

IN DEFENSE OF BOLSHEVISM

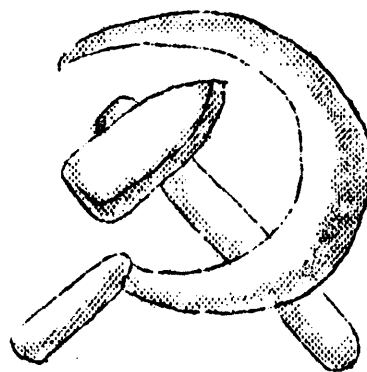
For the Fourth (Leninist) international

"WE MUST FACE THE ISSUES SQUARELY AND
CALL THINGS BY THEIR PROPER NAMES ;
WE MUST TELL THE WORKERS THE TRUTH."
(Lenin, Collapse of the Second Inter-
national.)

Leninist League

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In their revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie and its open and disguised agents, the workers must have precise knowledge of the economic, social and political forces within society. This accurate understanding of the surrounding world of facts the proletariat can form only when guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism. The testing ground for those who in all sincerity are seeking to know the picture of reality is reality itself. The establishment of truth is the indispensable condition for avoiding a mistaken course which inevitably leads to catastrophe.

The revolutionary Workers League of the U.S. (Oehler-Stamm group) professes to embrace the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism. It offers the workers a view of society and an appraisal of various political tendencies and the relationship among them. In evaluating Trotsky's role during the rise of Stalinism it states:

"By 1925 a new retreat was necessary (!?!-amazement ours). The struggle against it for a Leninist state and party policy broke out and was led by the Moscow and later the Left Opposition." (The Fourth International, February 1938, "Russian Question.")

The R. W. L. declares that Trotsky was a Bolshevik from the time he joined the Bolshevik Party (1917) up to his "French Turn" (1934), that the Trotsky-led Left Opposition "had a Marxist program and a Marxist position on all disputed questions." And after enumerating several "errors" of the Trotskyist Left Opposition, the R.W.L. reiterates:

"It represented the Marxist trunk of the Comintern.... In spite of all these errors the L.O.- I.L.O. - I.C.L. was a Marxist current, the only Marxist current in the labor movement in the period of 1924-1934."

And when faced with the task of building the independent Marxist organization, the R. W. L. goes on,

"Trotsky together with other leaders, recoiled from the enormous task and after a sojourn of 17 years in the Marxist movement (1917-1934), reverted to Trotskyism, to the role of reforming reformism." (The Fourth International, November 1937, pp. 4,6.)

Are the assertions made by the R. W. L. true or false? We maintain that they are absolutely false, having no relation to facts whatsoever, and are made along the line of concealing the actual role of Trotsky, that of a contributor to the rise of Stalinism. We declare categorically that Trotsky's position from 1922 up to the present moment has been anti-Leninist throughout. We shall proceed to prove this: *

The germ of Stalinism was planted at the Tenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party in 1921 when Zinoviev proposed Stalin for the hitherto non-exis-

* Incidentally, we take the occasion to correct our own error concerning Trotsky. In the work STALIN, TROTSKY OR LENIN we stated that Trotsky put up a struggle against Stalin in the Autumn of 1923. Our correction is: Trotsky did not fight Stalin in 1923; his line was not merely wrong but was something far worse than that.

tent post of General Secretary. During Lenin's illness in 1922 a conspiracy to usurp leadership was definitely formed by Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev. Although severely handicapped by illness, Lenin, at the first signs of the development of bureaucratism in the upper circles of the Party, took a step to remove from power the man who lurked in the center of the bureaucratic spider-web. At the end of 1922, "Lenin was now preparing not only to remove Stalin from his post of general secretary, but to disqualify him before the party as well...he was systematically preparing to deliver at the twelfth congress a crushing blow at Stalin as personifying the bureaucracy." (Lenin on Trotsky, MY LIFE, p. 480.) That was Lenin's position.

Now, what was Trotsky's position? Here is what Trotsky told Kamenev, then a close henchman of Stalin:

"Remember and tell others (i. e. the rest of Stalin's gang) that the last thing I want is to start a fight at the congress for any changes in organization. I am for preserving the status quo.... I AM AGAINST REMOVING STALIN." (Ibid., p. 486. Our emphasis.)*

As we see, Lenin's position and Trotsky's with respect to the question of removing the chief usurper were at opposite poles. Further:

"Stalin's other ally, Orjonikidze, Lenin thought it necessary to expel from the party because of his bureaucratic highmindedness in the Caucasus. I argued against it."

Lenin was through with Stalin not only politically but also personally. He sent Stalin a letter breaking all comradely relations with him. Trotsky knew of this letter the very night it was written. (L. Trotsky, The Real Sit-

*Much of the material given here is from the forthcoming book, WH I T H E R T R O T S K Y? by George Murlen.

uation in Russia, p. 308.) Trotsky did not find it advisable to break with Stalin in any manner. Despite the fact that Lenin, bedridden, appealed directly to Trotsky to take upon himself the task of opening the fight to remove Stalin, the records of the Twelfth Congress held in the Spring of 1923, conclusively indicate that there was complete political and organizational unity of Trotsky with Stalin.

The struggle against Stalin's machine in the Fall of 1923 was conducted not by Trotsky but by Sapronov, Preobrajensky and other Moscow oppositionists. Sapronov's line was not exactly Lenin's in that he did not demand outright the removal of Stalin. Opposing the line on Party building which was adopted by Stalin's Central Committee on December 5, 1923, the oppositionist Preobrajensky submitted his resolution in which the demand was set for "the renewal of the innerparty apparatus through new elections." Sapronov's offensive against Stalin's machine was described by a Stalinist, Volkov, in these succinct phrases: "Co-reporter Comrade Sapronov. The main point in his attack - the apparatus. The entire evil is rooted in the apparatus. It must be shaken up in the most radical manner." (Pravda, Dec. 13, 1923.)

The inadequacy of the Sapronov-Preobrajensky line is plain. Even if Preobrajensky's thesis were adopted, the door for Stalin's reelection remained ajar.

But if the position of the Sapronovists can in no sense be described as that of Lenin's, the position of Trotsky was a twisted Stalinist one. Fact one: together with Stalin he voted for the resolution on Party building adopted on December 5, 1923. Fact two: not only did he not call for the removal of Stalin, not only did he not support the Sapronovites' demand for the renewal of the Party apparatus, but he agreed to assign the Leninist task of developing the course on Workers

Democracy to — Stalin's bureaucratic machine! And in a letter Trotsky attacked those who, feeling skeptical about the sincerity of the Central Committee, declared that "the resolution will sow only illusions." (Pravda, Dec. 11, 1923.) Fact three: he spoke of the possibility of degeneration of the leadership, knowing quite well that the degeneration had already set in. His criticism of bureaucratism was not concrete and specific because it was not directed against Stalin, and therefore served Stalin as a means to deflect the workers' mind from the real source of the growth of bureaucratism. Saprionov, however, making use of Trotsky's criticism, levelled it openly and directly against the Central Committee as the promoter of bureaucratism. Since Trotsky himself showed no opposition to Stalin's Central Committee, Saprionov's borrowing of Trotsky's criticism was not construed by Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev as constituting proof that Trotsky actually sided with the Opposition. Thus Kamenev stated:

"That Saprionov agrees to employ Trotsky's formulation to hit the Central Committee, of that I have no doubt, but whether Trotsky agrees with Saprionov, that I do not know." (Pravda, Dec. 14, 1923.)

The conspirators had set themselves a goal to tear down Trotsky, who was to be transformed, as Stalinism advanced, into a convenient target. The first official offensive was launched by Stalin in Pravda, December 15, 1923. Trotsky was accused not of direct political opposition to the "Central Committee" but of "diplomatically assisting the opposition (Saprionov and others) in its struggle with the Central Committee of the party, under the guise of defending the resolution of the Central Committee."

With this the anti-Trotskyist storm burst in the Party and the press of the Soviet Union. Trotsky made no reply to Stalin's attack and to the barrage that followed, thus permitting Stalin to establish the myth of "Trotskyism" unchallenged. Trotsky exp-

lained:

"I do not reply to some specific articles appearing recently in the Pravda since I regard that this is more conforming with the interests of the party, and, especially with the present discussion of the new course." (Pravda, Dec. 18, 1923)

In January 1924 the anti-Trotsky storm grew in volume and viciousness, but Trotsky made no reply now because of illness; and when he got well he continued his silence.

The force of the first wave of "anti-Trotskyism" was spent. There came the shock of Lenin's death. Stalin proceeded to extend the bureaucratization of the party at once. "Availing itself of the death of Lenin, the ruling group announced a 'Leninist levy'....the 'Leninist levy' dealt a death blow to the party of Lenin.... The history of the Bolshevik Party became a history of its rapid degeneration." (Leon Trotsky, REVOLUTION BETRAYED, pp. 97, 98.)

The Stalinists disguised their bureaucratization drive with resounding fake phrases about proletarian democracy. Kamenev assured the workers that "The Leninist recruiting is the highest form of proletarian democracy." (Pravda, June 11, 1924.)

And Trotsky? What was he doing to counteract the fraud? Did he, aroused by the threatening danger, reply to the plotters with the irresistible weapon of facts, reveal to the masses Lenin's attitude towards the General Secretary of the Party, disclose the truth about the Georgian affair, the fake issue of "Trotskyism" and other unsavory secrets? Not at all! Trotsky not only continued silent, not merely gave Stalin free rein to carry out the opportunist maneuver with the "Leninist levy", but more, he actively assisted Stalin to present the "levy" to the trusting workers as the unfolding of highest, genuine proletarian democracy in the Party. Pravda

of April 10, 1924, reported that Trotsky, in speaking to the workers of Baku, stated:

"When the workingclass reacts to the death of its leader in such manner that Baku gives 9,500 new party members - this is the highest democracy, highest voting; this is not parliamentary charlatanism, not parliamentary deception, but a genuine democratic workers voice."

This is how Trotsky presented to the workers the "Leninist levy" which "dealt a death blow to the party of Lenin."

Emboldened by their initial successes due to Trotsky's conciliatory policy, the Stalinists prepared a new campaign against "Trotskyism." The offensive burst into fury in the Autumn of 1924. In the face of Stalinist distortions and lies Trotsky once again maintained unbroken silence. A Sapronovite, B. Pilipenko, in a letter to an oppositionist Drobnis, wrote with bitterness - "Silence in Trotsky's attitude is literally similar to death." Trotsky says he was ill during the second Stalinist attack. Possible. But when he got over his illness he certainly could have come out with refutations of Stalin's charges and with a powerful counter-offensive against the Stalinist clique. Well, here is his "Leninist" blow against the plotter and usurper of personal power in the first workers State, the renegade Stalin:

"And at present, evaluating the entire course of the discussion, despite the fact that during the run of the discussion against me were put forth numerous incorrect and really monstrous accusations, I think that MY SILENCE WAS CORRECT from the point of view of general interests of the party." (L. Trotsky, Letter to the Plenum of the Central Committee, Pravda, January 20, 1925. Our emphasis.)

Such was Trotsky's wretched policy, which, of course, only tended to

encourage Stalin and obscure the workers' minds.

The year 1925 opened up with Trotsky resigning his post of Commissar of War, a position of immense power. "I yielded up the military post without a fight, with even a sense of relief." (L. Trotsky, MY LIFE, p. 518.)

In the midst of this grave period Trotsky now took a "rest" from political activity! But try as he would to settle down to industrial work, the implacable Stalin kept up his intrigues: "The Stalinist apparatus followed on my heels... My attempt to win a political holiday for myself was patently a failure." (Ibid. p. 520)

The "political holiday" of "the greatest living Bolshevik" was drawn out throughout the entire year of 1925 and a goodly part of 1926. In reality it was no political holiday at all. It was during this period, when "I was taking a rest from politics and concentrating on questions of natural science and technology" (Ibid. p. 519), that Trotsky committed certain acts which do not fall into the category of mistakes.

Lenin left a letter to the party, commonly known as his testament, in which he stated that Stalin "has concentrated enormous power in his hands" and, describing Stalin as rude and disloyal, Lenin concluded with the advice to remove Stalin. An American intellectual, Max Eastman, visited the Soviet Union, saw the crooked game Stalin was playing, learned of Lenin's "will" and published his discoveries in the book "Since Lenin Died". Without mincing words Eastman wrote:

"With Stalin - who possesses all the craftiness that Trotsky lacks - in the key position as secretary of the party, and with Zinoviev enthusiastically cooperating, Kamenev not unwilling, and Bucharin easy to influence, they proceeded, by all those subtle means which the reader understands, to build up an

efficient political machine for grabbing and holding the power within the party."

Although Eastman's theoretical conclusions were incorrect, yet by presenting the true state of affairs in the Party, he performed a great service to the international workingclass.

Many a Communist worker, accepting Eastman's revelation as true, was alarmed at seeing an opportunist danger threatening the first workers' State. Then came the statement on Eastman from the former leader of the Red Army and the most popular figure in the Soviet Union. Here are the most important passages:

"Comrade Lenin HAS NOT LEFT ANY 'WILL'; the character of his relations to the Party, and the character of the Party itself, excludes the possibility of such a 'will.'... All talk with regard to a concealed or mutilated 'will' is nothing but a DESPICABLE LIE...It suffices to ask: 'If we assume that the malicious characterization of our leading Party comrades given by Eastman is only partly correct, how is it possible that this Party should have emerged from long years of illegal struggle, how could it stand at the head of masses of millions, carried through the greatest revolution of the world, the further the formation of revolutionary parties in other countries?'

"There is no sincere worker who will believe in the picture painted by Eastman." (Inprecorr, September 3, 1925, pp. 105, 106. Our emphasis.)

Only an idiot or a scoundrel can classify this outrageous act of Trotsky's as a mistake. No one knows better than Trotsky himself what words can correctly describe such a terrible act: "Lenin's 'Testament' is no state or party secret. It is no crime to publish it. On the contrary, IT IS A CRIME TO KEEP IT HIDDEN FROM THE PARTY AND THE WORKING CLASS." (Leon Trotsky,

The New International, November. 1934. Our emphasis.)

It may be argued that Trotsky did not know then of the existence of Lenin's "will." He did. The "will" was read in the close circle of leaders with Trotsky present on May 22, 1924, over a year before Eastman published his exposure. (L. Trotsky, The Testament of Lenin, The New International, July 1934.)

Thus, while Lenin, although physically non-existent, spoke to the proletariat: Remove Stalin!, Trotsky assisted the rude and disloyal Usurper to stifle Lenin's voice and prevent the revolutionary workers of the entire world from knowing that the first workers' State was being bureaucratically undermined. Such was Trotsky's political line - a line of peacemaking and conciliation with the renegade Stalin: "My then statement on Eastman can be understood only as an integral part of our then line toward CONCILIATION AND PEACE-MAKING." (Leon Trotsky, The New International, Nov. 1934.)

TROTSKY'S SUPPORT OF STALIN'S BUILDING "SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY"

Much ado has been made of Trotsky's "fight" against Stalin with respect to the "theory" of Socialism in one country. This "theory" was introduced officially by Stalin in his doctored work "Leninism" in the Autumn of 1924, several months after the Thirteenth Congress of the party, in the third year of the rise of Stalinism. Its appearance coincided with the second campaign of Trotsky-baiting. Trotsky maintained silence also with respect to this theoretical distortion of Marxism. And in January 1925, during his "political holiday" he wrote:

"After the XIII Congress there grew up or became more clearly defined new problems of economic Soviet and international character. The aspiration to counterpose any kind of 'program' to the work of the Central Committee in the task

of solving these questions was "absolutely alien to me." (Pravda, January 20, 1925.)

Such words could only be sweet music in Stalin's ears. With the joyous shouts that they were leading the Soviet Union towards Socialism, the Stalinists, citing bare figures of economic growth but concealing their organizational and political opportunism, were duping the masses. And Trotsky? What was he doing to expose the Stalinist smoke-screen behind which the bureaucratic pyramid of Stalin was being erected? Avoiding political evaluation since he had decided upon a pro-Stalinist political leave of absence, he too was citing figures and making the deduction that "Along this line the development is obvious and incontestible towards Socialism." (Pravda, November 28, 1925.)

Trotsky consciously omitted any but the purely economic part of the picture. In his essay "Towards Socialism or Capitalism" published early in 1926 Trotsky wrote:

"In the whole of my essay I have confined myself exclusively to the economic process and to its logical development (?!!!), so to speak. Thus I have consciously excluded from the field of vision all other factors not only influencing economic development but capable of diverting it in another direction." (P.122 - Our emphasis.)

Instead of exposing to the masses, Trotsky was concealing from them the factor which was in actuality diverting the economic process away from Socialism; and he was spending his time bolstering up Stalin.

ZINOVIEV AND KAMENEV IN "OPPOSITION" TO STALIN—TROTSKY "NEUTRAL"

At the end of 1925 Zinoviev and Kamenev realized that they had been cheated by Stalin in the division of power and they dissolved partnership with the sly General Secretary. They

showed their "opposition" to Stalin at the Fourteenth Congress in December 1925 by "criticising" his policies, at the same time concealing all his and their own crimes, and concluded by stating that "We do not counterpose to the Central Committee any line of our own." (Pravda, December 30, 1925.)

Trotsky was present at the Congress, but merely as an observer. He did not support his future allies; he did not even take the floor. He was "resting from politics."

After the Fourteenth Congress Stalin settled his accounts with the "New Opposition" by organizational measures and intensified his drive against Trotsky. In the interests of self-defense Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev in the middle of 1926 formed a bloc. The fundamental line of the bloc was not that of struggle to remove Stalin and smash the bureaucracy but that of pressure upon Stalin for "honest cooperation."

The leaders of the Bloc did some "criticising" in the closed sessions of the Central Committee. They sallied out into the open early in October 1926. Trotsky delivered a speech at the party unit of the factory Aviopribor. He did not go beyond urging the members of the party to request that the Stalinist leadership open a discussion on policies. Angered by Trotsky's sudden show of open "opposition" the Stalinists wrote the next day, half contemptuously:

"And how long is it since comrade Trotsky showed himself to be a 'soldier of the party' capable of standing at attention, et cetera? Somehow, that Trotsky was not to be seen at the meeting of the unit of 'Aviopribor.'" (Pravda, October 3, 1926—Emphasis in the original.)

Indeed, the "greatest living Bolshevik" for several years, since 1922, had been a soldier of Stalinism.

The open "struggle" of the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev bloc in 1926 lasted exactly two weeks and collapsed, ending in a cringingly wretched statement in which Trotsky and other leaders engaged in the most humiliating self-flagellation for having raised the request for discussion and abjectly promised to submit unconditionally to Stalin's discipline. Here is a portion of their truly infamous declaration of October 16, 1926:

"We call for the immediate dissolution of all factional groupings which have been formed round the views of the Opposition. At the same time we admit that by our appearance in Moscow and in Leningrad in October we violated the decisions of the Central Committee... We consider the decisions of the XIV Party Congress of the Central Committee and of the Central Control Commission as absolutely binding for us, and we shall unconditionally submit to them and carry them out.....In the liquidation of the factional struggle and in the struggle against recurrences of breach of discipline we obligate ourselves to render the party every possible assistance."

Trotsky and with him Zinoviev and Kamenev reverted to the policy of peace and conciliation with, and support to, the powerful Usurper. In the February 1927 Plenum of Stalin's Central Committee of which Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev were still members, the leaders of the Opposition Bloc voted for the Stalinist resolutions.

While Trotsky was engaged in opportunist maneuvering (Georgian scandal, silence during 1923 and 1924 anti-Trotskyist attacks, assistance to put over the "Leninist levy," deception of the masses during Eastman's exposure, support of the Stalinist fakery of leading the Soviet masses toward Socialism) and in shameful capitulation to Stalin (declaration of October 16), the rank-and-file of the Opposition became considerably demoralized, its militant spirit smothered.

The stale air of "peace" and "unity" with Stalinism was suddenly stirred by the momentous events in China. Stalin's policy of tying the masses to the Chinese bourgeoisie brought the destruction of the flower of the Chinese proletariat by the butcher Chiang Kai-shek.

"A wave of excitement swept over the party. The opposition raised its head. And disregarding all rules of 'conspiratzia' — and at that time, in Moscow, we were already obliged to defend the Chinese workers against Chiang-Kai-shek by using the methods of 'conspiratzia' — the oppositionists came to me by scores in the offices of the Chief Concessions Committee. Many younger comrades thought the patent bankruptcy of Stalin's policy was bound to bring the triumph of the opposition nearer. During the first days after the coup d'etat by Chiang Kai-shek, I was obliged to pour many a bucket of cold water over the hot heads of my young friends — and over some not so young. I tried to show them that the opposition could not rise on the defeat of the Chinese revolution." (L. Trotsky, MY LIFE, p. 530.)

The possibility of smashing Stalin clearly presented itself. But the chance of success rested squarely upon a policy of opening all the opportunist secrets, both those of Stalin and those of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev, before the proletariat. But the leaders of the Opposition were too deeply involved in the Stalinist mess. They concealed the truth. Pressed by the ranks of the Opposition on the one hand, and Stalin's hounding on the other, Trotsky and his allies criticized Stalin's line as a "mistake." They failed to show that it was a deliberate policy on the part of Stalin to prevent the extension of the revolution abroad in order to secure the completion of the erection of the bureaucratic pyramid in the Soviet Union.

The Trotskyists have never tired dinning into the ears of the workers of how Trotsky "toiled" to prevent the application of Stalin's line in China and how he "clamored" for the withdrawal of the Chinese Communist Party from the Kuomintang. As a matter of record, Trotsky permitted Stalin to set the infernal trap for the Chinese masses in 1925-1927 and only after the consummation of the betrayal did he openly demand the break with the Kuomintang. And even then he did not expose the real reason behind Stalin's policy. The Party knew nothing of Trotsky's position on China and even the rank-and-file of the Opposition saw no documents from Trotsky on this question until the first half of 1927. In a letter to Max Shachtman on December 10, 1930, Trotsky admitted:

"You are quite right when you point out that the Russian Opposition, as late as the first half of 1927, did not demand openly the withdrawal from the Kuomin Tang.....it was the general decision (of the Opposition center) that I must submit publicly on this question and acquaint the Opposition in writing with my standpoint." (Leon Trotsky, Problems of the Chinese Revolution, pp. 20, 21. Our emphasis.)

Since Trotsky pursued a policy of peacemaking, of distorting facts, of concealing Stalin's and his own and his allies' opportunism, it became possible for Stalin to be continuously on the offensive. The Usurper constantly reminded Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev that they were "oppositionists," always securing from them valuable services.

There was widespread talk among the followers of Trotsky that the Stalinist leadership represented the Soviet "Thermidor." Stalin had to smash this idea before it sank into the minds of the workers. Trotsky helped in this case as he had during Eastman's exposure. On August 8, 1927 Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev came out with a statement which read in part:

"On the question of thermidorianism we say: in the country there grow elements of thermidorianism which have a sufficiently serious social base. We don't doubt, that the party and the proletariat will overcome these forces with a Leninist line and inner party democracy. What we demand is — that the party leadership should give these manifestations and their influences upon certain links of the party a more systematic, firm resistance. We reject the idea that our bolshevik party, its Central Committee and Central Control Committee became thermidorian."

Trotsky in this case supplied Stalin with the sorely needed Bolshevik mask, facilitating matters for Stalinism in a tremendous degree and paving the way for the tragic end of all his followers. Refusing to halt in the process of concentrating power in his hands, the Usurper, sparing no invective, pushed his shabby "opponents" out of the rooms on the top floor of his apparatus, kicked them down-stairs, and made ready to fling them out into the gutter.

Trotsky and his allies sensed that the denouement was close at hand. It was either Oriental submission to the powerful Usurper or an attempt to retain a shred of right of independent thinking within the orbit of Stalin's discipline. They chose the latter course and Trotsky prepared the Opposition Platform, later published abroad under the title "The Real Situation in Russia."

How Leninist was this platform? True, it criticised Stalin's line. But it never indicated that the central problem the proletariat was faced with was the elimination of the bureaucratic distortion of the workers' State and the organization of wide and deep workers' democracy. The very opposite. It declared that the Stalinized "party" was the Leninist party

and unity within it must be preserved at all costs

"The opposition is for the unity of the Party. Stalin propagates his own program - to 'cut off' the Opposition - under the false flag of a pretense that the opposition wants to create a 'second' party. The Opposition answers with its slogan: 'Unity of the Leninist Russian Communist Party AT ALL COSTS'.....our task is to preserve the unity of the party AT ALL COSTS."(The Real Situation in Russia, p. 125 - our emphasis.)

Stalin, who was far from taking a political holiday, who never worried about the "danger of split" rounded out his machine by eliminating the Opposition Bloc.

THE LEFT GROUP

As we have shown, the Lefts within the Opposition, the Saprnov group put up a resistance to Stalin in December 1923. After Lenin's death the group folded up; at the XIII Congress and after, it accepted Stalin's line. Later it once again attempted a struggle against Stalin. Though never taking up the real Leninist course, it criticised severely the shameful line of the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenov Bloc.

The Stalinist Yaroslavsky, in his attack upon the Opposition, differentiated between the Trotsky-Zinoviev and the Saprnov currents:

"One group, which under the guidance of Com. Saprnov was not in agreement with the declaration of the 16th of October of the leaders concerning the admission of their mistakes, and another grouping of the so-called Bolshevik-Leninists' which agreed with the tactic of the leaders." (Pravda, July 26, 1927.)

"The 'Lefts' are pushing the Trotskyists to take more decisive steps, they demanded from them the

rejection of the declaration of October 16, 1926." (Ibid.)

And Yaroslavsky quoted a document of the Saprnov group:

"The struggle cannot limit itself within the Party frame. To overcome the Stalin group and the petty bourgeoisie which supports it, will be possible only in the event the opposition will assure for itself the active sympathy and support of the working class. Eyes must not be closed to the difficulties of the forthcoming struggle, it must be clearly seen that a defeat is possible, and be prepared for it in order to form at once the nuclei which will further defend the cause of the proletarian revolution. The Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc does not understand this. It entangles the opposition with hopes that Stalin will move to the left, and glosses over the real proportion of differences between the opposition and the Party (Stalinist upper crust), not wishing to give a clear political and tactical line. This decomposes the opposition. Exposing Stalin and his policy it is necessary also to expose the vacillation of the Opposition leaders, - only then will we be able to hammer out strong cadres which will carry on to the end."(Pravda, July 26, 1927)

However, under the brutal persecution of Stalin and continuous attacks by Trotsky, Saprnov broke down and, with Trotsky, appealed to Stalin to be taken back into Stalin's party.

TROTSKY ABROAD

Exiled to Turkey, Trotsky in a few brief but vivid paragraphs gave a highly revealing picture of his miserable policy during the advent of Stalin.

"To the last possibility I avoided the struggle. This is not

the place to discuss the question whether it was correct at the price of the greatest personal concessions to tend to preserve the ground of collective work, or it was necessary for me to go over to an offensive along the entire line, despite the absence for this of political bases. The fact is that I chose the first path, and despite everything do not repent it. There are victories which lead into a blind alley, and there are defeats which open up new ways." (Leon Trotsky, "What Happened and How," p. 34. Six articles for the bourgeois press. Our emphasis.)

It is fairly clear that with such a "Marxist," who sought defeat to open up new paths, as an "obstacle," the Stalinist development was unobstructed. And if Trotsky had mentioned a few more facts, the reader could clearly see that Trotsky not only actively prevented the unfolding of the struggle against the Stalinist monstrosity but also attacked the group to the Left of him, the Sapronovites, who made some sort of an attempt to stop Stalinism.

Trotsky now introduced a policy of "correcting" Stalin, meanwhile assuring the workers that Stalin's crimes against the proletariat were "mistakes." He and his Cannons and Shachtmans screened Stalin's bestial work in Germany by sowing unspeakable confusion among the workers. They assured the German and other workers that the change of Stalin's policy toward a genuine Bolshevik position was inevitable, when in reality the betrayal, unless Stalin was completely exposed and the workers freed from his clutches, was inevitable.

The Trotskyites raised the false and misleading slogan: "For a turn in the policy of the C.P.G." (The Militant, May 7, 1932.) They lulled and blinded the masses with the following: "Leninist turn imperative in Germany!" (The Militant, June 25, 1932.) "The about-face of the Stalinists is inevitable."

(Leon Trotsky, Germany What Next, p. 182.) "Within the party the dissatisfactions of its members has assumed such an extent and character that the leadership is forced to a more or less radical turn....the turn stands on the order of the day, yes it is already in process." (The Militant, May 28, 1932.) "Fascists in complete control of police. Party must act now!" (The Militant, Feb. 17, 1933.) The Trotskyites urged Stalin's "band of Judas to convoke the Congress of the "Comintern" to save the German masses (The Militant, Feb. 22, 1933).

And Trotsky added this utterly unrealistic explanation of the German situation:

"There is no way of getting around without the Nazis. But it is likewise impossible to give over to them the actual power." (Leon Trotsky Analyses The German Situation, first article after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, The Militant, Feb. 24, 1933.)

Such lullabies played marvelously into the hands of treacherous Stalin.

From the date of the Stalinist betrayal in Germany Trotsky has been pursuing a two-fold policy with respect to Stalin's aims. One day he lambasts Stalin as a betrayer of the proletariat, only the next day to reintroduce the pernicious illusion that Stalin wants a revolution, as for instance:

"He (Stalin) placed the techniques of Bolshevism at the service of bourgeois property. In his bureaucratic limitedness he imagined that the 'commissars' by themselves could guarantee victory." (Leon Trotsky, "The Lesson of Spain, Socialist Appeal, January 15, 1938.)

To recapitulate:

Many years back (1917-1922) Trotsky played a genuine revolution-

ary role and performed tremendous service to the proletariat. But from 1922 on Trotsky has made substantial contributions to the work of destruction of Lenin's party. He actively nursed Stalinism. Negatively, he assisted Stalin in betraying the Chinese, the German and the Spanish masses. Post-Leninist Trotskyism is a blend of Left-Menshevism and Bolshevism with an anti-Stalinist coloration. Its outstanding characteristic is conciliation with opportunism - 1922-1934 conciliation with Stalinism, since 1934 tail-ending Social Democracy and Stalinism (anti-Japanese boycott, material aid to the bourgeois states of China and Spain, etc.). "Trotskyism" is the traditional target of Stalinism. It has created ideological havoc with respect to the estimation of Stalinism and has been from the start Stalin's unwitting assistant.

* * *

The position of the minority of the R. W. L. (Stamm-Basky) is basically no different from that of Oehler. They deepen the anti-Leninist approach by transforming Trotsky's "errors" into a tactical "line," asserting that Trotsky's political line was Marxist and discover a "contradiction between the political and tactical lines." Lenin never separated theory from practice; and detested such opportunist tricks of covering up opportunism. Even if one's political position is correctly put down on paper, if this position is not translated into action it is not Marxism but a hypocritical mask. Trotsky's theoretical confusion was simply incorporated by him within his tactical line. But Stamm and Basky, while admitting "a series of capitulatory concessions to Stalinism" made by Trotsky, declare that Trotsky continued the struggle begun by Lenin that Trotsky represented Marxism:

"The Moscow Oppositor under Trotsky's leadership continued the struggle which Lenin, with Trotsky's help, began in defense of the conquests of the October Revolution against the opportunist policies Stalin and the growing bureaucracy in

the C.P., Soviets and other institutions....It was a Marxist force representing the interests of the proletariat. It analyzed correctly, during the struggle, its own role and that of the Stalinist tendency and the latter's allies." (The Fourth International, November 1937, pp.9,10).

Every statement quoted above is purest Trotskyist inventions completely belied by facts. Trotsky never correctly analyzed his own role within the post-Leninist Soviet Union. Trotsky with his current was but a particular feature of the degeneration of the entire leadership of the revolution; it was the recrudescence of authentic Trotskyism (not to be confused with the invented Stalinist "Trotskyism") in the post-Leninist epoch. He was as much a "Leninist" from 1922 on as he had been up to 1917. Knowing how eagerly the Stalinists were transforming Trotsky's most innocent remarks into a "vicious attack upon the Party," we can readily understand his role, particularly during his political holiday, seeing that the Stalinists themselves stated that up to October, 1926 he had been "a soldier of the Party ready to stand at attention." Trotsky's general role was that of a Stalinist. Trotsky's specific and fundamental role has been up to this very moment that of Stalin's chief scapegoat and target. As to the evaluation of Stalinism, Trotsky gave the workers a substitute for scientific analysis which he named "bureaucratic contrism." The situation today demands a merciless debunking of the post-Leninist history. But the Left Trotskyites (Oehler, Stamm, Basky) are doing the very opposite. Trotsky's disloyalty to Lenin they evaluate as "Marxism." They are either honest but dead wrong out of ignorance, or they are criminal opportunists, consciously concealing Trotsky's role within the proletariat from the day Lenin left the steering wheel. In either case they are doing great harm to the work of extricating the proletariat out of today's unspeakable morass of confusion and lies disseminated by Stalinism. Social Democracy, Trotskyism, Lovestons-

ism and all other opportunist groups and grouplets, including the "surface-Marxists" who view the process of retrogression of the Soviet Union towards capitalism as already completed and disregarding the fact that the economic base is still socialized production declare that the Soviet Union is a bourgeois Fascist State.

Being in essence Trotskyites, Oehler, Stamm-Basky are also rendering a valuable service to Stalin, but in their own way. Aside from declaring that Trotsky's false explanation of Stalinism and of his own role was correct. they do not question Trotsky's present nebulous evaluation of Stalinism which Trotsky traces over his former confusion, and instead of illuminating, further obscures the minds of uninformed workers. They fail to point out that Trotsky in his "theoretical" analysis of Stalinism has never explained the meaning of the Stalinist zigzags — the key method of Stalin. Trotsky has never shown to the workers that Stalinism — BUREAUCRATIC CENTRALIZATION OF THE WORKERS STATE — in order to exist must prevent revolution abroad and must do it, wearing a Bolshevik mask, through a zigzag policy either to the Right or to the Left of Leninism. This zigzag line can be definitely traced from the moment Stalinism had a hand in shaping the tactics of the Comintern. The destruction of revolutionary situations proceeded as follows:

- Ultra-Right — Germany, 1 9 2 3
- Ultra-Left — Esthonia, 1 9 2 4
- Ultra-Right — England, China
1925-1928
- Ultra-Left — Germany, Spain
1929-1934
- Ultra-Right — Spain, 1 9 3 4—

The revolutionary Workers League's way of objectively assisting Stalin and consequently the international bourgeoisie consists in diverting the workers' attention from Stalinism as the chief enemy within the workers' camp.

In STALIN, TROTSKY OR LENIN we stated:

"In Lenin's time the Third International, in spite of all the lying assertions and furious opposition of the opportunists, led the whole proletariat and the oppressed peoples—the entire humanity—whether the backward masses knew of the fact or not, whether or not they ever heard of Lenin and the Comintern, forward toward the abolition of capitalism, toward Communism. Owing to the desperate resistance of reactionary forces and the immaturity of the Communist Parties there were setbacks and temporary defeats, but the general direction was indubitable. The bureaucratic distortion of the first workers State warped and reversed the Comintern and the direction. Not merely one section of the international proletariat, the Russian, is in the toils of the tyrannous Stalinist bureaucracy; all sections are affected. The millions of workers in the Socialist Parties and trade unions, the vast mass of the unorganized, the peasantry, the colonial slaves and oppressed nationalities, although they are not aware of it, and especially because the proletarian vanguard is not conscious of the fact, are drawn by Stalinism into the abyss of reaction. Alongside of planned bureaucratized economy and the systematic abolition of October within the Soviet Union, there is planned and highly successful disruption of proletarian revolution without. The working class is helpless to prevent the Stalinist line from succeeding because Marxism is dispersed and silenced, and the opportunist currents cannot and will not halt Stalinism. During the "Third Period" it was the Stalinist line of "social fascism" and "united front from below only" that prevailed within the international proletariat; today it is the Stalinist line of the permanent "People's Front" that hand-cuffs the world proletariat politically and organizationally and robs it of independent thinking and action. Whether one recognizes the fact or not, in the work of entombing labor within capitalism, of taking precautions that the iron lid is fastened and bolted securely, of bar-

ring Marxism from coming to the rescue, Stalinism gives the lead."

The R. W. L. to the extent of its influence has beclouded the thinking and has sapped the vigilance of the proletarian vanguard with regard to Stalinism which has been steadily growing in size and power. The Stalinist monster was making ready to strike at the proletarian vanguard in Spain in order to stabilize the bourgeois regime, but the Oenlerites screened Stalinism from the workers' view by pointing in a different direction: "The betrayal of the Anarchists has been the key to the triumph of the bourgeoisie." (The Fourth International, January 1937. Our emphasis.)

Utterly wrong in its appraisal of post-Leninist Trotskyism, the R.W.L. in consequence, since post-Leninist Trotskyism is an integral feature of Stalinist development, is completely in a whirl regarding Stalinism. The bureaucratic centralization pyramid, systematically rising with Stalin on the pinnacle, is not obvious to the "theoreticians" of the R.W.L. Their vision is blurred as to the reason for the Stalinist zigzag policy. During the ultra-Left zigzag, when they were politically and organizationally with Trotsky, they accepted his characterization of Stalinism as "bureaucratic centrism." When the present ultra-Right zigzag has been launched at the "Seventh Congress of the Comintern," the "dialecticians" of the R.W.L., impressed by the tremendous sweep to the Right, decided that Stalinism has ceased being bureaucratic centrism and has become reformism.

"Stalinism as a movement in the ranks of the international proletariat is a new historic form of reformism. Its base is the degeneration of the first proletarian dictatorship. It is an open counter-revolutionary force." (The Fourth International, February 1938.)

Except for the statement on what constitutes the base of Stalin-

ism, the above has nothing to do with reality. In the first place, Stalinism is not an open, but a masked counter-revolutionary force. Secondly, it differs from reformism as fish from fowl. And by allowing the possibility of the transformation of Centrism into reformism the "theoreticians" of the R.W.L. supplement the revisionism of Leninism by Trotsky who, in reevaluating Social Democracy, allows the possibility of the transformation of Centrism into Marxism.

What will the "theoreticians" of the R.W.L. say when Stalin completes his betrayal in Spain and perhaps after the betrayal in France abandons the ultra-Right line, which will become untenable, and will introduce his ultra-Left -- all this if no Leninist Party arises to stop Stalinism. Oh, they will "correct" their evaluation made during the ultra-Right zigzag and will fall back upon "bureaucratic centrism" -- if they persist in their Trotskyist confusion.

The statement of Stamm-Basky: The central axis of Stalinist revisionism is the international character of the proletarian revolution (nationalism)" (The Fourth International, November 1937), is incorrect. Stalinism was born and thrived for three years before the introduction of the "theory of Socialism in one country. The Stalinist attack on Trotsky occurred before this "theory" was ever a consideration. The pivot of Stalinism is not this "theory" as against Lenin's position of world revolution, but bureaucratic centrism as against Workers Democracy. The "theory" of constructing a full socialist society in the isolated workers' State is but a screen behind which the bureaucracy has organized its political power and economic well-being. The fake "theory" should be refuted. Trotsky has done this, but he has completely failed to show the substance this "theory" is covering up. Trotsky's method of refutation leaves the false impression that Stalin and his clique seriously

believe that it is possible to build Socialism in one country.

The most fitting characterization of Stalinism is: BUREAUCRATIC CENTRALISM OF THE PROLETARIAN STATE.

Having not a grain of understanding of either Stalinism or post-Leninist Trotskyism, the R. W. L. naturally rejects the fundamental truth that the source of the present-day, unprecedented wave of reaction lies in the fact that the reactionary leadership of the only existing, bureaucratically distorted, workers' State, instead of promoting the world revolution, is pursuing a conscious and deliberate policy of transforming every revolutionary situation into a counter-revolutionary one and of destroying the revolutionary vanguard abroad and at home; that Stalinism, by the weight of the magic prestige of being in control of the Soviet Union and the Comintern, is the most influential, the deadliest enemy of the proletariat within the toilers' camp. Stalinism stands guard, ready to deliver the French and other workers to Fascism; preparing to sidetrack the German proletarian revolution if it occurs during the present ultra-Right zigzag (Fore-shadowed in the Stalinist appeal for a "German People's Front" during the army crisis, Daily Worker, February 11, 1938).

It is no accident that the R.W.L. diverts the attention of the workers from the Stalinist scourge in Spain and elsewhere. Burying their heads deep into the sands of illusions and distortions, the leaders of the R.W.L. imagine that Trotsky has done the best possible job of fighting Stalinism, and has failed. Frightened, the leaders of the R.W.L. turn their back upon Stalinism and "simplify" the task by a direct "anti-capitalist orientation." But capitalism does not operate with naked hands; it is being served and is protected by powerful agencies. The wide current of rebellion against capitalism in its course to the Left is trapped by Stalinism and is diverted either to the Right or to the Left of the Marxist

line. It is thus prevented from dashing against the bourgeoisie, who, in turn, loosen the blackest reaction upon the toiling masses and oppressed nations. Stalinism during acute crises within capitalism undergoes a hot-house expansion. In Spain from a mere mouse-trap with 900 members it metamorphosed into a gigantic steel-trap holding in its jaws 340,000 workers, peasants, intellectuals and liberal and petty-bourgeois elements--and directing the betrayal of the Spanish masses. In France from 35,000 the trap now holds over 300,000. In America the Stalinist machine within a period of half a year with remarkable ease has ensnared over 20,000 new victims, many of whom are proletarians from mines and factories, and oppressed Negroes. What is the R.W.L.'s reaction to these demonstrated facts? Does it take a courageous, realistic view of the situation? Does it realize that the Leftward-moving workers are not frightened, rather attracted by the Red words, Communism, Bolshevik revolution, Marx, Engels, Lenin; but are led to believe by the cunning Stalinist cheats that Bolshevism and Stalinism are one. The deeper the crisis the more apt are the bureaucratic impostors to spread their influence among the Leftward-moving masses. The task of the revolutionists is to cut and deflect the stream of workers away from the Stalinist sieves and turn it against the bourgeoisie. But the leaders of the R.W.L. push their heads deeper into the sands.

Stalinism is in the ascendancy because there is no Marxist party to counter-act its deadly work. By sabotaging the struggle against this newly developed savior of capitalism, the R.W.L. objectively aids international reaction.

The leaders of the R.W.L. attack the Trotskyites' statement that "Stalinists have been the chief enemies of workers revolution." (The Fourth International, December 1937.) Since Oehler-Sturm Basky declare that Stalinism and other agencies of counter-revo-

lution can be defeated by an "anti-Capitalist orientation," they do not bother to expose the utter hypocrisy of the Trotskyites by showing that Trotsky and his hangers-on have never fought and never will fight Stalinism, that Trotsky and his Cannons and Shachtmans, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, have been working for Stalin (Trotsky's entire line, 1922-1938; Cannon's criminal sabotage of the Kirov situation, the Trotskyites' present position of tail-ending Stalinism, Cannon's program of "trade-unionizing" the Trotskyite Party, when the outstanding task today is to politicize the workers along Marxist lines, to open their eyes with respect to Stalinism, Social Democracy and other opportunist currents).

That The R. W. L. is a Left Trotskyist group ideologically and spiritually attached to Trotsky, that its "revolutionary Marxist" leaders can conceive of opportunism as being not anti-working-class, is obvious, if one needs further proof, from the following statement of the R.W.L.:

"True it is that Trotsky's political line is opportunist today. He advances the slogan of the Fourth International and dissolves the groups of his followers into the Second International. His followers betray Marxism, make principled con-

cessions to Stalinism and the Socialists. But Trotsky's line is not anti-workingclass, not pro-capitalist."

* * * *

Truth is of crucial importance to the proletariat. It is the fundamental cornerstone of a Bolshevik organization. Deception and confusion when couched in Marxist phrases becomes monstrous charms in the hands of opportunists who beguile the toiling masses, shackle them ideologically, and deliver them to the enemy, the bourgeoisie.

For a ruthless eradication of all pernicious lies, all distortions and entrapping illusions spread by conscious and unconscious "Marxist" opportunists!

Rescue the masses of France, the workers of all countries from the deadly clutches of the Stalinist monster, its Socialist partners, and from all sorts of pseudo-Bolshevik confusers!

For a Leninist (not a Trotskyist or Left Trotskyist) Fourth International!

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By GEORGE MARLEN

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