference of all Opposition tendencies to take place in July, 1928. The immediate aim of the conference was to discuss the economic and political situation, the status of the Opposition, and to explore the possibility of fusion and a common organ.²⁷ Out of the eight groups invited, however, only two responded

affirmatively. The main point of contention was over the presence of Treint. Of the responses none was more acrimonious than Souvarine's: "If you intend to defend ideas already expressed the conference is in vain; if you have something to say you have your journal."²⁸ Nonetheless, Contre le Courant continued with its efforts throughout 1928 and 1929 receiving only bitter polemics in return. In spite of the emphasis on Communist regroupment the creation of a second party was never considered as a serious alternative. Since such a party could not be created in the Soviet Union to constitute one would be to "perform a disservice to the Revolution." The only grouping useful is that which works for reform of the International which is the "first condition" of any regroupment on the left.³⁰

In order to give their increasingly futile efforts for regroupment a theoretical base, a special Opposition platform was formulated in April, 1929. Attempting first to develop an international perspective, it was argued that revolutionary prospects were dependent upon several international antagonisms. The most important of these was the growing rivalry between U.S. and European capitalism which was beginning to clash most sharply in the arena of international finances and over constituting international trusts. Other important antagonisms included those between: (1) The U.S. and Japan in the Pacific. (2) The U.S.S.R. and the rest of the world which carried the greatest potential for war. In spite of the sharp nature of these antagonisms it was felt that "war is not presently imminent but the situation could change rapidly." Rather than preaching the imminence of war Communists must "keep their eyes open, expose the situation

to the masses and prepare them for violent turns. . . ." As for immediate revolutionary prospects it was declared that the post-war revolutionary wave had exhausted itself leaving behind only the Soviet Union and "a germ of political instability. " Consequently: "The proletarian revolution is no more imminent than war, but like the latter can suddenly become the order of the day and it is the duty of Communists to prepare now the instrument of proletarian liberation, the class-based Communist Party. "

On the Russian question it was argued that it was "not possible to say that Thermidor has been accomplished, " though important steps in that direction had been taken. Power had escaped the proletariat but had not moved into the hands of the bourgeoisie and could not without a civil war. Such a development would pose grave problems for the international Communist movement: "The destiny of the Russian Revolution is connected to the destiny of the Third International. If the theory of "socialism in a single country" definitively triumphs in the U.S.S.R., and thereby in the International, the latter, contaminated by the national spirit, will go the same way as the Second International. Thermidor accomplished will mark the end of the Communist International, but since Thermidor has not been accomplished the slogan remains reform of the Communist movement.

For France the situation was viewed as one of stabilization through rationalization, concentration and structural reform. On this basis the Communists' theses and slogans about the growing radicalization of the masses were "largely premature. " Little effort, however, was made to define the Opposition's task in strategic terms

(at least in the published versions of the platform: Contre le Courant ceased publication before it could be published in its entirety) and Communist Oppositionists were admonished only to: "regroup the forces of the proletariat, rebuild labor unity, reconstitute the Communist Party, which must be the iron arm of the working class."³¹

In the summer of 1929 a new issue suddenly intruded upon the scene destroying irrevocably whatever lingering hopes Contre le Courant had for Communist regroupment. The immediate issue involved was the question of the East China Railway in Manchuria which the Soviet Union held a concession over as a legacy from Czarist Russia and to which China now pressed a claim. On July 10, 1929 the conflict was suddenly exacerbated when Chinese authorities unexpectedly arrested a large number of Soviet workers and functionaries. The U.S.S.R. responded with a note on July 13 demanding nullification of the measures taken by the Chinese and the creation of a special commission to regulate the situation. The note demanded a favorable response within three days at which time the U.S.S.R. "would find itself obliged to resort to other means to defend the legitimate rights of the U.S.S.R."³²

As the possibility of the conflict developing into war loomed ever larger the question began to drive a wedge into the ranks of the Opposition. Trotsky's basic argument was that Stalin was responsible for the conflict solely in the sense that his past politics had aided Chiang Kai-shek in destroying the Chinese revolution: "If the worker and peasant revolution had triumphed in China the question of the East China Railway would present no problems . . . But in China the revolutionary elements have been defeated by the upper elements of

the bourgeoisie supported by foreign imperialism. Under these conditions to return the line to Chiang Kai-shek would be to support the Chinese Bonapartist revolution against the Chinese people." Despite its degenerate character the Soviet Union is still a workers' state and to defend its interests is to defend the world revolution. Moreover, even if Chiang Kai-shek was given control it would be only a matter of time before the railroad fell under the sway of Japanese or American imperialism. The question of Chinese rights, Trotsky felt, was irrelevant because the question was only part of a larger conflict between the various forms of imperialism and the Soviet Union. A return would be justified only with the conquest of power by the Chinese working class.³³

Contre le Courant's argument, on the other hand, was that the cause of the U.S.S.R. in this instance was not bound to the cause of the proletariat. The Soviet Russia of 1929 was not the Red Russia of 1917. Stalin and the bureaucrats have become the masters and have nothing in common with the proletarian state forged by Lenin and the Bolsheviks during 1917-1923. The state apparatus and the bureaucracy are no longer the power of the proletariat but have already developed into an intermediate and privileged class of their own having distinct interests often directly opposed to those of the Russian workers. In this context the conflict was merely a political adventure on the part of Stalin intended to divert attention from the growing trend toward Thermidor and "a semi-colonial war in which the Russian workers have nothing to gain and everything to lose." For these reasons the task of the Opposition should be to call upon the Chinese

workers to transform the imperialist war into a civil war. The conflict would have positive value in the long run only in the sense that it would contribute to "opening the eyes of the working class to the degeneration of the proletarian state and the character of the Stalinist regime" and demonstrate "how the Stalinist bureaucracy having betrayed socialism is now attempting to move, even at the risk of war, in the direction of bourgeois nationalism and chauvinism."³⁴ Robert Louzon took a similar view in La Révolution Proletarienne, declaring, "to stay in China because Chiang Kai-shek is 'bourgeois' is the same as conquering the Riff because Abid-el-Krim is 'feudal'."³⁵

Trotsky countered with a harsh stream of invective charging Contre le Courant with reasoning in a "criminal manner," "hopeless errors, half social Democratic, half ultra-leftist," being "malcontented defenders of Chiang Kai-shek," and with maintaining an "imprecise, radically false" attitude during the first period of political trial.³⁶ Despite the emotional nature of Trotsky's response the question had broader implications extending well beyond the immediate issues involved. In theoretical terms the conflict, in its fundamental aspects, was similar to the Russo-Finnish War controversy of ten years later which split the international Trotskyite movement and led to Max Shachtman's theory of bureaucratic collectivism.³⁷

The policy dispute over the question of the East China Railway only underscored another set^{of} rapidly developing differences between Trotsky and Contre le Courant. Though difficult to disentangle the personal from the political these differences first came to the surface during Maurice and Magdeleine Pazes' visit to Prinkipo in the spring

of 1929. Trotsky, envisioning a rapid expansion of the Opposition, took the occasion to urge them to transform Contre le Courant into a "great and aggressive" weekly and presented them with detailed plans for a major Opposition recruitment campaign.³⁸ Upon returning to Paris, however, the Pazes declared that such an undertaking was unfeasible and refused to cooperate in expanding Contre le Courant. In refusing the Pazes maintained: "The Opposition's journal if it is not to end in failure must avail itself of other things besides the scintillating prose and the nom de bataille of Comrade Trotsky." As to the value of Trotsky's name, they could only warn: "Don't give yourself too many illusions about the weight of your name. For five years the official Communist press has slandered you to such an extent that among the great masses there is left only a faint and vague memory of you as the leader of the Red Army. . ."³⁹ An objection was also made to what they felt was Trotsky's attempt to impose Rosmer's leadership upon the Opposition.⁴⁰ When Contre le Courant's platform appeared Trotsky charged them with creating it through "laboratory procedures" and suggested: "It is not a platform; it is literature and not even the best kind."⁴⁴ Trotsky also felt that Paz wanted to be the sole representative of the Opposition in France,⁴² and demanded that Paz chose "between the revolution and the palace."⁴³ Contre le Courant countered by charging Trotsky with using the same methods as in the Comintern by employing "unjustified demagogic polemical arguments," of attempting to "deform the thought of his contradictors," and of expressing national rather than proletarian aspirations.⁴⁴

By November, 1929 the bridges between Trotsky and the Pazes

had been irrevocably broken. Trotsky, writing several years later, described Paz as a "bourgeois lawyer, insensible, narrow and profoundly repugnant. If at a certain moment he adheres to the Left Opposition it is solely because it grants to him freely (which for him is decisive) a certain halo-effect, yet at the same time requires absolutely nothing in return."⁴⁵ Paz, however, remained undeterred and in November, 1929 launched a new publication Le Libérateur which was envisioned as an eventual Opposition weekly with Contre le Courant continuing to appear as an irregular "documentary supplement."⁴⁶ Although 7,000 copies of the first number were distributed⁴⁷ and a later issue spoke of "3,000 comrades who follow the action of Le Libérateur,"⁴⁸ publication ceased in mid-1930 after only eight issues. The publication could do little more than issue an occasional abstract appeal of "to the masses."⁴⁹ No further issues of Contre le Courant appeared after November, 1929. Following the collapse of Le Libérateur the Pazes collaborated for a time with Souvarine on La Critique Sociale and later joined the S.F.I.O. where they supported the Blum tendency.⁵⁰

Toward A New Party: The Ligue Communiste

While the question of a new Communist party was not formally posed by the orthodox Trotskyist movement until after the German defeat in 1933 a major step in this direction was taken with the formation of the Ligue Communiste in April, 1930. The origins of the Ligue are tracable to Trotsky's activity in Prinkipo and to the actions of a group of young sympathizers relatively new to the Opposition of whom the Naville brothers,⁵¹ Pierre and Claude, the Molinier

brothers,⁵² Raymond and Henri, and Francis Gérard⁵³ were the most outstanding. Pierre Naville and Francis Gérard first openly joined the Opposition late in 1927 after meeting Trotsky in Moscow at the tenth anniversary celebration for the Russian Revolution and after witnessing first-hand the struggles of the Russian Opposition.⁵⁴ Following this meeting their first activity was to transform the literary publication Clarté (which the following year became Lutte de Classe) into an Opposition organ devoted largely to publishing Trotsky's writings.⁵⁵

In the months that followed Trotsky's arrival at Prinkipo in January, 1929 the Trotsky household was characterized by a constant stream of visitors, extended political discussions and debates which ultimately crystalized in the publication La Verité and later in the formation of the Ligue Communiste.

The concrete issue posed throughout the discussions was the nature of the Opposition. Two fundamental choices lay open. To attempt a strategy based on mass actions or to limit the Opposition to small-scale propaganda actions based on clarification of the Opposition's ideas. Trotsky's position was that the Opposition was "presently founded on the basis of an ideological delimitation, from the point of view of principles, and not on mass action. This corresponds to the present period." An analogous process, he felt, occurred in Russia after 1905 and in the Zimmerwald movement.⁵⁶ Trotsky, in assessing the prospects of the French Opposition maintained: "The French Opposition up until now has not led a political struggle in the real sense of the word. . . Both the right and left wings are crystallized in summary

fashion without any liaison with the struggles of the French proletariat."⁵⁷ A similar position was taken by Pierre Naville who contended that "a left Communist current cannot be created in France today that is capable of appealing to an authentic revolutionary tradition." Naville also felt that the French Opposition was guilty of "submission to the more or less official representatives of the Russian Opposition, disappearance of all conscious criticism from its political views, ossification and mechanization of its opinions, bureaucratic organization, factional struggles indifferent to the reactions of the masses etc."⁵⁸ Alfred Rosmer was also critical of the existing state of the Opposition, contending: "The great misfortune of all these groups is that they find themselves outside of all action and this fatally accentuates their sectarian character."⁵⁹

In the ensuing discussion a major point of contention arose over the question of Albert Treint and his Zinovievist followers. Trotsky still valued Treint as a capable organizer.⁶⁰ Moreover, in projecting a model for the French Opposition Trotsky envisioned the creation of an all-inclusive Opposition bloc similar to the Russian Joint Opposition.⁶¹ For this reason Trotsky invited--despite strong objections from Rosmer--Treint to Prinkipo in May, 1929 and spent a month attempting to reach a political understanding with him. Opposition from Rosmer and others, however, prevented any kind of political accord for the time being although Trotsky and Treint parted on friendly terms.⁶²

A key element in Trotsky's strategy of Communist regroupment was the creation of an Opposition weekly. This idea became

reality in mid-August, 1929 with the appearance of the publication La Verité. Defined as "half journal, half review"⁶³ La Verité was founded by (as it was later affirmed) "less than a dozen comrades"⁶⁴ with the first issue actually prepared in Prinkipo and the opening statement drafted by Trotsky.⁶⁵ Rosmer was made the first editor and editorial work was undertaken on the basis of "samedis communistes"⁶⁶ the reason behind the publication's name was contained in its opening affirmation that: "The French working class movement is in need of a dose of the truth."⁶⁷ The aim of the publication was defined simply: "The Communist Opposition in France needs to become a force."⁶⁸

As is often the case the creation of a journal is only the prelude to the creation of an organization. Consequently, on November 22, 1929 La Verité announced the creation of an organization called simply the Opposition Communiste, which was to have its main base in the Paris region. Little was specified about the projected organization except that it would hold meetings open to all sympathizers and work to eventually transform La Verité into a daily. In April, 1930 the Opposition Communiste, borrowing the name of the American Trotskyist organization, transformed itself into the Ligue Communiste. Organizationally, the Ligue went several steps beyond its predecessor. A seven member Executive Committee was created to oversee it⁶⁹ and dues were assessed at the rate of four francs a month (two francs for youth and P.C.F. members). To insure a functioning democratic centralism provisions were made for four national conferences a year.⁷⁰

For Trotsky, the Ligue Communiste was also envisioned as the nucleus of a larger international organization. Thus, at the same time that the Ligue was being formally constituted an international meeting of the Opposition was held in Paris with delegates from Germany, Belgium, Spain, Hungary, Italy and the U.S. Rosmer had earlier laid the groundwork by a special tour of Europe during the summer of 1929.⁷¹ Little concrete evolved out the conference, however, except for the creation of a seven member International Bureau which never managed to function actively.⁷²

In attempting to define a political perspective the Ligue felt the primary task was to "lay the basis for a healthy Communist Party in France." At this stage, however, this did not imply the creation of a second party, but rather "a faction organized on the basis of the principles of the Communist International . . ." To this end: "We address ourselves to all comrades in the party: continue to struggle inside the party with the Ligue Communiste. Read La Verité. To those comrades who have been expelled or quit the party we say: come struggle with the Ligue Communiste; reject Social-Democratic-like groupings. . ." Three primary aims were defined for the first stage of the Ligue's activity: (1) Organize a solid base for the left in the Communist movement. (2) Publish a journal tied to the life of the revolutionary avant-garde, (3) Create serious educational projects.⁷³ Such a strategy was not without its problems. As Rosmer expressed it: "The task of an Opposition which intends to remain Communist is difficult. It finds itself caught between those who abandon Communism at the same time they quit the party and the small army of battle hardened

functionaries posed against those who refuse to servilely apply the slogans of the leadership. The blows rain from both sides."⁷⁴

From almost the moment of its inception the paramount concern of the Ligue was the trade union question. For the French trade union movement the 1920's were a period of rapid decline and demoralization.⁷⁵ Faced with this situation, a growing economic crisis and ten years of dual fratricide by a divided trade union movement the question of developing and applying a proper trade union strategy assumed increasing urgency. For the Ligue two main possibilities of labor action lay open: to act by themselves as an exclusively Opposition-Communist faction, or to search for allies and struggle with them for reform of the C.G.T.U. In attempting to determine which course of action to follow, however, the Ligue's policies became more a reaction to events unfolding within the labor movement rather than a consciously developed strategy.

With the Communist Party's left turn and its disastrous attempt to apply a similar set of sectarian and adventurous policies within the C.G.T.U. a major outbreak of discontent soon developed within the organization.⁷⁶ The first organized expression of this discontent was in the formation of the Comité pour l'Indépendance du Syndicalisme which was closely tied to the Ligue Syndicaliste but nonetheless had its own publication, Cri du Peuple (which soon reached a circulation surpassing 5,000).⁷⁷ Motivated at first by the P.C.F.'s bureaucratism and ultra-leftism in the C.G.T.U., the C.I.S. soon developed major strongholds in the dockers' union, food production and le livre.⁷⁸ As the year 1930 progressed the C.I.S.'s main

attentions shifted to the effects of the division in the working class and to the need for a new and bold attempt at labor unity. To lay the groundwork for such an undertaking several groups outside the C.G.T.U. favorably disposed to labor unity were approached.

The result was that on November 9, 1930, 22 labor militants met in a small restaurant on the rue de Maubeuge and constituted themselves as the Comité de propaganda pour l'unité syndicale, more commonly known as the Comité des 22.⁷⁹ Present were seven confédérés, eight unitaires, and seven autonomes (largely from the Fédération Autonome des Fonctionnaires). A founding manifesto was prepared which called for unification of the labor movement on the basis of a threefold formula: (1) Adherence to the Charte d'Amiens. (2) Practice of the class struggle. (3) Total independence from government, party, faction, or sect.⁸⁰

For the Ligue Communiste, however, the formation of the Comité des 22 did not constitute a progressive step. Starting from the premise that it was the C.G.T.U. which was carrying on the pre-war revolutionary tradition of the French labor movement, it was argued that the Comité des 22 was a "Right tendency, the wing of the labor movement which seeks political unity with Social Democracy . . ."⁸¹ From this standpoint labor unity with the reformists without a common program was a "myth," a "capitulation to reformism and passage to the camp of the disaggregators of the revolutionary forces of the proletariat."⁸² The prevailing principle of the Ligue was contained in Trotsky's statement: "It is completely incontestable that the unity of the working class cannot be realized except on a revolutionary

base."⁸³ In polemicizing against the Comité des 22 special invective was reserved for Monatte whom Trotsky accused of "social patriotism," associating with the class enemy and rallying against the proletarian revolution.⁸⁸ The Comité's efforts, however, proved to be in vain as the proposals for unification were solidly rejected in December, 1931 at both the congresses of the C.G.T. and C.G.T.U. Most of those in the Comité active in the C.G.T.U. soon moved directly into the C.G.T.

The Ligue's strategy of reform of the C.G.T.U. became a viable option with the formation of the Opposition Unitaire in the C.G.T.U. in April, 1930. Rather than a conscious creation of the Ligue the Opposition Unitaire developed out of the actions of the Fédération Unitaire de l'Enseignement a long time revolutionary bastion in the French trade union movement.⁸⁵ Differences between the Fédération and the Communist C.G.T.U. leadership first came into the open in 1929 when Fédération leaders attacked Communist control. The C.P. leadership in response attempted to bring the Fédération leadership into line by demanding that they sign a document recognizing Communist control. Feeling isolated in their struggle the Fédération leadership saw the need for creating an opposition within the entire C.G.T.U. and began discussions with several members of the Ligue. The result was that on April 27, 1930 a manifesto (drafted largely by Dommanget with the aid of Rosmer) entitled "Sauvons la C.G.T.U." appeared in the Fédération publication l'Emancipation. The manifesto was largely a condemnation of the Communist leadership of the C.G.T.U., the syndicalist oriented Comité pour l'Indépendance Syndicale, and the reformist C.G.T. coupled with a demand for throughgoing reform of the C.G.T.U.

Because of the "dictatorial politics" and "mechanization of the labor movement" by the Communists the labor movement was facing an extremely grave crisis. The ideological independence of the syndicats, on the other hand, was "nonsense and a chimera." And on the question of labor unity: "In the present conjuncture with the integration of the C.G.T. into the bourgeois state we consider labor unity neither desirable nor supportable."⁸⁶ To develop an effective organizational vehicle a special provisional bureau was constituted with Dommanget, Chabonon of the chemical workers' union and Gouget of the metal workers' union.⁸⁷ The latter two were members of the Ligue Communiste. While resting largely on the cadres of the Fédération the Opposition Unitaire soon picked up strength in the nord and in the chemical workers' and Parisian postal workers' union.⁸⁸

The initial reaction to the formation of the Opposition Unitaire in the Ligue was one of support. The underlying assumption was that the O. U. would stimulate the application of an effective united front tactic, a more precise estimate of daily and practical demands and the correct political development of strikes.⁸⁹ Despite fears by some that the O. U. might be "centerist", La Vérité reproduced the manifesto in full and pronounced the O. U.'s position "identical" to its own.⁹⁰ This initial support, however, proved to be short lived as the Ligue soon found itself embroiled in a protracted series of disputes over this question which ultimately proved instrumental in paving the way for the defeat of the O. U. itself. In January, 1931 Trotsky raised several criticisms about the Ligue's support for the Opposition Unitaire and about the social nature of the O. U. itself. The Ligue, he felt, had renounced all autonomous labor action since April, 1930 in favor of

subordinating itself to the O.U. This in turn had allowed the O.U. to be dominated by a federation which was not really proletarian and could not become the basis of a reinvigorated labor movement. "Marxists cannot tolerate such a situation a day longer," he argued. In analyzing the social character of the O.U. Trotsky contended that it was "neither a Communist organization nor an anti-Communist one because it is heterogenous." Within the O.U. Trotsky noted three distinct tendencies: an extreme Right sympathetic to the syndicalists whom he felt must be "unmasked and eliminated," elements sympathetic to the Ligue whom he felt must be brought into the Ligue, and an amorphous grouping sympathetic to neither tendency with whom a tactical alliance could be reached. Because of this social composition the O.U.'s politics operated "in a triangle between the official course, Right opposition and Left opposition." For these reasons Trotsky felt that the Ligue must have its own clear and autonomous labor policies rather than subordinate itself to the O.U.⁹¹

Following Trotsky's lead the Executive Committee of the Ligue--dominated largely by Frank and Molinier--resolved on January 9, 1931: "The relations between the Ligue Communiste and the Opposition Unitaire depend solely upon the political platform and slogans adapted by the O.U., because, as we have said, the O.U. is a defined tendency desiring revolutionary reform of the C.G.T.U. This reform cannot be effectuated independently of the reform of the C.P. and C.I. to which the Ligue Communiste and the international Left Opposition is devoted . . . If the O.U. rejects this then we feel that it is abandoning its goal of revolutionary reform of the C.G.T.U."⁹² When the first national

conference of the O. U. made provisions for a publication entitled Combat Unitaire, the Ligue Communiste internal bulletin requested that militants oppose the publication on the grounds that La Vérité should be the main outlet.⁹³ Reinforcing many of the objections to the O. U. was the fact that the O. U. refused to allow the Ligue to constitute themselves as a faction within the organization.⁹⁴

Against these views a faction headed by Rosmer, Naville, Collinet and Gourget continued to affirm the necessity of supporting the O. U. To do otherwise, it was argued, would only cut the Ligue off from working class militants and would lead to suffocation and sectarianism. Trotsky, they charged, was advocating the same type of bureaucratic manipulation by the Ligue in the O. U. as was being practiced by Stalin with the various Communist parties.⁹⁵ For this reason the Ligue was guilty of attempting to "sabotage" the work of the O. U. and of the "introduction into the O. U. of neo-Stalinist methods and tactics."⁹⁶ As to Trotsky's charge that the Fédération de l'Enseignement was "non-proletarian," it was contended that the Fédération was motivated by revolutionary ideals in contrast to the corporatism of many of the manual workers unions.⁹⁷

Compounding these differences were a series of personal quarrels centering around the person of Raymond Molinier extending back to 1929. Differences of a tactical nature first arose at Prinkipo between Molinier, Rosmer and Naville when Molinier proposed a series of bold initiatives which he felt would transform the Opposition into a major political force. To implement these schemes Molinier envisioned certain fund raising methods of a questionable nature. Naville and

Rosmer, who felt that the Opposition should confine itself to more modest activities such as education and propaganda, feared that such schemes would only discredit the Opposition. Questions were also raised about the nature of his business activities and about his conduct as a Communist while a party member. "Ce n'est pas un militant communiste, c'est un homme d'affaires, et c'est un illettré," claimed Rosmer.⁹⁸ Molinier had also managed to provoke discontent in the ranks of the Ligue by his habit of securing funds solely for his own projects.⁹⁹

Molinier, meanwhile, had endeared himself to Trotsky by undertaking a wide variety of personal tasks. Trotsky, for these and other reasons, felt compelled to defend Molinier and suggested that Naville's objections were due to "intellectual haughtiness," "schematic thinking," "political lukewarmness" and "fear of work among the masses."¹⁰⁰ As the only "activist" in a group of predominantly intellectuals Molinier also had the advantage of enjoying widespread admiration in the Ligue for his ability to get things done.¹⁰¹

The quarrel developed progressively, first as a largely Naville-Molinier conflict with Rosmer remaining on the sidelines. Then in June 1930 Naville and Rosmer, supported by the National Executive of the Ligue, demanded that Molinier resign from the leadership as a possible prelude to expulsion. Molinier, supported by the Parisian group of the Ligue, appealed to Trotsky and gained the support of the International Secretariat. Rosmer and Naville, however, gained the support of the International Bureau. To resolve the matter both sides were summoned to Prinkipo in the summer of 1930 for

extended discussions. After heated debates an accord was reached which became known as the "Peace of Prinkipo." The "Peace," however, soon proved short lived when the conflict resurfaced again with even greater intensity in October and November. Once again Trotsky sided with Molinier charging Rosmer with dealing with "personal characteristics," and Naville and showing "a total incomprehensions of the spirit of a revolutionary proletarian organization." The accusations against Molinier, Trotsky felt, were founded solely upon his "turbulent character" and "his capacity to disregard all the rules and superstitions of philistines."¹⁰² Rosmer, in response, accused Trotsky of introducing "Zinovievist methods" into the Ligue.¹⁰³

Shortly before a national conference of the Ligue in October, 1931 many of the developing criticisms of the Ligue's leadership were formalized in the form of an open letter to the delegates. The Ligue's leadership, it was contended, was "super-Stalinist" and "little more than a miniscule caricature of the party during the third period." The leadership represented only a minority of the Ligue and was "maintained in power only by the prestige and confidence awarded to them by Comrade Trotsky. . . ." The central question, they felt, was "whether the Ligue should be a proletarian organization or an assembly of parrots." In attempting to establish itself "the leadership of the Ligue has found it necessary to employ some of the advertising methods of capitalism which can ruin a proletarian organization. The Ligue was 'launched' in the classical sense by publicity and bluff. Even the Stalinist bureaucrats maintain a collective and relatively impersonal character which

is not found in the leadership of the Ligue. "¹⁰⁴

Further fuel was added to the conflict when Albert Treint was admitted into the Ligue in October, 1931 and immediately sided with Molinier and Trotsky.¹⁰⁵ Other differences of a less personal nature arose over the third period left turn. The Molinier-Frank faction felt that it was a progressive step and that the party must be supported in all sincere efforts to apply it. The Rosmer-Naville faction, on the other hand, felt that it could lead only to opportunism and therefore it must be constantly denounced.¹⁰⁶

As a result of these differences Rosmer and a number of friends and supporters resigned to constitute themselves as the Gauche Communiste, with the publication Bulletin de la Gauche Communiste. This resignation effectively paved the way for the consolidation of the Molinier-Frank leadership. The substance of the Gauche Communiste's principles was that the Opposition should not subordinate itself to the Communist International but should undertake "independent activity" of its own, particularly in the syndicats and should actively oppose the tactics of "class against class" and the theories of social fascism.¹⁰⁷ The Ligue, it was contended, "does not exist as an organization independent of the C. P."¹⁰⁸ The group itself was composed of about 15-20 persons and was limited almost exclusively to the Paris region.¹⁰⁹ In spite of its limited membership the group did, however, have a number of important international connections such as with the Landau group in Germany and organized an international federation of its own. Its primary arena of activity was the Opposition Unitaire and the Fédération de

l'Enseignement where it had close relations with the leadership. As a result the Fédération's publication l'Ecole Emancipée (circulation 3,000) occasionally featured articles by members of the Gauche Communiste.¹¹⁰ For Trotsky, however, the split masked the "most important and significant event in the internal life of the international Left, which in this manner cleansed itself of elements of alien origin."¹¹¹

The conflict that led to the split of the Gauche Communiste was only the most prominent of an uninterrupted series of factional struggles. Shortly after his admission Treint constituted his own Fraction de Gauche with the publication, Bulletin de la fraction de gauche. The central point of contention was over what Treint felt was "the negation of the possibilities of reforming the P.C.F." and the need for the creation of a new party under the slogan: "The parties of the Third International are no longer Communist parties." Treint also took a position favoring "réentrée en bloc" into the C.G.T. and called for the liquidation of the C.G.T.U. As a consequence Treint and several others were expelled in May, 1932 and soon constituted themselves as an autonomous group. In addition to calling for the formation of new Communist parties the Fraction also maintained the necessity of a "new revolution in Russia."¹¹² According to Treint it was now "impossible" to consider the Russian state "under the control of the workers in any form." Treint, like the Pazes, now subscribed to a theory which viewed Soviet Russia in terms of the emergence of a new bureaucratic class: "The Soviet bureaucracy is a class holding power on the basis of possession of the large scale means of production which are used to exploit the workers."¹¹³ This phenomenon, Treint

felt, was only one of the new and diverse forms of state capitalism emerging out of the permanent crisis of capitalism. As a solution to the problem Treint advocated the formation of a new fourth International which would be dedicated to fighting the various forms of state capitalism.¹¹⁴ With this goal in mind Treint in 1934 formed an organization entitled Comité d'études pour la Quatrième Internationale, which dedicated itself largely to circulating Treint's lengthy theoretical analyses. This group, however, fared little better than Treint's Fraction de Gauche whose influence was limited solely to a small number expelled from the party and the Ligue.¹¹⁵ Within several years Treint joined the S.F.I.O. where he faded into political obscurity.

Another split developed toward the end of 1932 when a number of recent adherents to the Ligue in the banlieue Ouest attempted to pursue policies independent of the leadership. In the spring of 1933 this group combined with the Treint group and small groupuscules led by Collinet and Barré as well as other dissidents from the Ligue to form the L'Unité de l'Opposition de Gauche. The theoretical base of this new organization was renunciation of the principle of "unconditional defense" of the Soviet Union and unity of the Left Opposition. Several issues of a small bulletin appeared sporadically but otherwise the group remained lost in obscurity.¹¹⁶

Differences also arose between the Ligue's leadership and the autonomous Jewish federation. The dispute first surfaced openly when the two members of the Jewish federation on the Executive Committee resigned in protest over policy differences. Trotsky,

in response, charged the federation with a "splitting action" and seeking to transform the Ligue into "a federation of national groups," thereby introducing "Bundism into the ranks of the Left Opposition."¹¹⁷

In assessing the impact of factionalism on the politics of the Ligue Trotsky perhaps summed it up best when he remarked to Naville: "Vous savez jamais je n'ai vu de luttes factionnelles comme chez vous. Chez nous il y en a eu beaucoup. Ce m'était pas toujours doux, non. Mais des querelles comme chez vous, non, je n'ai jamais vu cela. . . Ça, c'est extraordinaire. Comment est-ce possible? Il faut redresser cela . . . Vous perdez des des forces."¹¹⁸

The underlying cause of this fatal sectarianism lies undoubtedly in the Ligue's failure to penetrate the working class mainstream. In addition to its efforts at regroupment in the C.G.T.U. the Ligue made several attempts to intervene directly in working class struggles during this period. As the effects of the 1929 depression began to be felt in 1930-31 in France the French working class found itself in the midst of a new series of labor struggles. Rather than the "radicalization of the masses" so confidently claimed by the Communists the workers faced--as Trotsky had foreseen--a new offensive of the patronat. For the Ligue Communiste the strikes offered the possibility of intervention on the basis of what they termed the front unique ouvrier.

The first of these struggles began in July, 1930 when parliament passed a new loi on assurances sociales which placed a heavy burden of assessments on the working class. In response to the new loi a series of spontaneous strikes broke out in the textile industry in the region surrounding Lille. Within a short time 100,000 strikers were out.¹¹⁹

The C.G.T. --in spite of the doctrines of social peace being promoted by Jouhaux--immediately attempted to capture leadership by raising the demand for a compensatory increase of 0.25 francs. The Communists, sensing an opportunity to attack the reformists, demanded an increase of 0.50 francs under the assumption that the demand was more revolutionary and raised the slogan: "Contre la loi fasciste de Assurances Sociales." This, however, ignored the fact that the Communist parliamentary delegation had voted for the loi. As a consequence the strikers were divided, denouncing each other as "opportunists" and "adventurists." The Ligue, with a small nucleus of militants active in the nord including one local C.G.T.U. secretary, in response called for a united struggle on the basis of united demands. To realize this the Ligue called for the formation of a proportionately elected "common central strike committee," "common assemblies" of workers, a national campaign against the patronat, and building support in Belgium. As for the monetary demands it was argued that if the majority of workers wanted 0.25 francs they must be supported.¹²⁰ The Ligue's handful of members active in the nord, however, proved too few to influence the course of events and the strike was decisively defeated. The Ligue was also badly hampered in its strategy by claiming to be Communists while at the same time under attack from the party.¹²¹

A similar strategy was pursued the following year when the miners of the nord and Pas-de-Calais struck over a 6% wage reduction. When the Communists called for unity "à la base" against the "chefs social fascistes" the Ligue again demanded a united front with all other

groups. As the reformists limited the strike to 24 hours and accepted the wage cuts the C.G.T.U. found itself increasingly isolated as it attempted to carry on the strike alone while the miners slowly returned to work. To preserve the cohesion of the miners the Ligue raised the slogan of "réentrée en bloc" which the Communists promptly denounced as defeatist.¹²³ The C.G.T.U. leaders refused and the defeat took the dimensions of a catastrophe with long term implications for the French miners. Again, however, the Ligue nucleus had been too small to influence events. Organizationally, the attempt to intervene in the textile and mine strikes had little impact on building the Ligue. At the November, 1931 Congress of the C.G.T.U. the Ligue had only two delegates, both from extremely weak unions.¹²³

However badly they fared in establishing a working class base the Ligue Communiste had at least a measure of success in constituting themselves as an organized opposition. Membership numbered approximately 250-400 of which approximately two thirds were in the Paris region.¹²⁴ Socially, the majority of this membership consisted of white collar and professional categories such as teachers, writers, technicians and civil servants. In the crucial Paris region only about one third of the membership fell into blue collar categories and most of these were either young or foreign workers.¹²⁵ Perhaps the Ligue's greatest success was in organizing foreign workers into separate branches of the Ligue. Active groups existed for Italian, Vietnamese, Hungarian and Jewish workers.¹²⁶ This foreign base had several advantages and disadvantages for the development of the Ligue. Often driven from their countries by the reaction these workers often brought

with them an attitude more combative, more internationalist than the average French worker. On the other hand these workers were often unable to participate in political action and their preoccupations were in many cases not those of the majority of French workers. The most active foreign federation was the Jewish federation which claimed to constitute a majority of the Ligue in the Paris region, and had its own Yiddish language publication, Klorkeit (circulation 250).¹²⁷ The Ligue's youth activity was centered largely around working within the Jeunes Communistes, although it had an autonomous youth group of its own with several dozen members. The main activities of this group consisted of holding foyers de jeunes which were often successful in attracting large numbers of youth from the Communist and Socialist parties.¹²⁸

In addition to its two main publications, La Vérité and Lutte de Classe, the Ligue published an internal bulletin, three local bulletins, and a youth bulletin. Circulation for La Vérité averaged 3,000 in 1938 of which 500-600 were paid subscribers. For Lutte de Classe the figure was 900-1,000.¹²⁹ An important part of the Ligue's activities consisted of publishing and distributing the works of Trotsky. In this connection free copies were often furnished to 400-500 militants in the P.C.F. and C.G.T.U.¹³⁰

In evaluating the overall impact of the Ligue, however, the situation was perhaps best summed up in a Ligue internal document written in 1938 as a major confrontation with the French Right was shaping up and on the eve of the Ligue's entrance into the S.F.I.O.:

The leading cadres of our organization are weak, new people have not yet come to us. A new process of selection is taking place. The ability to improve the old cadres remains limited due to the lack of a mass base which would be advantageous for its development. The Ligue has not become a revolutionary pole, a force to be reckoned with . . . we do not appear as a force rooted in the mass organization, particularly in the trade unions, our direct contacts with the working class are almost nil.¹³¹

Opposition From the Right

At the same time that Trotsky was attempting to regroup his followers another Opposition movement based in the party's Right was also rapidly gaining momentum. While the origins of the movement are traceable to the opposition to the party's "class against class" electoral policies the catalytic agent came when the Horthy government of Hungary and the city of Budapest invited a large delegation of the Comité Municipal of Paris for a visit. The Horthy government at the time was considered by the Comintern as one of the most reactionary in Europe. Without informing the party leadership six Communist municipal conseillers accepted.¹³² The six were promptly informed by their federation leaders that the party disapproved absolutely of their intentions.¹³³ When on November 6, 1929 a declaration of the Political Bureau on party recruitment appeared in l'Humanité the six used it as a pretext to openly attack the policies of the party. Shortly thereafter the leadership charged them with liquidationism and seeking to place the party "under the control of the bourgeoisie."¹³⁴ Consequently, at the national conference later in the month a motion to expel them on the basis of indiscipline was accepted unanimously.¹³⁵

On December 28, 1929 the six, meeting with other dissident elements, officially constituted themselves as the Parti Ouvrier Paysan. In contrast to the other Opposition groups the main focus of the P.O.P.'s activities was on local politics at which it had some minor successes. In addition to the six municipal counseillers the P.O.P. gained control of most of the municipal offices of Clichy, several provincial offices, and drew 300,000 votes in the 1932 legislative elections, winning five seats.¹³⁶ An effort was also made to work within the C.G.T.U. where the P.O.P.ists allied themselves with the syndicalist Comité pour l'Independence Syndicale on a program of labor autonomy, but with few concrete results. The P.O.P.'s defined aim was to act as a "center between the sectarianism of the Communists" and the "opportunism of the Socialists" and to act as the principle agent of socialist unity by working for the fusion of the "three great workers' parties."¹³⁷ As a program to achieve this end the P.O.P. proposed in February, 1933:

- (1) Refusal to participate in bourgeois governments. (2) The "negation of national defense." (3) The "complete autonomy of syndicalism."
- (4) Internal democracy in the party. (5) Realization of the united front.¹³⁸

While centered largely in the Paris region the organization was organized on the provincial level in 16 departments. The total number of members was estimated at 1,500 in 1933 of which 700-800 were located in the Paris region. The Clichy section was strongest with 100-160 members. Former P.C.F. members tended to make up the largest category of members followed by a surprisingly large number of disillusioned S.F.I.O. militants and a lesser number of members

tied directly to the municipal leaders. Socially, there was about an equal distribution between blue and white collar workers.¹⁴⁰

Organizationally, the party had an active youth organization, several sports federations, and a number of publications, the principle ones of which were the daily Ça Ira (circulation 7,200-8,000)¹⁴¹ and the weekly l'Unité Ouvrière. The main base of the party was the unusually strong Clichy organization which had its own publication, La Proletaire and controlled an organization called Les Jeunes Campeurs, which had 100 members and a weekly mimeographed publication entitled La Jeune Campeur Ouvrier.¹⁴² Like most of the other Opposition groups the P.O.P. had its share of internal difficulties. In 1933 the crucial Clichy organization, considering itself more leftist than the majority of the party, chose to become autonomous. Differences also arose between a parliamentary faction headed by Louis Sellier and a leadership faction headed by Paul Louis. Sellier's view was that the party should open talks with the Socialists with an eye to merger. Louis, on the other hand, maintained that the party should serve as "a refuge" for discontented workers. While the latter view prevailed at the party congress of 1933 the question continued to divide the party. Internationally, the P.O.P. maintained close ties with the Brandler group in Germany and viewed the Soviet Union as a form of state capitalism similar to fascism.¹⁴³ The organization was strengthened somewhat when in 1931 it merged with the Parti Socialiste Communiste which had been in existence since 1924 and changed its name to the Parti de l'Unité Proletarienne. Following the party's collapse in the mid-30's most of the leaders entered the S.F.I.O. where they took a

place on the extreme right wing.¹⁴⁴

Closely allied with ^{the} P. O. P. was a group in the Aube known as Les Amis de Rappel. Founded in 1932 in the midst of a legislative campaign by a P. C. F. deputy named Plard, the main focus of the organization was on electoral politics. The defined aim of the group was "to assemble Communist, Socialist and even Radical comrades, whether organized or not, for the purpose of free discussions." Its sole platform was the 1905 Socialist declaration of unity. The organization was composed of 15 local groups with a membership of 200-300 the majority of whom were former P. C. F. members. In addition it had a youth group, the Jeunesse Troyanne, with a membership of 150. Its publication, Le Rappel de l'Aube had a circulation of 3,000. Plard also maintained close contacts with La Révolution Proletarienne and certain elements of the S. F. I. O.¹⁴⁵

Almost simultaneous with the development of the P. O. P. there emerged a second regionally based Right Opposition current, the Parti Communiste -Opposition of Alsace-Lorraine. While an outgrowth of differences with the central party apparatus dating back to 1925 the party arose in the summer of 1929 out of a conflict over the question of national autonomy for Alsace-Lorraine. The basic point of contention was the regional leadership's refusal to follow the national leadership's order to break the united front with the bourgeois autonomists. To cope with the situation the Political Bureau dispatched a special delegation headed by Doriot to expel those responsible. Doriot's efforts took an unexpected turn when, at a special meeting of the sous-rayon of Strasbourg, his motion in the name of the Political Bureau received only six votes to

300 opposing it.¹⁴⁶ The vote, however, mattered little as the party leadership expelled the Alsace-Lorraine leaders without the support of the local organization.

In the absence of the proper source materials it is not easy to define the political features of the Parti -Communiste Opposition. While proclaiming allegiance to the principles of Communism ("A party cannot be Communist without discipline. . .") and calling for closer relations with other Opposition groups and for a special international Opposition conference the organization's primary activities centered largely around local electoral politics.¹⁴⁷ In this endeavor the organization enjoyed considerable success, controlling 17 municipal council seats in Strasbourg and the post of mayor being held by the party's leader, Hueber. In addition the party had strong positions in several municipalities around Strasbourg and one legislative deputy. In the 1932 legislative elections the party drew 13,100 votes, of which 8,300 were in Strasbourg (which compared with 1,750 for the Communist candidate in Strasbourg).¹⁴⁸ Much of this strength, however, was due to a united front with the autonomist groups. In addition to its electoral success the party exercised considerable influence in several organizations in Alsace-Lorraine. This included control of the syndicat unitaire des municipaux of Strasbourg with several hundred members, partial control of the syndicat unitaire des cheminots, and a Strasbourg sports federation with 4,000 members. In 1932 the party gained control of the 800 member syndicat autonome du bois with only a dozen members active in the union. The party also created several mass organizations of its own such as the Internationale Hilfsvereinigung and a youth

federation. The party's main organ was the daily publication Die Neue Welt which was financed by the municipal government and had a circulation of 2,000-3,000.¹⁴⁹ Party membership stood at 660-700 with white collar workers comprising the largest social category followed by railroad workers.¹⁵⁰ Internationally, the party maintained close ties with the Brandler group in Germany and after Hitler's ascension to power Brandler established himself in Strasbourg which soon became a center of Brandlerite activities.

A third form of Right, regionally based, Opposition was represented by the Fédération Communiste Indépendante de l'Est. Formed out of a fusion of dissident Communist groups in Belfort, Valentignez and Doubs in late 1932 the F.I.C.E. considered itself "the germ of a renovated Communist party, future section of a fourth International."¹⁵¹ While no information is available about the group's specific ideology it is known to have favored complete labor autonomy and a return to the C.G.T.¹⁵² The group also called for a refusal to participate in all organizations "annexed to the degenerate party."¹⁵³ Close ties were also maintained with Souvarine. The main base of support for the organization was provided by control of a 3,000 member cooperative at Valentignez.¹⁵⁴ Limited strength was also found in several local unions.¹⁵⁵ The party also had considerable success in organizing an anti-fascist committee at Belfort which achieved the participation of the Socialists and Radicals. Membership was approximately 70-80 with about 25 located at Belfort.¹⁵⁶ While most of the membership was concentrated in the east a number of militants were scattered throughout the country with a small number active in Belgium

as well. The social composition ranged from exclusively white collar workers and teachers at Doubs to largely manual workers (especially metal workers) at Belfort. Particular emphasis was placed on attracting discontented S.F.I.O. members. Despite the party's relatively isolated character the group's weekly publication Le Travailleur Communiste et Coopératif achieved an impressive circulation of 1500-2000, though this was almost exclusively concentrated in the territory of Belfort and Doubs.¹⁵⁷

Notes

¹"Une lettre d'Eastman," Bulletin Communiste, January-March, 1927.

²Souvarine, "Huitième année," Bulletin Communiste, January-March, 1927.

³Souvarine, "La scission," Bulletin Communiste, July-September, 1927.

⁴Souvarine, "Notre crise," Bulletin Communiste, January-March, 1927.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Souvarine, "Entre nous," Bulletin Communiste, April-July, 1928.

⁷Ibid. Souvarine also noted: "Other comrades await the 'slogans' for the 'workers'. One would think that the proletariat exists only for obeying prefabricated slogans predesigned by certain individuals. That is perhaps the Leninist conception but it is surely not a Marxist point of view. But in any case the emancipation of the working class will be the work of the workers themselves . . . we have given neither orders, nor counter-orders nor slogans. Our role is to disinterestedly serve the exploited and oppressed and to give those who desire it, reason, opinions, and advice based on social science."

⁸"A valoir," Bulletin Communiste, January-March, 1928.

⁹Souvarine, "Notre crise," op. cit.

¹⁰"Notre 'campagne électorale'," Bulletin Communiste, January-March, 1928.

¹¹Souvarine, "La tactique communiste et les élections," Bulletin Communiste, January-March, 1928. Souvarine also denied that there had been any intensification of class antagonisms or radicalization of the masses: "The radicalization of the masses is a hysterical hallucination. . ." Souvarine, "L'Acclame," Bulletin Communiste, April-July, 1928.

¹²Souvarine, "Guerre et Paix," Bulletin Communiste, April-June, 1927.

¹³Souvarine, "La scission?" Bulletin Communiste, July-September, 1927.

¹⁴Souvarine, "Octobre noir," Bulletin Communiste, October-November, 1927.

¹⁵Souvarine, "Trotsky et la Révolution d'Octobre," Bulletin Communiste, August-December, 1928. Souvarine was still careful to distinguish between Lenin and Leninism claiming that between the two "there is as much difference as between cult and culture."

¹⁶Souvarine, "Octobre noir," op. cit.

¹⁷Isaac Deutscher, The Prophet Outcast (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 45.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Quoted by Trotsky in Trotsky to Souvarine, April 25, 1929. Contained in Souvarine, "Une controverse avec Trotski," in Jacques Freymond, Contributions à l'histoire du Comintern, op. cit., p. 149.

²⁰Trotsky to Souvarine, May 10, 1929. In Ibid., p.

²¹Deutscher, The Prophet Outcast, op. cit., p. 46.

²²Souvarine to Trotsky, June 8, 1929. In Freymond, op. cit., pp. 152-208.

²³Trotsky to Souvarine, July 3, 1929. In ibid., pp. 208-209.

²⁴Trotsky, "Letter to Albert Treint," The New International, February, 1928.

²⁵Souvarine, "Perspectives de travail," La Critique Sociale, November, 1931.

²⁶J. Senestre, Review of Cercle communiste démocratique: déclaration et statuts, in La Critique Sociale, September, 1932.

²⁷"Lettre ouverte aux communistes d'opposition," Contre le Courant, June 28, 1928.

²⁸"Reponse du Cercle Marx et Lénine," Contre le Courant, June 28, 1928. Paz in response noted: "Souvarine's four page response can be modestly summed up in one word which summarizes all his activities in the Opposition. And that word is: 'Me'! Me, I think; Me I observe; Me, I analyze; Me I act. And anyone who does not think, observe and act as Me is guilty of senseless cretinism, servility and inaction." Maurice Paz, "Une mise au point nécessaire," Contre le Courant, June 28, 1928.

²⁹For a summary of some of these attacks see, "Feu à gauche," Contre le Courant, April 12, 1929.

³⁰"Condition première d'un regroupement de l'Opposition," Contre le Courant, September 10, 1928.

³¹"Projet de platform," Contre le Courant, July 10, July 28, and September 21, 1929.

³²"Déclaration sur le conflit Sino-Russe," Lutte de Classe, October, 1929.

³³Trotsky, "Le conflit Soviëto-Chinois et les tâches de l'Opposition," Contre le Courant, September 21, 1929.

³⁴"Le conflit Sino-Russe," Contre le Courant, July 28, 1929.

³⁵Robert Louzon, "La seule solution révolutionnaire: Rendreaux aux Chinois l'Est Chinois," La Revolution Proletarienne, August 1, 1929. Similar positions were also taken by the German Leninbund and by certain Belgian Oppositionists, most notably W. Van Overstraeten. See W. Van Overstraeten, "Vers socialisme imperialisme," Contre le Courant, September 21, 1929.

³⁶Trotsky, "Le conflit soviëto-chinois et les tâches de l'opposition," op. cit.

³⁷For information on this dispute and on Shachtman's theory of bureaucratic collectivism, see Max Shachtman, The Bureaucratic Revolution (New York: Donald Press, 1962).

³⁸Deutscher, The Prophet Outcast, op. cit., p. 49.

³⁹Paz to Trotsky, Trotsky Archives, closed section. Quoted in ibid., p. 50.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 49.

⁴¹Trotsky, "Réponse du camarade Trotsky," Lutte des Classes, September 10, 1929.

⁴²Marguerite Rosmer to Mougeot, early 1929. Quoted in Gras, op. cit., p. 355.

⁴³Quoted in Christian Couden, Jean-Paul Joubert, René Revol. Trotsky, L'Opposition de Gauche et le Group Bolchevik-Léniniste en France de 1929 à 1936, mimeographed seminar paper, Institute d'Etudes politiques de Grenoble, 1968.

⁴⁴"Notre point de vue," Contre le Courant, September 21, 1929. Perhaps a minor factor in the dispute was Maurice Paz's attitude toward Trotsky. Pierre Naville has noted: "Paz did not render any major services to Leon Trotsky. . . . On the contrary: after his voyage to Prinkipo he asked L. T. to reimburse him. This

was one of the small ways in which 'The Old Man' judged him . . ."
Quoted in Couden et al., op. cit.

⁴⁵Trotsky to Serge, April 29, 1936. Quoted in Gras, op. cit., p. 315.

⁴⁶"Entre comrades," Le Libérateur, December 20, 1929.

⁴⁷"Entre comrades," Le Libérateur, December 5, 1929.

⁴⁸"S.O.S.," Le Libérateur, February 20, 1930.

⁴⁹"Aux masses," Le Libérateur, December 5, 1929.

⁵⁰Craipeau interview, op. cit.

⁵¹See appendix one.

⁵²See appendix one.

⁵³See appendix one.

⁵⁴Pierre Naville, Trotsky Vivant (Paris: Julliard, 1962), p. 13.

⁵⁵Naville and Gérard also participated in Souvarine's Cercle Communiste Marx et Lénine until June, 1928.

⁵⁶Trotsky, "Lettre à propos des différents groupements de l'Opposition communiste," Contre le Courant, April 12, 1929.

⁵⁷Trotsky, "Un pas en avant," Lutte de Classe, September 10, 1929.

⁵⁸"Lettre aux camarade Trotsky," Lutte de Classe, September 10, 1929.

⁵⁹Rosmer to Trotsky, April 16, 1929. Trotsky Archives, Harvard University, closed section. Quoted in Deutscher, The Prophet Outcast, op. cit., p. 45. During the period 1927-1928 Rosmer had become increasingly disillusioned with La Revolution Proletarienne and finally ceased all collaboration. Throughout 1928 Rosmer's connection with the Opposition remained only tenuous. As he affirmed several years later: "I found myself on the fringes of the Communist Opposition and participated in none of its activities." Lutte Ouvrier, March 17, 1938.

⁶⁰Craipeau interview, op. cit.

⁶¹Deutscher, The Prophet Outcast, op. cit., p. 85.

⁶²Ibid., p. 48.

⁶³"La 'Verité' et la 'Lutte de Classe' en 1930," La Verité, January 3, 1930.

⁶⁴Trotsky, Le mouvement communiste en France, ed. by Pierre Broue (Paris, Les Editions de Minuit, 1967), p. 338.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 347.

⁶⁶Gras, op. cit., p. 359.

⁶⁷"Appel aux ouvriers révolutionnaires," La Verité, August 15, 1924.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹These included: Rosmer, Pierre Naville, Pierre Frank, Gouget, Gerard Rosenthal, Levine, and Obin.

⁷⁰"La vie de l'Opposition," La Verité, April 18, 1930.

⁷¹Deutscher, The Prophet Outcast, op. cit., p. 53.

⁷²This consisted of Rosmer and Pierre Naville from France, Shachtman from the U.S., Landau from Germany, Nin from Spain, and Trotsky's son Lyova for the Russian Opposition. Because of the Bureau's inability to function properly a special International Secretariat was created shortly thereafter of which Pierre Naville soon became the mainstay.

⁷³"La vie de l'Opposition," La Verité, April 18, 1930.

⁷⁴Rosmer, "La vie de l'Opposition," La Verité, April 4, 1930. Rosmer also noted: "We would be in the party if we could be and are outside it only because we have been excluded; but in any case we will remain wherever the revolutionary workers are. It should also be said that we shall exist wherever the party does not, or if it disappears by discrediting itself. We do not want to live as an appendage of the party, but to remain with the working class whether it is organized, in the party or not." Rosmer, "La vie de l'Opposition," La Verité, April 11, 1930.

⁷⁵Decline of the C.G.T.U. during this period went as follows:

1921 - 600,000	1928 - 375,000
1926 - 475,000	1929 - 400,000
1927 - 452,000	1931 - 256,000

Cited in Coudene et. al., op. cit.

⁷⁶An important element in this new policy was the tightening of control of the C.G.T.U. by the party: ". . . the party must exercise a permanent and vigorous control over the activities of its members, particularly those occupying high positions." La Forge, "Les problèmes de la politique syndicale du Parti," Cahiers du Bolchévisme, January, 1930.

⁷⁷"Le Cri du Peuple a dépassé les 5,000 abonnés," Cri du Peuple, November 4, 1931.

⁷⁸Yvan Craipeau, Histoire du Trotskysme en France (Paris: Editions Syros, 1971), p. 53.

⁷⁹Daniel Guérin, "Une tentative de réunification syndicale," Revue d'Histoire Economique et Sociale, No. 1, 1966, Pierre Monatte, "Vie et mort du Comité des 22," La Révolution Proletarienne, December, 1931.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Laurent, "Le Comité pour l'indépendance' précise sa ligne politique," La Verite, June 6, 1930. Not everyone in the Ligue, however, accepted this position. One prominent Ligue leader urged critical support on the basis of the following argument: "The ultra-left and ultra-right zig-zags in the Centrist course of the C.I. render the classifications left and right useless. To treat the representatives of the new minority as reformists it is necessary to consider the present leaders of the party as revolutionaries. The Opposition has the duty to guide, orient and lead the labor opposition; not to reject it." André Ariant, "Que représente la minorité syndicale?" La Verite, November 29, 1929.

⁸²"Qu'est-ce que le manifesto d'unité des syndicalistes révolutionnaires", La Verite, November 21, 1930.

⁸³Trotsky, "Contribution à la discussion," La Verite, April 17, 1931.

⁸⁴Trotsky, "Monatte avocat des social-patriotes," La Verite, February 6, 1931. Monatte countered by noting that Trotsky had cooperated with Cachin at one time.

⁸⁵See, Maurice Dommanget et. al., Le Syndicalisme dans l'Enseignement; Histoire de la Fédération de l'Enseignement: des origines à l'unification de 1936 (Grenoble: Institut Etudes Politiques de Grenoble, 1967), pp. 106-134.

⁸⁶"Déclaration de l'opposition unitaire," La Verite, June 13, 1930.

⁸⁷Dommanget, op. cit., p. 116.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 118.

⁸⁹"France: the Development of the Opposition," International Bulletin of the Communist Left Opposition, February, 1931.

⁹⁰"Pour l'opposition unitaire," La Verite, May 9, 1930.

⁹¹Trotsky, "Les erreurs des elements droitiers de la Ligue dans la question syndicale," La Verite, January 16, 1931.

92 "Resolution de la C.E. de la Ligue," La Vérité, February 13, 1931.

93 Trotsky, "Le mouvement communiste en France, op. cit., p. 380.

94 "The situation in the Communist League," International Bulletin of the Communist Left Opposition, May, 1931.

95 A. Ariat, "Réponse au camarade Trotsky," Bulletin de la Gauche Communiste, June 15, 1931.

96 Gourget, "Et l'opposition unitaire," Bulletin de la Gauche Communiste, June 1, 1931.

97 Ariat, op. cit.

98 Deutscher, The Prophet Outcast, op. cit., pp. 50-52.

99 Craipeau interview, op. cit.

100 Deutscher, The Prophet Outcast, op. cit., p. 52. Trotsky, writing a few years later, however, attempted to qualify this support: "Molinier was accused not of retreating from our program but of being undisciplined, arbitrary and of venturing into all sorts of financial adventures to support the party and his faction. Since Molinier is a very energetic man and has unquestionable practical capacities I found it necessary--not only in the interests of Molinier but above all in the interests of the organization itself--to exhaust all the possibilities of convincing and reeducating him in the spirit of proletarian discipline. Since many of his adversaries possessed all of his failings but none of his virtues I did everything to convince them not to hasten a split but to test Molinier over and over again. It was this that constituted my 'defense' of Molinier in the adolescent period of the existence of our French section. . . In any case I did not make the slightest principled concession to Molinier." Trotsky, In Defense of Marxism (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), p. 147.

101 Craipeau interview, op. cit.

102 Trotsky to the Federation of the Charleroi, June 28, 1931. Quoted in Gras, op. cit., p. 371. Deutscher has described Trotsky's attachment to Molinier as "little short of infatuation." Deutscher, The Prophet Outcast, op. cit., p. 59.

103 Gras, op. cit., p. 371.

104 Letter from the Gauche Communiste to the delegates of the national conference of the Ligue. Contained in Lettres et discours de Trotsky, Treint et al. à la conférence de la Ligue Communiste (Paris, 1931).

¹⁰⁵Treint's admission, however, was not without its price. In order to receive Trotsky's approval Treint was compelled to admit that he contributed to the "false politics" of bolshevization and Zinovievist centerism and to express his support for the theory of permanent revolution. Treint, nonetheless, could not resist a jab at his old adversaries, claiming that he also opposed a "Right current, represented in France by those such as Souvarine, Monatte and Loriot, who attempted to drape themselves with the mantle of the Russian Opposition." "Declaration of Treint," in ibid.

¹⁰⁶"The situation in the Communist League," op. cit.

¹⁰⁷"Résolution sur le rapports de la Gauche Communiste Internationale et de l'Internationale Communiste," Le Communiste, May, 1932.

¹⁰⁸Patri, "Pour un véritable opposition de gauche," Bulletin de la Gauche Communiste, April, 1931.

¹⁰⁹"Les organisations et les cadres de renégats," op. cit. Various issues of the Bulletin de la Gauche Communiste list as many as 30 persons soliciting contributions.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Treint, Où en sommes-nous?, mimeographed, 1933.

¹¹⁴Treint, Capitalisme d'Etat et Quatrième Internationale (Paris: Nelly Rosseau, 1934).

¹¹⁵"Les organisations et les cadres de renégats," op. cit.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷"Declaration of the Jewish group." Contained in miscellaneous international materials section, Socialist Workers Party archives, Wisconsin State Historical Society.

¹¹⁸Quoted in Naville, op. cit., pp. 136-137.

¹¹⁹"La bataille gréviste dans le nord," La Vérité, August 22, 1930.

¹²⁰"Le Front Unique, condition de la victoire," La Vérité, August 22, 1930.

¹²¹Craipeau interview, op. cit.

122 "Aux mineurs en lutte," La Verite, April 3, 1931. The slogan, however, was strongly criticized in the Ligue, particularly by Pierre Naville.

123 Craipeau interview, op. cit.

124 Craipeau has cited the figure of 250, Craipeau interview, op. cit. The figure of 400 has been cited in "Les organisations et les cadres de renégats," op. cit. Important Ligue strongholds included the second, 12th, 18th and 20th arrondissements of Paris, Montreuil, Bagnolet, Puteaux, Villejuif, the nord, Halliun, Moutiguy, Marseilles, Arjon and Belfort.

125 "Les organisations et les cadres de renégats," op. cit. Yvan Craipeau has also confirmed this information.

126 Ibid.

127 "Declaration of the Jewish group," op. cit.

128 "Les organisations et les cadres de renégats," op. cit.

129 Ibid. Rosmer in a letter dated October, 1929 quoted sales of 10 in Lille, 32 in Rouen, 30 at Limoges and several at Lyon and Saint Etienne. Rosmer to Mougeot, October 24, 1929. Quoted in Gras, op. cit., p. 359.

130 Ibid. Treint, in attacking the Ligue, termed it "a society for editing the works of Trotsky."

131 Quoted in Communist League of America (Opposition), Internal Bulletin, September, 1934.

132 The six were: Louis Sellier, Jean Garchery, Camille Renault, Louis Gelis, Castella and Jules Lauze.

133 Barbe', op. cit., p. 265.

134 Ferrat, op. cit., p. 250.

135 Barbe', op. cit., p. 266.

136 "Les organisations et le cadres de renégats," op. cit.

137 Ibid. It was for this reason that one Ligue spokesman described the P.O.P. as the "purgatory of the Socialist paradise." E. Laurent, "L'Opposition unitaire in the C.G.T.U.," Lutte de Classe, May-June, 1930.

138 Ibid.

139 Ibid. According to one P.O.P. account the adhesion of the Communist deputy Perrin brought 500 members with him.

140 Ibid.

141 "Pour reparaitre en Octobre," Ca Ira, April 25, 1931.

142 "Les organisations et les cadres de renégats," op. cit.

143 Ibid.

144 Craipeau interview, op. cit.

145 "Les organisations et les cadres de renégats," op. cit.

146 J. P. Mourer, "Discipline et démocratie du Parti," Contre le Courant, July 28, 1929.

147 "Les organisations et les cadres de renégats," op. cit.

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid.

150 Ibid.

151 Ibid.

152 "It is necessary to return to the C.G.T. . . . there is no other eventuality possible." Rassinier, Le Travailleur Communiste et coopératif, April 22, 1933. Quoted in ibid.

153 Ibid.

154 Ibid.

155 Ibid. One leader before the split was head of the l'Union Regionale Unitaire and at a regional C.G.T.U. Congress drew 7 votes against 21. Another was head of the Union Locale Unitaire and at Doubs the party controlled the Syndicat de l'Enseignement.

156 Ibid.

157 Ibid.

CONCLUSION

The Communist Opposition in France had its origins in the crisis in the Russian party and in a series of disputes that developed within the French party throughout 1923. The conflict in its early stages proceeded slowly, almost unconsciously, before developing into open political struggle in the spring of 1924. As the year 1924 progressed clearly defined factional groupings emerged but few issues of a concrete nature were posed. Throughout the controversy the actual differences between the Opposition and the leadership were more a matter of emphasis than principle. Captivated by the force of events, the Opposition was unable to develop any coherent strategy or think the issues through properly to their logical conclusion. The Opposition's criticisms, for the most part, represented either ad hoc analysis or vaguely formulated discontent against a fumbling leadership. Only with the question of bureaucratic leadership was an issue of a fundamental nature touched upon. The actual process by which the Opposition was defeated was through organizational power which had its roots in the intrusion of the Russian conflict into the French situation. A major part of this process was the systematic atrophy of internal democracy and over bureaucratization of the instruments of party control through the policy of bolshevization. While organizational power, in the final analysis, determined the outcome of the controversy the Opposition compounded their weakness in this

regard through a series of tactical errors of their own. In strictly political terms it would seem that the Opposition missed its best chance during these few months. In failing to overcome the indifference and inertia prevailing in the party's ranks the Opposition only underscored a problem that was to plague it throughout the course of its existence: the inability to establish a mass base of any significant dimensions.

With the decisive defeat of the first internal Opposition in December 1924 a new question was posed: that of regroupment outside the party. For many, separation from the Communist Party, whether by expulsion or by free will, often signified an end to effective revolutionary activity. In confronting this harsh and disconcerting reality of acting as Communists outside the party several divergent responses emerged. For some, such as La Révolution Proletarienne and Fernand Loriot, the dilemma could only be resolved by a return to the past, to the ideology of pre-war revolutionary syndicalism. For others, such as Souvarine, the answer lay in the creation of small intellectual study and propaganda circles, charged with the task of providing a theoretical clarification and delimitation of ideas until the day the masses would reawaken. For most, however, the only hope lay in an eventual reform and realignment of forces within the Communist Party. Only with the review Contre le Courant was there an attempt made--through half-hearted at best--to build a larger unified Opposition movement upon which long-term future struggles could be based. Although the fundamental question of revolutionary organization was never seriously grappled

with and an overall strategy never posed several other major theoretical issues were increasingly injected into the conflict during this period. The most important of these was the question of the historical and social status of the Russian Revolution. The practical relevance of this seemingly abstract dispute is made evident by the differences in strategic orientation toward the international Communist movement that such analyses posed.

By 1929 it had become clear to many that major reform in the international Communist movement was an increasingly less viable option and that a new orientation was called for. The result was the creation of the Ligue Communiste, a party-like formation which soon embarked upon an ill-fated effort to develop a trade union base and intervene in several labor struggles. Despite the benefit of Trotsky's leadership the Ligue fared no better than any other group in building a mass movement or developing a viable Opposition strategy. As a consequence the Opposition continued to progressively subdivide itself on the basis of purer and purer principles.

The dominant socio-economic factor in the situation during the 1920's was ^{the} phenomenon of capitalist stabilization with its subsequent demoralization and depoliticization of the working class. Throughout this period the Opposition continued to pin its hopes on the revival of a revolutionary wave. When such a wave, however, did finally develop in the 1930's the Opposition, lacking a comprehensive strategy and irrevocably divided, proved completely incapable of coping with it in any meaningful way.

The fact that the Opposition failed its established goals does

not mean that its ideas and aspirations were irrelevant to the basic conflicts in French society. Rather, the real problem seems to lie in the manner in which these ideas were disseminated. The primary means by which the Opposition conveyed its ideas to the public was through small circulation intellectual reviews and newspapers. For this reason it could never address itself to more than an extremely selective audience, to the avant-garde of the working class movement, the active minority of militants directly involved in revolutionary struggle.

While it is perhaps true that the Communist Opposition in France never represented more than loose congeries of splinter groups, it is also true that what ultimately crystallized into the orthodox Trotskyist movement showed in France a greater sustenance, stability, seriousness and tenacity than in other lands. And, undoubtedly, the primary reason for this lies in the fact that Trotsky's views were defended and popularized in France by an abrasive cadre of Communists experienced and known in many fields of activity which served as a connecting link with movements of the past.

APPENDIX ONE: INDEX OF MILITANTS

ANTONINI. Came to the Communist movement by way of revolutionary syndicalism. On the editorial board of l'Humanité but resigned in protest over Treint's policies. Left the P.C.F. at the same time as Monatte, Rosmer and Delagarde. Founder and long time collaborator on La Révolution Proletarienne.

ARIAT, A. (Aime Patri). Expelled from P.C.F. in 1929. Leader of Ligue Communiste. Major writer for La Verite. Quit the Ligue in 1931 along with Collinet over differences over trade union question. Participated in small groupuscule led by Collinet and later in another one known as L'Unité de l'Opposition de Gauche. Upon breaking completely with Trotskyite movement he became a professor and collaborator on various anti-Communist reviews.

BARRE. P.C.F. leader of allied with Treint. Expelled with Treint in 1927. Collaborated on L'Unité Leniniste. Later a leader of Redressment Communiste. Joined Ligue Communiste. Quite in 1933 and formed a small groupuscule of his own. Later joined S.F.I.O. where he became active in left wing and was elected a deputy.

BIGOT, Marthe. Member of P.C.F. Comité Directeur. Active in Opposition of the 250. Expelled in 1926. Collaborated with Bulletin Communiste.

CHAMBELLAND, Maurice, 1901-1966. Came to Communism by way of syndicalism. Editor of l'Humanité but resigned along with Monatte and Rosmer in protest over Treint's policies. Second Oppositionist to be expelled in October, 1924. Founder and life long collaborator on La Révolution Proletarienne. First secretary of the Ligue Syndicaliste and leader of Comité pour l'Indépendance du Syndicalisme, Comité des 22, and the Cercle Zimmerwald. Also secretary of printers' union.

CHARBIT, Fernand. Active in printers' union. Left P.C.F. along with Rosmer and Monatte. Founder and life long collaborator on La Révolution Proletarienne. Brief collaboration on Contre le Courant.

COLLINET, Michel (Paul Sizoff), b. 1904. Entered Jeunesses Communistes in 1925. Joined Ligue Communiste in 1929 and played an active role in Opposition Unitaire. Left Ligue in 1931 over differences in trade union question to form L'Unité de l'Opposition de Gauche. Later entered S.F.I.O. and one of the founders of Pivert's Parti Socialiste Ouvrier Paysan.

CRAIPEAU, Yvan, b. 1904. Member of Jeunesses Communistes. Expelled 1930. Leader of Ligue Communiste. Left Trotskyite movement in 1948. Presently professor and leader of P.S.U.

DELAGARDE, Victor, d. 1954. Entered P.C.F. by way of syndicalism. Metal worker by profession. Member of Central Committee and one of leaders of internal opposition of 1925. Founder and long term collaborator of La Révolution Proletarienne.

DELFOSE. Former secretary of Federation of Miners. On the editorial board of Contre le Courant and Contre le Courant's primary contact in the labor movement.

DUNOIS, Amédée, 1879-1944. Pre-war Socialist and during the war active minoritaire. Founder member of P.C.F. Active in both internal Oppositions. Collaborated with Contre le Courant upon leaving P.C.F. in 1927. Active in P.O.P. Later rejoined S.F.I.O. Died in German concentration camp after his arrest for publishing a clandestine edition of La Populaire.

FAUSSECAVE, Marguerite. Member of Political Bureau and active in the Treint Opposition. Excluded from Political Bureau in 1926; expelled 1927. Active in L'Unité Léniniste and Redressment Communiste.

FELIX. Associated with Contre le Courant. Later joined Ligue Communiste where he became a leader of Jewish federation.

FRANK, Pierre, b. 1904. Expelled from P.C.F. 1928. Longtime leader of Ligue Communiste and Fourth International. Personal secretary to Trotsky.

GIRAULT, Suzanne. Member of French Communist group formed in Moscow in 1918. Member of political Bureau. One of the principal Bolshevists of 1924. Her ties to Zinoviev led her into Opposition in 1926-1927. Expelled in 1927. Founded L'Unité Léniniste with Treint. Capitulated in 1928. Later became a P.C.F. parliamentary deputy. Considered by many an agent of the G.P.U.

GODONNÈCHE. Pre-war syndicalist. Member of C.S.R. Delegate to founding congress of Profintern. On editorial board of l'Humanité but resigned in protest over Treint's policies. Expelled along with Rosmer and Monatte. Founder of La Révolution Proletarienne.

GOURGET, Pierre. Member of C.G.T.U. Fédération du Bois. Active in Opposition of the 250. Expelled in 1926. Collaborated on Bulletin Communiste and Contre le Courant. Secretary of Cercle Communiste Marx et Lénine. Joined Ligue Communiste in 1929. Quit in 1931 over trade union question and rejoined P.C.F. in 1932. Recently a local leader of Mouvement de la Paix.

HUMBERT-DROZ, JULES, 1891-1971. Swiss Protestant pastor. Refused military service in 1916 and supported Zimmerwald movement. Head of Comintern Latin Secretariat throughout the 1920's. Demoted because of his Bukharinite sympathies. Leader of Swiss Communist Party 1936-1941. Expelled 1943. Later rejoined Swiss Socialist Party and served as Secretary General, 1946-1955.

JACOB. P.C.F. Central Committee member and representative to the Comintern. Allied with Treint and removed from his positions' because of this. Capitulated in March, 1927.

LORIOT, Fernand, 1870-1932. School teacher and pre-war S.F.I.O. member. Pro-war in 1914, opposed it from 1915 on. Worked closely with Trotsky and helped arrange Lenin's journey through Germany. Active in C.S.R. and Committee for the Third International. Founder of P.C.F. Leader of Opposition of the 250. Collaborated with Contre le Courant. Left editorial board in dispute of over Leninist party and collaborated with La Révolution Proletarienne.

LOUZON, Robert, b. 1878. Engineer and member of several pre-war Socialist parties and briefly a pre-war syndicalist militant as well. Left P.C.F. along with Monatte and Rosmer. Founder and life long collaborator on La Révolution Proletarienne. Participated as a volunteer in Spanish Civil War. Interned during Second World War.

MAHOUY. Active in Opposition of 1924 and Opposition of the 250. Left P.C.F. in 1926. Collaborated with Contre le Courant and Bulletin Communiste, Secretary of Cercle Communiste Marx et Lénine.

MOLINIER, Henri, d. 1944. Active in Ligue Communiste. Left it during 1930's and joined Parti Ouvrier Internationale, where he became one of the party's military leaders during the war. Killed during the war.

MOLINIER, Raymond. Leader of Ligue Communiste and close associate of Trotsky. Involved in numerous internal and personal disputes. Quit Trotskyite movement in 1935. Gaullist agent in Latin America during the war then directeur de cirque. Presently managing a bookstore in Montevideo, Uruguay.

MONATTE, Pierre, 1881-1960. Working class militant par excellence. Proofreader by profession. Started out first as an anarchist but turned to revolutionary syndicalism. Founder of La Vie Ouvrière in 1909. Leader of anti-war movement. Founder member of C.G.T.U. in 1921. Joined P.C.F. 1923; expelled 1924. Founder and life long collaborator on La Révolution Proletarienne. Later active in Cercle Zimmerwald.

NAVILLE, Claude, d. 1935. Active in Ligue Communiste. Broke with Ligue to join Gauche Communiste.

NAVILLE, Pierre, b. 1904. Surrealist and editor of Clarté. Member of Jeunesses Communistes. Converted to Opposition by an encounter with Trotsky in 1927. Expelled from P.C.F. 1928. Collaborated first with Souvarine's Cercle Communiste Marx et Lenine and then joined the Ligue Communiste where he became a major leader. Expelled in 1935 after opposing entry into S.F.I.O. Prisoner during war. Presently a sociologist and leader of P.S.U.

PASCAL, Pierre. Member of French Communist group formed in Moscow in 1918. Remained in Moscow throughout the 1920's. In close contact with La Révolution Proletarienne group and a major source of information on the Russian situation.

PAZ, Magdeleine (Magdeleine Marx). Author and literary critic. Active in the Opposition of the 250. Founder of Contre le Courant. Collaborated afterwards with Souvarine on La Critique Social. Later joined S.F.I.O.

PAZ, Maurice, b. 1896. Lawyer by profession. Minoritaire during the war. Joined P.C.F. in 1920. Leader of Opposition of the 250. Founder of Contre le Courant. Later collaborated with Souvarine's La Critique Social and joined S.F.I.O.

RAPPOPORT, Charles, 1865-1941. Scholar and journalist of Russian descent. Pre-war Guedist Socialist. Minoritaire during war. Joined P.C.F. 1920 and became member of Comite Directeur. Oppositionist during 1924-25. Paris correspondent for Izvestia. Left party in 1938 because of purges and rejoined S.F.I.O. in 1940.

RIEU, Roger. Oppositionist in 1924. Capitulated after receiving ultimatum.

ROSENTHAL, Gérard (Francis Gérard). Won over to Opposition at a meeting with Trotsky in Moscow in 1927. Editor of Lutte de Classe and active in Ligue Communiste. Served as Trotsky's lawyer. Broke with Ligue in 1939.

ROSMER, Alfred (Alfred Griot), 1877-1864. Son of a Communard. Took the name Rosmer from a character in Ibsen. Prewar syndicalist militant and founder of La Vie Ouvrière. Major leader of French anti-war movement. On the Executive Committee of Comintern. Editor of l'Humanité but resigned in protest over Treint's policies. Major leader of Opposition of 1924. Expelled in December, 1924 and one of the founders of La Révolution Proletarienne. Leader of Ligue Communiste but left in 1931. Trotsky's closest friend during his exile. Active in Cercle Zimmerwald after war.

SELLIER, Louis. Former Jauressian Socialist. Joined P.C.F. in 1920. Served as member of Comite Directeur, Political Bureau and Comintern Presidium. Joint Secretary of the party in 1923. Broke with P.C.F. in 1928 in opposition to party's "class against class" electoral tactics and helped found Parti Ouvrier Paysan. Later rejoined S.F.I.O.

SEMARD, Pierre. Entered P.C.F. by way of syndicalism. Leader of C.G.T.U. Federation of Railway Workers. Member of Political Bureau and Secretary General of P.C.F. from 1924-1929. Became party's principal trade union leader. Shot by the Nazis.

SOUVARINE, Boris (Boris Lifschitz), b. 1891. Born in Kiev. Took the name Souvarine from a character in Zola's Germinal. Journalist by profession. Founder member of P.C.F. Representative on Comintern Presidium. Editor of Bulletin Communiste. First Oppositionist. Expelled in June, 1924. Later resurrected Bulletin Communiste as an Opposition organ and founded the Cercle Communiste Marx et Lénine, and still later the review La Critique Sociale. Became a prominent social commentator and contributor to anti-Communist reviews.

SOUZY. Leader of Lyon Opposition. Active in Opposition of the 250. Left party in 1926. Collaborated on Bulletin Communiste.

TREINT, Albert, 1889-1971. School teacher by profession. Joined S.F.I.O. in 1910. Rose to rank of captain in war and received legion d'honneur. Founder member of P.C.F.; member of first Comité Directeur; joint secretary, 1923-1924. Principal protagonist of Opposition of 1924. Later his ties to Zinoviev led him into Opposition. Removed from Political Bureau 1926; expelled 1927. Published L'Unité Léniniste but left over differences with Suzanne Girault to form Redressment Communiste. Joined Ligue Communiste but left shortly afterwards to form his own group. Rejoined S.F.I.O. in 1934. Continued to remain active in teachers' union.

VALLIANT-COUTURIER, Paul, 1892-1937. Pre-war socialist. Writer and poet. Member of Committee for the Third International. Member of Comité Directeur and long time P.C.F. parliamentary leader.

APPENDIX TWO: LIST OF OPPOSITION

GROUPS AND PUBLICATIONS

LE AMIS de RAPPEL. Located in the Aube. Led by former P.C.F. Parliamentary deputy Plard. Close ties with Parti Ouvrier Paysan. Publication Le Rappel de l'Aube. Estimated membership of 150.

BULLETIN COMMUNISTE. Opposition organ edited by Souvarine, 1925-1926, 1927-1931. Weekly from 1925-1926; irregular, 1927-1931.

BULLETIN de la FRACTION de GAUCHE. Organ of the Fraction de gauche, 1932; irregular appearance.

BULLETIN de la GAUCHE. Organ of the Gauche Communiste, 1931-1932; irregular appearance.

BULLETIN de l'INFORMATION de GAUCHE. Organ of the Fraction de gauche, 1932; irregular appearance.

BULLETIN de la GAUCHE. Organ of the Gauche Communiste, 1931-1932; irregular appearance.

BULLETIN de l'INFORMATION de GAUCHE ITALIENNE. Organ of Italian Bordigaists. Published irregularly during late 1920's and early 1930's.

BULLETIN de OPPOSITION de GAUCHE du 15e RAYON. Published by a local organization of the Ligue Communiste, 1932.

ÇA IRA. Daily publication of the Parti Ouvrier Paysan, 1930-1935. Circulation estimated at 7,200-8,000.

CERCLE COMMUNISTE MARX et LÉNINE. Founded by Souvarine in 1926. Name changed to Cercle communiste démocratique in 1931. Started out with an ideology demanding readmission to the international Communist movement, but by 1930 was completely opposed to Leninism.

CLARTÉ. Began as a literary publication but taken over by the Opposition in 1928. Name changed to Lutte de Classe. Edited by Pierre Naville.

COMITÉ d'ETUDES POUR LA QUATRIÈME INTERNATIONAL. Formed by Treint in 1934.

COMITÉ POUR LE REDRESSEMENT COMMUNISTE du PARTI et de INTERNATIONALE. Formed by Treint in 1928 out of a split with l'Unité Léniniste. Published Redressement Communiste. Devoted largely to reform of the existing Communist movement.

CONTRE le COURANT. Opposition organ edited by Maurice and Magdeleine Paz, 1927-1929. Weekly. Favored unification of the Opposition movement. Followed by Le Libérateur in 1929.

LA CRITIQUE SOCIALE. Bimonthly intellectual review founded by Souvarine in 1931.

L'ETINCELLE de l'EST. Monthly bulletin of the Region de l'est de la Ligue Communiste.

FÉDÉRATION COMMUNISTE INDÉPENDANTE de l'EST. Formed in 1932 out of a fusion of dissident groups in Belfort, Valentigney, and Doubs. Membership of approximately 70-80. Published Le Travailleur Communiste et Cooperatif.

FRACTION de GAUCHE. Formed by Treint in 1932 out of a split in the Ligue Communiste. Favored a complete break with the international Communist movement.

FRACTION de GAUCHE ITALIENNE. Group of Italian Bordigaists. Active from 1926 on. Published Prometeo and Bulletin de l'Information de la Fraction de Gauche italienne.

GAUCHE COMMUNISTE. Arose in 1931 out of split in Ligue Communiste over trade union question and personal conflicts. Opposed subordination to Communist International. Membership of approximately 15-20 persons. Published Bulletin de la Gauche Communiste.

GROUP d'AVANT-GARDE COMMUNISTE. Split off from Fraction de Gauche italienne in 1927. Bordigaist. Published Le Reveil Communiste.

GROUP COMMUNISTE INDÉPENDANTE d'OISEL. Regional group active in 1929. Had approximately 30 members.

LE GROUPE COMMUNISTES INTRANSIGEANTS de PARIS. Group of Bordigaists active in 1927.

LE GROUPE LYONNAIS de l'OPPOSITION. Regional group led by Berthe Joly.

GROUPE PUPISTE de CLICHY. Local split-off from Parti Unité Proletarienne, 1933. Published Le Proletaire.

GROUPE SOCIALIST-COMMUNISTE de MARSEILLE. Founded in 1928 by a former P.C.F. member, Sabiani. Devoted largely to municipal politics. Approximately a dozen members.

HUMBERDOT-MORIN TENDENCY. Internal Opposition group active throughout 1925-1926. Promoted a program of democratization for the Party.

LE JEUNE BOLCHEVIK. Youth organ of the Ligue Communiste.

DIE KLORKEJT. Publication of the Jewish Federation of the Ligue Communiste. In Yiddish.

LE LIBÉRATEUR. Founded by Maurice Paz to replace Contre le Courant. Appeared irregularly during 1929 and 1930.

LIGUE COMMUNISTE. Formally constituted in April, 1930 under the inspiration of Trotsky. Represented the orthodox Trotskyist tendency. Published La Verité and Lutte de Classe. Membership of approximately 250-400.

LIGUE SYNDICALISTE. Syndicalist organization dedicated to work in the labor movement founded by La Révolution Proletarienne group in 1926.

LUTTE de CLASSE. Theoretical monthly of the Ligue Communiste.

DIE NEUE WELT. Daily publication of Parti Communiste-Opposition of Alsace-Lorraine. Circulation of approximately 2,000-3,000.

L'OPPOSITION COMMUNISTE. First name given to what later developed into the Ligue Communiste.

PARTI COMMUNISTE OPPOSITION. Regional Opposition group based in Alsace-Lorraine. Politics based on autonomy for Alsace Lorraine. Founded 1929. Led by Hueber. Membership of approximately 660-700. Published Die Neue Welt.

PARTI OUVRIER PAYSAN. Formed in 1929 upon the resignation of six municipal couseillers from the P.C.F. Orientated largely toward municipal politics, and toward a fusion of the Communists and Socialists. Led by Louis Sellier and Paul Louis. Membership of 1,500. Published Ca Ira and l'Unité Ouvrière.

PARTI de l'UNITÉ PROLETARIENNE. New name for Parti Ouvrier Paysan.

LE PROLÉTAIRE. Publication of the autonomist P.U.P.ists of Clichy.

PROMETEO. Publication of the Fraction de la Gauche italienne.

LE RAPPEL de l'AUBE. Weekly publication edited by a former P.C.F. deputy, Plard.

REDRESSMENT COMMUNISTE. Publication of the Comité pour le redressment communiste du Parti et de Internationale. Published irregularly during 1928 and 1929.

LA RÉVEIL COMMUNISTE. Publication of Lyon based Groupe d'avant-garde communiste. Later became Le Communiste and Le Ouvrier Communiste. Began publication in 1927.

LA RÉVOLUTION PROLÉTARIENNE. Founded in 1925 as a syndicalist-Communist monthly. Later switched to pure syndicalism.

LE TRAVAILLEUR COMMUNISTE et COOPÉRATIF. Weekly publication of the Fédération Communiste Indépendante de l'Est. Began publication 1932. Circulation of 1,500-2,000.

LA TRIBUNE LIBRE. Internal P.C.F. publication of a group led by Baranton desiring greater internal democracy. Published in early 1927.

UNION des TRAVALLEURS RÉVOLUTIONNAIRES. Limoges based group led by Marcel Body. Published an irregular appearing newspaper, La Vérité.

L'UNITÉ LÉNINISTE. Organ of Zinovievite Opposition led by Treint and Girault, 1927-1928. Suspended publication upon Suzanne Girault's capitulation.

L'UNITÉ de l'OPPOSITION de GAUCHE. Formed out of the fusion of several grouplets which split off from the Ligue Communiste in 1933. Led by Collinet and Barré.

L'UNITÉ OUVRIÈRE. Parti Ouvrier Paysan weekly.

LA VÉRITÉ. Weekly publication of the Ligue Communiste. Began publication 1929.

LA VÉRITÉ (Limoges). Organ of Union des Travailleurs Révolutionnaires.

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