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IN DEFENSE OF BOLSHEVISM

FOR A NEW LENINIST INTERNATIONAL

Cannon's "Clean" Banner

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CANNON'S "CLEAN" BANNER

By George Marlen

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THE American Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party is holding a convention early in July to "sum up the past" and chart the course of its future activities. Turning loose the faucet of phrases, the leader of the American Trotskyites, James P. Cannon, in his article, "Before the National Party Convention" makes an effort to imbue his readers with confidence in the Trotskyist organization. With pride, not with shame, Cannon looks back at the Trotskyist past and declares:

"Our survey of the past can only assure us that our preliminary work is done, and for the most part, NOT BADLY. We have built firmly, our achievements have a mighty historic significance. This we know and nobody can tell us differently. Our program has withstood all the tests of theory and experience and stands unassailable. We have assembled the forces of the vanguard in a single organization. We no longer have any rivals in this field and no problems of 'unity' require a second thought. The ten-years' task of clearing the air of confusion and programmatic disorientation, of regrouping the scattered forces of the revolutionary fighters under a new, CLEAN banner-----" (Socialist Appeal, June 13, 1939, "Before the Nat'l Party Convention, by James P. Cannon. My emphasis-G M.)

Cannon is quite pleased, as we see, with the Trotskyist past. Trotsky's program has stood the test, Cannon assures the workers. It is "unassailable" and the Trotskyist work, presumably in the interests of the world proletariat, was done "not badly."

Well, let us see —: let us take a look at this work and judge how clean is the banner of Trotskyism. Only by knowing Trotsky's political history since the rise of Stalinism, only by knowing his policy during the fateful course of events since 1922, can the workers unmistakably conclude whether he and his aides, Cannon, Shachtman and others, are worthy of workers' confidence.

The key to the understanding of Trotsky's present role within the proletarian ranks must be sought not in the references to the days of his service to the revolution, but in the part he played in the frightful degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Comintern.

We know, on Trotsky's own testimony, that Lenin's line was to remove Stalin, to come out before the entire world working class with a devastating exposure of the bureaucratic General Secretary and crush him politically and organizationally:

"Lenin's intentions now were quite clear to me; by taking the example of Stalin's policy he wanted to expose to the party, and ruthlessly, the danger of the bureaucratic transformation of the dictatorship." (Leon Trotsky, MY LIFE, p. 484.)

"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....." (Ibid. p. 480.)

Had Trotsky followed Lenin's line and fought to remove the General Secretary and crush in the egg the Stalinist monster, the great tragedies of the world proletariat might never have occurred. But Trotsky adopted a policy of keeping Stalin in the post of power. The Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev gang realized that Lenin had entrusted to Trotsky the fight for the removal of Stalin. When Stalin's partner, Kamenev, on learning that Lenin had broken all comradely relations with Stalin, sounded out Trotsky, Trotsky spoke to him reassuringly:

"Remember, and tell others 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....." (Leon Trotsky, MY LIFE, p. 486. My emphasis - G.M.)

One might shrug this away with a mere ejaculation — a mistake! No, it was something far worse. A close survey of the entire historical period compels one to look the truth full in the face. The fact is that the Russian leaders during Lenin's illness secretly agreed to entrench themselves in positions of permanent power. What makes the matter complicated for the one who does not delve deep into the analysis of that period is the fact that the conspiracy of Stalin against Trotsky was a plot within a plot. But that Trotsky participated in the original scheme to form a permanent bureaucratic control of the first workers State becomes adequately clear if one collects all the facts to see the entire picture.

Besides getting rid of interference from below in the Soviet Union itself, the gang of plotters had to forestall the possible "meddling" by the victorious workers abroad. To prevent the spread of the revolution to other countries, the Russian renegade leaders devised a zigzag line running now to the Right, now to the Left of Leninism. Through the Stalinized Comintern, at the head of which stood Zinoviev, this line was introduced within the international proletariat

and the revolution was successfully disrupted in a number of countries. Trotsky directly participated at the Fourth Congress of the C.I. in laying down the first Rightist Stalinist zigzag which ditched the German revolution in 1923.

Already on the retreat before the attacks by Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, Trotsky was forced to make gestures of "opposition." One of these gestures, mostly made within the four walls of the meeting room of the Stalinist Central Committee, was his plain talk about the Brandler leadership of the German Communist Party, the puppets of Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev. This occurred in September 1923, a few weeks before the German workers were strangled by Brandler and delivered to the bourgeois generals. Here is the proof quoted by Trotsky from the records:

".....Comrade Trotsky, before leaving the session of the Central Committee (September 1923 Plenum), made a speech which profoundly disturbed all the members of the Central Committee and in which he alleged that the leadership of the German Communist Party was WORTHLESS and that the Central Committee of the German C.P. was permeated with fatalism, sleepy-headedness, etc. Comrade Trotsky then declared that the German revolution was DOOMED TO FAILURE....." ("Documents of the Conference of the C.P.S.U." Jan. 1924, p. 14, quoted in "Third International After Lenin," by Leon Trotsky, p. 94.)

Beyond all question, Trotsky knew that the German leaders of the Party led the revolution to destruction. But his speech in which he branded the German leadership as worthless was, as we have said, a mere show of "opposition" to Stalin.

Fully conscious that the best German workers were in a trap called the Communist Party, were in mortal danger of annihilation, Trotsky, supposedly the continuer of Lenin's work, did not warn them and the world proletariat. Worse! Hard on the heels of his speech at the September 1923 plenum, Trotsky

addressed the workers outside. He drew an entirely different picture of the German party before the trusting revolutionary proletariat. The later speech, which he delivered before the metal workers of the Moscow district, was reported in the Pravda, October 21, 1923. It was printed in the Worker here in the United States in the December 1, 1923 issue. Here is what Trotsky said:

"The question is: this party is still young. Will she find in herself the will to effect a revolution, and will she be able to do so? In this respect circumstances favor the working class of Germany. They are ready for the struggle and in order to act they must know that at their head stands a party READY TO LEAD THEM from struggle to struggle and TO FINAL VICTORY." (Speech reported in Pravda, October 21, 1923, printed in the Worker, U.S.A. December 1, 1923. My emphasis--G.M.)

A mistake? No, a crime! Tied to the Stalinist clique through the original plot, Trotsky had no alternative but to go through with the betrayal. A triumphant revolution held now a threat not only of elimination of the bureaucratic pancer in Russia, but also of baring of the monstrous plot and the exposure of all the participants. That would have sealed not only Stalin's doom but also Trotsky's. Inevitably the plotters would be brought into the open. On this point, despite the ever-growing personal animosity, there was established a community of interests between Stalin and Trotsky.

Committed to the political support of Stalinism, Trotsky could never depart from doing untold injury to the world proletariat. Making a pretense of opposition he of necessity conducted the line of peace-making and conciliation with the irreconcilable Stalin. To conceal the original plot by diverting the workers' minds from a thorough investigation of the genesis of the Stalinist frightfulness became Trotsky's prime concern. It is for this reason, and for no other, that he committed so disloyal and vicious an act when Eastman told some revealing

and revolting facts concerning the usurpation of power by Stalin. Here is how Trotsky deceived the workers and covered up the Stalinist gang with the mantle of Lenin:

"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, to further the formation of revolutionary parties in other countries?'

"There is no sincere worker who will believe in the picture painted by Eastman." (Imprecorr, September 3, 1925, pp.115,116. My emphasis--G.M.)

A mistake? No, a coldly-calculated, unpardonable crime! Eastman's revelations created quite a stir in the Comintern. Had the revolutionary workers in Russia and throughout the world been certain at that time of the authenticity of Lenin's will and rallied to the Leninist line of removing Stalin, then a different history of the Soviet Union would have been written. It would have been written not in the devastation and horror inflicted by Stalinism upon the Russian and world proletariat, but in the destruction of the Stalinist cancer in Russia and in the Comintern. By shielding Stalin, Trotsky shielded himself from the threat of political annihilation

Thus, from 1922 on, Trotsky's line, as well as that of Stalin's, Zinoviev's, Kamenev's, Bukharin's and other leaders was the essence of treachery and betrayal in the guise of "Bolshevism."

The new system developed an inner

motion of centralization of power in the hands of Stalin and his closest collaborators. The elevation of Stalin and the elimination of his partners and big figures of October could proceed not otherwise than over the political and organizational destruction of Trotsky, the most popular man in the Soviet Union next to Lenin.

The Stalinist clique made of Trotsky their chief target and scape-goat. On his part Trotsky was making a show of "resistance," meanwhile attracting to himself all the Communist workers who turned against Stalin and the bureaucratic pyramid he was erecting. The old dread of being exposed prompted Trotsky to lay down for the unsuspecting opposition workers the policy of unity with the Stalinist clique.

"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. My emphasis - G.M.)

Trotskyism became a lightning rod diverting the anti-Stalinist electricity from striking at Stalin. The far-reaching consequences of Trotsky's policy was the complete and bloody extermination by Stalin of all the opposition workers.

After his exile to Turkey Trotsky continued his policy, with one fundamental difference; before he had operated solely within the Soviet Union, misleading the opposition workers to their doom. Now his activity was confined to the capitalist world. In Germany, France, in America, in China thousands of revolutionary workers were leaving Stalin's Comintern, in search of a correct explanation of the Stalinist phenomenon and in hope of finding the precise Leninist line in the trying circumstances. They came upon Stalin's target and lightning rod, Trotsky. It seemed logical to them

that if Stalin is a renegade, then Trotsky must be the successor of Lenin. Just as the Russian workers-oppositionists had trusted Trotsky implicitly so did the new victims place their political fate in the hands of Trotsky, remote from suspecting that he is one of the criminal bureaucratic betrayers of Lenin and the working class. They followed Trotsky, but the line he gave them was not a Leninist line, and no man knew it better than Trotsky himself. With the knowledge of the early crimes of Stalin, and of Lenin's uncompromising attitude toward the disloyal General Secretary, it would have required no profound political insight on the part of Trotsky, after the arrest and murders of the oppositionists in Russia and his exile to Turkey, to grasp the meaning of the Stalinist cancer. The import of Lenin's advice to fight for the removal of Stalin and his henchmen, Lenin's position that with Stalin no compromise should be attempted even on a correct line could not have failed to strike Trotsky with deep significance. But Trotsky had to follow the inner dictates of his guiltily uneasy mind. No matter how crushingly costly to the proletariat his line would prove, it had to be aimed at the preservation of the criminal secrets respecting Trotsky's true role in the rise and method of Stalinism.

That Trotsky had a fairly clear idea of Stalin's coldly-devised zigzag method of preventing proletarian revolution, there can hardly be any doubt. At first in complete harmony and afterward as a loyal "oppositionist" Trotsky politically collaborated with Stalin through all the zigzags. We have cited his participation in the first zigzag by means of which the top leaders of the Russian party sent the German revolution to its grave. In the second zigzag, which was to the Left and lasted a bare few months, Trotsky gave Stalin support in various ways, one of them being his flat refusal to take the floor at the Stalinist Fifth Congress of the Comintern. The Rightist zigzag by means of which the Stalinist bureaucracy maneuvered the Chinese revolution into destruction by the Kuomintang was also covered up and supported by Trotsky. When Stalin and his clique chloroformed the Chinese

Communist workers into supporting their bourgeois enemy, the Kuomintang, Trotsky spoke reassuringly of this treacherous Stalinist policy:

"We approve of Communist support to the Kuomintang party in China, which we are endeavoring to revolutionize." (Leon Trotsky, INPRECORR, May 29, 1924.)

And when the reactionary nature of the Stalinist policy was mirrored back to the workers in the pools of toilers blood throughout China, throwing the Russian Party into an uproar; when the oppositionists raised their heads, feeling that the hour had struck for them to take the affairs of the Soviet Union and the Comintern into their hands, Trotsky recoiled in dread of exposure. Too well did he realize that the overthrow of the Stalinist leadership would open the way to workers coming into their own and before long discovering the whole truth of Trotsky's betrayal of Lenin's trust. The opposition had to be stopped. A hollow excuse for not removing the Stalinist gang was quite easily furnished by Trotsky:

"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." (Leon Trotsky, MY LIFE, page 530.)

Before he had resided in Turkey very long, Stalinism and Trotsky faced another revolutionary situation developing in Germany. There could have been no doubt in Trotsky's mind that if Stalinism were not exposed in time, it would reap as bloody a harvest in Germany as it had reaped not long before in China.

But the situation was fraught with peril to Trotsky no less, rather

more, than in 1923. To open the black pages of Stalinism to the workers was tantamount to political suicide. Separated from Stalinism organizationally but organically a part of it, Trotsky had no choice but to collaborate with Stalin as before and prevent the revolution in Germany. Instead of the Leninist line of a merciless struggle to expose and destroy Stalinism he fastened upon the anti-Stalinist Communist workers a cruel delusion that Stalin and his international puppets would adopt a correct policy. This, notwithstanding the fact that Lenin would not trust Stalin even on a correct line.

In the betrayal of the German workers in 1930-1933 Cannon and Shachtman directly took part. With revealing unanimity they gave support to Trotsky's line. They disseminated Trotsky's and their own writings on the German situation, emphasizing the central ensnaring delusion that the Stalinist Comintern was a revolutionary organization whose turn to a correct policy was inevitable:

"For a turn in the policy of the C.P.G." (The Militant, June 25, 1932)

"The about-face of the Stalinists is INEVITABLE!" (Leon Trotsky, "Germany, What Next", p. 182.)

"...the turn stands on the order of the day, — yes it is already in process." (Militant, May 28, 1932.)

Stalinism was dressed up by Trotsky to pass for Bolshevism:

"Only these two groups are growing in Germany: Fascism and Bolshevism." (What Next, p. 89.)

"Our differences with the Party's policy, which isolates it from the masses and impedes the revolutionary movement in this and other countries, cannot eliminate the fact that the Communist Party is the ONLY working class party in the field, the ONLY revolutionary party which stands for the interests of the working class TODAY and TOMORROW." (The Militant, October 29, 1932. My emphasis - G.M.)

This was written in October 1932, three months before the "only revolutionary party" wound up its second betrayal of the German masses and opened the ghastly era of Hitlerism! There could be no more terrible mental poison for the revolutionary workers than the poison dished out by the Trotskyite leaders. It must be borne in mind that Trotsky and his Cannons conducted this line of supporting Stalin, with "criticism" to be sure, long after Stalin had sold out the Chinese masses. We repeat, since Trotsky had seen the Stalinist method at close range, himself directly participating in betraying the German revolution in 1923, there could be no room for doubt in his mind as to the inevitable upshot of Stalin's deadly work among the German masses. Today even to some Trotskyist workers it is clear that his line on Germany did not "exactly" serve the proletariat. And yet, the Trotskyist entire pro-Stalinist political program, which included the policy on Germany, is painted Leninist by Cannon:

"We have every right to confidence in our future, for we alone, out of a 15-year period of unprecedented defeat and disintegration, have fought a way forward. Beginning with nothing but a REVOLUTIONARY program and a handful of people, we have become a movement....." (James P. Cannon, Socialist Appeal, June 20, 1939. My emphasis - G.M.)

Fighting "a way forward", Trotsky and his Cannons, through their "revolutionary" program, aided the Stalinists in keeping on the mask of Bolshevism. Assisted by Trotsky, with Social Democracy doing its usual Judas work, Stalin sent the radical workers of Germany to their horrible death. After the German betrayal there was no possibility for Trotsky to continue his policy of telling the workers to fight for the "correction" of Stalinism. The fraud would have been too transparent. The old policy of diverting the workers from making a thorough study of the Stalinist plague had to be stung in another direction. Much of the blood of the German workers had not yet dried on the criminal hands of the Social Democracy when Trotsky told the

workers that

"The destiny of the proletariat depends, in large measure in our epoch, upon the resolute manner with which the social-democracy will succeed in the brief interval which is vouchsafed it by the march of development, in breaking with the bourgeois state, in transforming itself and in preparing itself for the decisive struggle against Fascism." (The New International, September-October 1935.)

Now the Cannons and Shachtmans, again with singular unanimity, took up the new delusion which was no less deadly than the former one. This poison received widespread distribution among the followers of Trotsky. Here and there the Cannons and Shachtmans dragged their misinformed followers into the "stinking corpse," the Second International. Among the important hidden aims was the one to take their minds away from the thought of the need of striking a death blow to the Stalinist reaction raging within the international proletariat.

Meanwhile a new hope was rising on the international proletarian horizon — Spain! The revolutionary tide engulfed the bourgeois property in Spain, throwing the ruling classes in panic and consternation. But opportunism within the Spanish and international proletariat, particularly the Stalinist monster, held the masses in a powerful grip of deception. And here, too, Trotsky gave his followers a line which in essence continued holding them back, leaving Stalin a free hand to tear down the revolution in Spain. To some extent, Trotsky's policy, like Stalin's, passed through several successive stages. At each stage Trotsky's line was dependent upon Stalin's. At first, when Stalin worked in close collaboration with the Left Social Democrats of Spain, in the People's Front Government, the stage of Trotsky's policy was of imbuing the minds of the workers with confidence in the treacherous Left Socialists:

"The leftward evolution of the international social-democracy after the defeats of Germany and

Austria, came in Spain more rapidly than elsewhere. Caballero joined the left wing, of which the Socialist youth, deeply critical of both the Second and Third Internationals, was the mainstay. The left wing declared for preparing the proletarian revolution, to be achieved by armed insurrection. The center wing of the party, led by Prieto and Gonzales Pena, publicly pledged, in the Cortes, that any attempt at a fascist regime would be met by armed revolution. Only a small right wing under Besteiros refused to learn from Austria and Germany. In the U.G.T. Caballero introduced a regime of bold struggle and the right wing Socialists who objected were forced to resign from its executive. Precisely because they had been so ideologically dependent on the Kautskys and Bauers, the fall of their teachers enabled the SPANISH SOCIALISTS TO MAKE AN EXTRA-ORDINARILY SHARP BREAK WITH THEIR PAST.

"The bourgeoisie, reading politics by way of bourgeois analogies, thought this was the bluff — until they were scared into conviction by the discovery of large depots of arms in socialist homes and buildings.

"With the Socialist Party ready to struggle, the fight against fascism was enormously facilitated. INDEED IT IS NOT TOO MUCH TO SAY THAT ONLY THE LEFTWARD turn of the Socialist Party made possible, under the existing conditions, the victory over fascism." (Felix Morrow, "The Civil War in Spain," p. 28. My emphasis - G.M.)

Later, when Stalin broke with the Left Socialists the Trotskyist line assumed a changed aspect fundamentally remaining a welter of confusion, disorienting the revolutionary workers. The line of comfortable illusions was pursued by the loyal Cannons with unquenchable zeal. The Spanish workers were assured that they had learned the lessons of the German betrayal.

"Fortunately for the world proletariat, Stalinism in Spain does not command the forces it held in leash in Germany — precisely be-

cause the lessons of Germany have entered the consciousness of the Spanish proletariat." (Felix Morrow, "The Civil War in Spain," p.62.)

Only a Bolshevik Party could lead the Spanish workers to victory. But the treacherous Trotskyite leaders painted the thoroughly opportunist CNT, FAI and the POUM as organizations that could destroy Spanish counter-revolution:

"Only the United Front of Struggle of the CNT-FAI-POUM and all of revolutionary organizations can succeed in annihilating the ogre of counter-revolution." (Trotskyist leaflet of June 19, 1937. Quoted in Socialist Appeal, August 21, 1937.)

The indirect support to Stalinism and reaction the Trotskyite leaders rendered throughout the Spanish crisis climaxed with supporting, in the Socialist Appeal, the Stalinist-engineered Madrid putsch which the Daily Worker glorified.

Stalin's Browders, Hernandezes and Thorezes masked the betraying line with the cry for material aid to the Stalin-initiated and Stalin-directed Popular Front Government. Steadfastly clinging to the essential Trotskyist policy of not fighting Stalinism but giving it indirect aid, the Trotskyite leaders advocated support to Stalin's Popular Front Government trap with "criticism". This word "criticism" was to give the impression that a struggle against Stalinism was being conducted, when in reality silence concerning the origin and the zig-ag method of Stalinism was being maintained. Nowhere was there the slightest warning to the workers that Stalin consciously betrays the proletariat.

With pride, not with shame, the hardened opportunist, Cannon, looks back at the past destructive work of Trotskyism, at the record of dishonesty and deception, at the successful hiding of Trotsky's political face since the rise of Stalinism. And Cannon creaks, with utmost satisfaction: "not badly."

Indeed, "not badly" for the Trotskyist leaders. From 1922 on, Trotsky's crime of participating in the nursing of Stalinism has been shrouded in profound secrecy. Serving as the chief target of Stalin, Trotsky has aroused very great, albeit totally misplaced sympathy of the anti-Stalinist workers; acting as the powerful lightning rod for Stalin, he has been holding these workers politically within the Stalinist system, helping Stalin to drage them on, together with all other victims of reaction, to their untimely graves.

Trotsky's past "anti-Stalinist" policy which was designed to promote good-will and better understanding between himself and Stalin is politically connected with his present "anti-Stalinist" policy. The old, hidden purpose underlies the entire turtuous course of Trotsky. In his continuous effort to keep the shroud of secrecy over his role in the degeneration of the October revolution Trotsky, through his Cannons, today distracts the attention of the workers through a vigorous fake "mass line." This "mass line" illusion is no less sinister than the former variations of Trotsky pro-Stalinist policy.

The unsuspecting victims of Trotsky and his Cannons, just as the victims of another ex-Stalinist bureaucrat, Lovestone, have accepted the "mass line." In deep belief that they are on the Leninist path, they fail to observe the many-sided scheme to prevent their digging into the blackest depth of the origin of Stalinism. In that manner the slightest suspicion of Trotsky's hand in the creation of Stalinism is averted. Remote from their mind is the least notion that the organization they are in serves Stalin as a lightning rod preventing the workers from a direct combat against Stalinism, the chief enemy within the proletariat and the source of the present monstrous tide of capitalist reaction.

That the Trotskyist "anti-Stalinism" is but an old-established fraud can be gathered from the following half-hearted "admission" on the part of the Trotskyist leaders:

"The total of all other opponent organizations — Social Democratic Federation, Socialist Party, Lovestoneites, etc.— does not add up to a small fraction of the importance of the Communist Party. INSUFFICIENT ATTENTION to the Communist Party, almost equal attention to other opponent groups, have been one of the most serious weaknesses in the work of the party during the past year. The Communist Party is far and away the greatest obstacle in this country to the building of the revolutionary movement... The basis for influencing the Communist Party for recruiting its members and sympathizers and for hastening its dissolution as an obstacle to the growth of the revolutionary movement, is present. What is required for success is a conscious, deliberate and sustained policy on our part." (Socialist Appeal, May 23, 1939. — My emphasis - G.M.)

Let none indulge in the illusion that tomorrow the Trotskyite leaders will actually introduce a "conscious---." Nothing is further from their intentions — unless they are ready to break with Trotsky and expose the whole story of the Stalinist degeneration — which supposition would be a piece of political lunacy. "Insufficient attention" or, to translate these weasel words into the language of political action, persistent sabotage of any serious effort to fight the Stalinist plague will be neatly carried on as before. Trotsky and his Cannons and Shachtmans now take new refuge in the fake "mass line." Trotsky and his Cannons spur their followers to futile fights "against" Fascism, only to deliver them eventually to the enemy — as Trotsky handed over the misinformed and misled workers-oppositionists in Russia, Germany and other countries to Stalin and Fascism.

The Trotskyist conventions, like the Stalinist, are held for the purpose of giving a coat of Red veneer to the new variation of the old line. In the usual manner the leaders of Trotskyism will spill their unusually subtle demagogy. The hall will reverberate with Cannon's fake ravings "against" Stalinism. In a masterly

constructed web of illusions composed of "revolutionary transitional demands", of the building of the reformist labor party, and of other opportunist yarn, the Cannons and Shachtmans will attempt to ensnare their honest followers. And the persistent evasion in their deliberations to touch upon Trotsky's outrageous policy on Georgia at the 12th Congress of the Russian Communist Party in April 1923, on Trotsky's support of the Stalinist betrayal of the German revolution in 1923 through the Rightist trap of "workers government," on Trotsky's refusal to fight for Lenin's line to remove Stalin, on Trotsky's entire opportunist line up to the present, will bear a startling resemblance to the deliberations of the Lovestoneite and Stalinist C. P. conventions. There will be a routine misreading of post-Leninist history. Instead of honest lessons of the past, instead of Leninist analysis of every important political force within the proletariat, especially of Stalinism, — nothing but criminal boastings and soothing lies.

All the sincere revolutionary workers, and that includes the honest but misled followers of Trotsky and his Cannons, shoulder a heavy responsibility, for to them the future of the American and the world proletariat is a deep concern. They are vitally concerned not with this or that former great figure, but with bringing to light facts — f a c t s which are incontrovertible, which give the lie to the historical picture and the task of the proletariat as presented by the Trotskyite leaders.

New betrayals are in the making. The traitors and opportunists through compounds of lies and duplicity are leading the workers downward into the pit of universal Fascism. If the back of Stalinism is not broken in time, the fate of the German and Spanish masses is in store for the American workers. The only hope lies in gathering the scattered forces of revolutionists and opening a powerful campaign of unmasking Stalin, Trotsky, Lovestone and all other star renegades and opportunists. Only thus can the cadre of a new Bolshevik party be built.

Cannon boasts of the Trotskyist "new clean banner." That it is completely new, dating back only to 1922, we will hardly deny. As to its cleanliness, this banner is indelibly smeared with Stalinism. Maintaining sheer silence regarding some impressive evidence, Cannon is attempting to lend dignity and responsibility to the banner that is not easily discernible for the treachery and hypocrisy it shrouds. This banner serves Trotsky, Stalin and the international bourgeoisie.

Armed with the authority of the first workers State in history the heavy hand of Stalin is reaching out for the wider sections of American toilers to prevent their struggle for the overthrow of their capitalist exploiters. If Stalin succeeded in disrupting the revolution in Spain, starting his job with such meagre force as 900 members in the entire country, what greater possibility of Stalin's success among the American workers with Browder's trap steadily expanding — unless the anti-Stalinist revolutionary workers awaken to the danger and, profiting by the cruel lessons of Germany and Spain, tear the masks off Stalin and his indirect protectors, chiefly Trotsky and Lovestone.

With the darkness of world reaction and the threat of imperialist war against the Soviet Union steadily closing in, the transformation of American bourgeois rule from "democracy" to Fascism is dangerously close by. The repetitions of the German, Chinese, Spanish betrayals are inevitable, unless Marxian truth rises to dispel all the black clouds of opportunism within the workingclass. The final word rests with the honest revolutionary workers, many of whom are today victims of organized deception. But they cannot long remain undisturbed by the fact that the policies of their leaders, instead of halting, actually promote reaction. They have much to ponder over. Sooner or later those workers will abandon the banners of Stalin and Trotsky — the banners which are soaked with the blood of the best workers. They will lift the old clean banner of Lenin which Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukhrin and other renegades

exchanged in 1922 for the pottage of collective bureaucratic security. Under this banner they will gather the scattered individual revolutionists who will form the nucleus of resurgent Bolshevism. Then the struggle to wrest the vanguard from opportunism will be unfolded in all directions. And with the wresting of the vanguard from Stalin, Trotsky, Lovestone and other opportunists, all of them now operating chiefly through the ensnaring "mass line," the historical picture will be entirely transformed. Growing primarily at the expense of its oppor-

tunist enemies, as the Bolshevik party grew at the expense of the Mensheviks and S.R.'s, the new revolutionary Party will occupy the avenues that lead towards the wide toiling masses of America and other countries. Then the masses led by its revolutionary vanguard will seriously challenge the power of the bourgeoisie; and, as the Russian workers in October 1917, they will prevent the transformation of the "democratic" form of capitalist rule into a Fascist one with the iron hand of proletarian revolution.

THE LEFT-TROTSKYITE'S "ANALYSIS"
OF OUR LINE

In Volume 5, No. 3 of the MARXIST, published by the R. W. L. (Oehler group) in the article "For the Fourth International," the workers are treated to what purports to be an evaluation of the "main line" of the Leninist League U. S. A. We take exception to this "analysis" because it is nothing but an evasion of presenting truthfully our position to the workers.

Here is what Oehler says of us:

"They present the defeatist idea that unless Stalinism and the OTHER REFORMISTS and opportunists can be isolated first, the workingclass is doomed in advance. Reacting violently away from Stalinism, the Marlen group fails to understand that centrism and reformism will exist so long as there is capitalism, that it is fatal to single out one reformist agency of capitalism in labor's ranks, deadly as Stalinism is, and relegate the struggle against the MAIN ENEMY, (capitalism in the original) capitalism, to a secondary place." (My emphasis-G.M.)

The statement above tends to leave a number of false impressions regarding our own evaluation of Stalinism and the question of which is the "main" enemy of the masses.

We state that Stalinism is an entirely new opportunist force unlike any other that ever existed. Having studied the origin and the method of this force we have concluded that it has no organical connection with the old opportunist tendencies, reformism and centrism. These arise and thrive within the workingclass in capitalist conditions, generally under the bourgeois-democratic form of imperialist rule. Stalinism, however, arises out of victorious proletarian revolution on the ruins of reformism and centrism and rests in the form of a bureaucratic pyramid upon the backs of the toilers of the first workers State. The evaluation of this bureaucratic cancer we define as Bureaucratic Centralism of the Workers State. Oehler, on the other hand, says that Stalinism is some sort of reformism. As we see Oehler not only does not tell the workers of our

conception of Stalinism, but he even goes to the length of giving a misleading impression that we adhere to his definition of this opportunist power.

Next is the question of the main enemy. Here Oehler confuses two separate sides of the class struggle: the condition within the proletariat on the one hand, and the historico-social system of exploitation on the other. What we say is that within the working-class, of all the opportunist forces Stalinism is the most powerful one due to the weighty fact that it holds in its mighty clutches the first workers State, is its official representative, and has usurped and distorted all the traditions of October and is parading as the real Bolshevik movement. Oehler knows our position but he does not inform his readers.

Further Oehler discloses that we have "singled out" Stalinism. We have indicated throughout our literature that it is history that has "singled out" Stalinism as the most powerful enemy in the workers' midst.

Now we have to deal with Oehler's charge that we have relegated the struggle against capitalism to a "secondary place."

We have cited repeatedly Lenin's method of fighting capitalism, that unless the opportunist enemy within the workingclass is defeated, the bourgeoisie can never be overthrown. Time and again we have pointed out that Lenin's success in arousing the Russian masses against their oppressors was due to the fact that Lenin directed his heaviest blows against the Mensheviks and S.R.'s, the MAIN enemies within the camp of the toilers during that period. Had he adopted a reverse line, such as Oehler, Field, and other "mass liners" advocate, and turned his guns of exposure and criticism mainly upon Russian capitalism, he would have done a great service to the Mensheviks and S.R.'s, and thus would have aided the Russian bourgeoisie. This would have happened if he did not have a correct evaluation of the Mensheviks and S.R.'s, as Oehler or Field who present a wrong explanation of

Stalinism. In the light of the rich lessons of the October Revolution we wonder, is it actually ignorance with Oehler. Oehler's argument is that opportunism will exist so long as there is capitalism. He knows well, we think although he does not tell it to the workers, that the manner in which the proletariat solves the problem of overthrowing capitalism was clearly established by the experience of the Russian proletariat.

In the process of the crisis of the capitalist system in many instances the capitalists stand impotently before the turbulent tide of proletarian upsurge. In Spain the capitalists were to a considerable degree dislodged, but thanks to the predominance of opportunists within the workingclass the Spanish capitalists stabilized their tottering system. The German capitalists in 1918-1919, in 1923 and again in 1932 remained in power primarily because opportunism within the German proletariat misled and betrayed the workers. The workers overthrow capitalism only when they successfully and decisively shake off the opportunists. As far as Leninism is concerned, as far as the revolutionary activity of the Marxists is concerned, the correct formula is not, Opportunism will exist so long as there is capitalism, but, Capitalism will continue its existence as long as the proletariat and specifically its advanced section is in the grip of opportunism, especially in the grip of Stalinism and its powerful-lightning rod and traditional scapegoat, Trotsky.

And this brings us to a very important feature in Oehler's hiding of our line from the workers. It is the question of Trotsky. Not a single word does Oehler's "analysis" contain with respect to the astounding material that we have uncovered on Trotsky nor on the position we held regarding Trotsky's tendency as well as Oehler's own tendency which we show to be Left-Trotskyism. Since we have been sending our magazine to Oehler quite regularly we have no doubt that he is familiar with the facts with respect to Trotsky's participation in the plot of Stalin, Zinoviev, Kamenev and other traitors and deserters of October. Not a single

word of refutation as well as not a single word of doubt of the material has ever been heard or seen from Oehler. We have presented to the workers unimpeachable evidence which shows that during Lenin's illness Trotsky played false and double-crossed Lenin and traded the cause of the workers for the mirage of a collective bureaucratic control of the first workers State. Trotsky helped Stalin to transform the Twelfth Congress of the Party, in April 1923 — the very Congress at which Lenin from his sick room entrusted Trotsky to fling the "bomb" at Stalin — into a Stalinist Congress. Trotsky betrayed into the hands of Stalin the Georgian Communists, Mdivani, Macheradze and others whom Lenin supported and who on the floor of the Congress complained against the Stalinist bureaucratism in Georgia. The records of the proceedings of the 12th Congress indicate unmistakably where Trotsky stood. The resolutions previously concocted and agreed upon by the Stalinist clique were adopted UNANIMOUSLY. We have brought to light Trotsky's ghastly crime against the masses. Trotsky together with Zinoviev, Bukharin and other Stalinists were the chief organizers of the betrayal of the German working class in the Autumn of 1923. While making fake gestures of opposition in the face of a formidable drive against him, Trotsky voted together with Stalin for the December 5th, 1923 resolution on Party building. This resolution contained perfectly empty words about the danger of bureaucratism, completely shielding the Stalinist development. Trotsky's entire line during the fiercest attacks upon him and upon the anti-Stalinist workers who fell into his trap was a line of peace-making and conciliation. Caught in the coils of the bureaucratic snare in the making of which he actively participated, Trotsky up to the present day has been concealing the true story of the rise and methods of Stalinism. Up to his ears in the bloody mire of Stalinism, Trotsky lied to the workers that Lenin left no testament, that Stalin was building revolutionary parties, when the very cause of Leninism and the October revolution were being destroyed. We have shown that Trotsky's treason ex-

tended into all the phases of the Stalinist development, even on the question of building Socialism in one country, which fakery Trotsky supported for some time after it had been introduced by Stalin in the Fall of 1924. By now Oehler without doubt knows the facts, yet in "analyzing" our position he keeps mum on the whole question of the present-day Trotskyism, which we have shown to be organically connected with Stalinism. Oehler does not challenge our facts. He simply turns his back upon them in another section of his article. He dishes out to the workers the following pro-Trotskyist deception:

".....the Trotskyist movement took form in 1923-24 as the MARXIAN TRUNK of the Communist International in the struggle against Stalinist revisionism. But serious organizational and political errors undermined its base from the time of its formation and struggle, through the Chinese Revolution and up to the defeat in Germany and the victory of Hitler." (Ibid. p. 4. My emphasis - G.M.)

Oehler speaks of Trotsky's "errors." An error is an unconscious, unintentional misstep within the bounds of the Bolshevik line which in general fights against opportunism, in the interest of the proletariat. But Trotsky's line from 1922 on was no longer a Bolshevik line. It was opportunist throughout and was expressed in his words to Kamenev: "I am against removing Stalin." That was not an error but a definite pro-Stalinist position, diametrically opposed to Lenin's line which was for the removal of Stalin and his entire clique. Trotsky never made an "error" in the pro-Stalinist line, that is, he never reverted to Leninism. From 1922 on and up to the present day Trotsky's entire line has been an unbroken chain of renegadism and betrayals of the workers. His line ran through the Fourth Congress of the C.I. at which he helped Zinoviev to lay down the Rightist trap named by them "Workers and Peasants Government," by which means they strangled the German workers in 1923. Trotsky's line ran through the Thirteenth Congress of

the Party, in 1924, where he helped Stalin to put over the "Leninist levy," that marked a new stage of the bureaucratization of the Party. Trotsky's line ran through his "political holiday" which lasted to October 1, 1926. His line can be seen in the wretched and criminal declaration of October 16, 1926, in which he pledged to deliver into the clutches of Stalin all oppositionists who attempted to break Stalin's discipline. Trotsky's treacherous line ran through his support to Stalin during the bloody days of Shanghai when the Party was seething with excitement, and when the opposition workers raised their heads and received buckets of cold water from their chief misleader. Trotsky's pro-Stalinist, anti-Leninist line is plainly manifest in his platform of 1927, in which he proclaimed "UNITY AT ALL COSTS."

If Marxism is a policy which consists of lies, treachery, treason,

crimes and endless betrayals of the world proletariat then Trotsky since Lenin's illness is without any doubt a Marxist and so is Stalin. One reading Oehler can't help asking, now that the facts are available and can be ascertained by anyone who wishes to take the trouble to do so. Is it ignorance on Oehler's part or purest fakery? We notice that Oehler does not entirely ignore the question of Trotsky. In the same article he takes the Fieldites to task for tail-ending Trotsky, for proposing negotiations to the Trotskyites, but this superficial criticism is obviously a cover for Oehler's own role of shielding one who not any less, and in fact very much more than many a Stalinist is responsible for the rise of the Stalinist monstrosity and the present tragedy of the world proletariat. Is it ignorance on Oehler's part or purest fakery? We have a strong suspicion.

G.M.

THE L.R.W.P. GIVES A HAND TO STALIN
AND "DEMOCRACIES"

THERE is, of course, some difficulty in proving to members of an opportunist organization that they are expounding the cause of the enemies of the proletariat. Unable to distinguish Marxism from opportunism, they allow their minds to absorb the ideology of the enemy. The most vicious mental poison becomes a calmly accepted part of their daily life.

A deplorable example is the organization which, oddly enough, styles itself the League for a Revolutionary Workers Party, and whose members are, politically speaking, at swords' point with us for our insistence that, objectively, they are an aid to Stalin, Trotsky and the bourgeoisie. In previous issues of our bulletin we indicated the essential political character of the L.R.W.P. What we take up at

present is but some added proof of the correctness of our estimate of this organization.

Marxism teaches the workers that present-day society is torn by a fierce struggle of classes which stand in irreconcilable antagonism to one another. The modern class of slave-holders, the bourgeoisie, through ingenious ideological devices, chloroforms its slave, the proletariat, to blind it the more securely to the capitalist system. To muddy the consciousness of the workers, the capitalists and their agents within the workers' ranks direct the thinking of their victims into "classless" channels. The mental picture of capitalist slave society is willfully twisted and instead of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat the workers behold "producers and consumers"; instead of imperialist

robber states he sees "peace-loving" democracies and aggressive Fascist countries. The revolutionists, on the other hand, carry on a relentless struggle against the bourgeois ideological plague. They do their utmost to clear the workers' thinking and make them understand that the world is divided not into "consumers" and "producers" but into classes, the exploited and exploiters, the workers and the capitalists. The opportunists lay down a program which in some subtle way compels the workers to defend the interests of their exploiters. The Marxists, on the other hand, pursue a policy which will free the workers from the clutches of the opportunists and will set the masses in motion for the revolutionary overthrow of their oppressors. The whole matter is so elementary that only "Bolsheviks" who lack Marxist education, or conscious deceivers of the proletariat don't recognize it and adulterate Marxism. Today this adulteration of Marxism and poisoning of the toiling masses with "classless" bourgeois ideas and programs are being conducted in certain concrete historical surroundings. Increasing the labor week to 60 hours, and intensifying the exploitation of the German workers, the German bourg-

geoisie is becoming the keenest competitor of the British and American capitalists in South America and other markets. The increase of duty against wares made in Germany coupled with ~~Haycott~~ are strong means to reduce the German competitors. And in these circumstances the L.R.W.P. has given the workers the following line purporting to represent a Marxist policy of class struggle:

"For a Producers' and Consumers' Boycott of Fascist countries!" (Workers' Voice, Dec. 1938.)

This is not merely a line of class collaboration and assistance to the "democratic" bourgeoisie of Canada, the United States and of other "democracies" to compete successfully with Germany and Japan. In the present political setting, with Stalinism carrying out its betrayals through the rightist line of "Democracy vs Fascism" and "Boycott Fascist Goods!" and with Trotskyism giving the Popular Front line "critical" support, this line of the L.R.W.P. is a direct aid to Stalin and Trotsky. To our knowledge, this line has never been repudiated.

G.M.

A NEW LEFT-TROTSKYIST GROUP

THROUGH a recent split in the Oehler organization, a new group has been formed, the Communist Workers Group. From the start the group manifests complete lack of knowing the basic distinction in the tasks between a Marxist party which is duty-bound to carry on work among the masses and an initial Marxist propaganda group which concentrates all its energies in the ideologico-political fight against the existing opportunist organizations to clear the field for the building of the central nucleus of the future party. The leaders of the Communist Workers Group imagine that a small

propaganda group can fulfill the function of a Party —

... "The Communist Workers Group will work as a propaganda group with a mass orientation." (The Workers Banner, June 1939, p. 2.)

With this contradictory position as its point of departure the C.W.G., as all other "mass-line" groups, is out to plow the ground, plant the seed, and simultaneously garner the ripe grain. This is but the simple mass-line device employed by Cannon, Lovestone and other opportunists to
(Continued on page 39)

"POSITIVE" OPPORTUNISM
VERSUS
"NEGATIVE" MARXISM

By J. C. Hunter

EVERY occurrence in the political framework of capitalism serves as an object lesson to teach the working class the nature of the capitalist system in its various aspects. The opportunists in the camp of labor, like the bourgeoisie themselves, strive to conceal the truth and to paint a false picture of reality. Marxists, on the other hand, utilize each incident to expose to the understanding of the toilers the bourgeoisie and their labor-opportunist co-workers.

The freeing of TOM MOONEY for example reveals these tendencies in a glaring light. We see the bourgeois wolf in its sheep's clothing, and the opportunists with the Stalinist gang at their head struggling to the best of their ability to help the bourgeoisie conceal their true wolf's form.

By freeing Mooney, the American bourgeoisie have, with the aid of the opportunists, succeeded in extricating themselves from a very uncomfortable situation. Mooney's detention in prison for so many years on obviously trumped-up evidence has been a bone in the throat of the bourgeoisie especially whenever, like today, they try to use liberalist demagogy as a means of retaining the support of the working-class. After holding Mooney in prison for twenty-two years, the bourgeoisie now decided to set him free. The following questions arise: 1) How was Mooney's life saved in the first place; 2) What happened subsequently to prevent the complete liberation for so many years; 3) How does it happen that the bourgeoisie have now freed Mooney; and 4) What problems face the workers in connection with this case which is far from being closed.

HOW MOONEY'S LIFE WAS SAVED
IN 1917

MOOONEY'S life was saved originally by the revolutionary action of the Russian Bolsheviki. The Bolshevik demonstration in Petrograd on April 23, 1917 and others which followed, a symptom of the general revolutionary ferment throughout the working class, shook up the American bourgeoisie considerably. The Bolsheviki made it clear to the American ambassador, David R. Francis, that his own life was not safe if Mooney was hanged. Whereupon, after a cable from Francis to President Wilson, Mooney's death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

It was not only Mooney who profited by the revolutionary developments in the Russian proletariat. The upsurge of the Russian workers culminating in the October Revolution and victorious civil war resulted in a large number of class-war prisoners being set free. In Russia itself the bourgeois jails were emptied of working-class prisoners, and by exchange of hostages the Bolsheviki liberated hundreds of radical workers from the prisons of several European countries. Had the proletarian revolution spread over the world, the tens of thousands of Mooneys held prisoner by the bourgeoisie everywhere would have come out of their dungeons to see the dawn of new society.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY FROM 1914 UP TO
1922 CHIEF SAVIOR OF THE
BOURGEOISIE

Unfortunately, the process of the proletarian revolution was pre-

vented outside of Russia by several opportunist forces. Until 1922, Social-Democracy was the spearhead of opportunism in the ranks of labor. Supporting the bourgeois-democratic form of capitalist dictatorship as opposed to reaction from the Right and "reaction" from the Left the Social-Democratic leaders prevented the proletariat from realizing that its task was to destroy all forms of capitalist rule. The Social-Democratic workers were thus tricked into supporting bourgeois dictatorship. Participating in bourgeois cabinets, the Social-Democratic leaders directly aided the capitalists in carrying out their counter-revolutionary designs. Proletarian revolution was prevented by the Social-Democratic leaders in a number of countries, with Germany and Italy the most outstanding examples. By such treacherous tactics, the Social-Democratic leaders enabled the bourgeoisie to fortify their tottering dictatorship. Bourgeois reaction was intensified. The prison and the grave swallowed up countless thousands of Mooneys.

S T A L I N I S M — A NEW OPPORTUNIST FORCE

THE success of the Russian Bolsheviks in breaking the criminal grip of the Social-Democratic leaders on the Russian workers opened up the historical epoch of the collapse of Social-Democracy on an international scale. Had the Leninist trend in the workingclass been maintained, Social-Democracy would have been destroyed as a force in the proletariat and a triumphant assault on capitalism would have been on the order of the day.

In 1921-1922, however, there developed in the body of the proletariat a new opportunist cancer which eventually crushed Leninism. The formation of the Stalinist clique striving for personal power in the first workers republic marked the beginning of a long series of betrayals of the toilers by their leaders. This was a form of opportunism unforeseen by any Marxist. Recognizing from the very start that a new wave of proletarian revolu-

tion would crush all forms of oppression including the usurping Stalin bureaucracy, the Stalin clique set about to prevent all further revolutionary successes by the toilers. It was comparatively easy for the Stalin clique to win the support of unsuspecting radical workers the world over. No worker could ever dream that people on the soil of the Soviet Republic speaking in glowing terms of the October Revolution, of Lenin and of Socialism had in mind to prevent all further revolutionary developments. Hence, scores of thousands of the most radical workers fell into the trap set for them by the Stalin clique. The most Left section of the proletariat rallying behind the Stalinist-dominated "Comintern" was diverted from the Leninist line by an alteration of ultra-Rightist and ultra-Leftist maneuvers each of which resulted in a bloody defeat for the toilers.* Stalinist treachery was the prime cause of the crushing of the workers in Bulgaria and Germany in 1923, in England in 1926, in China in 1927, again in Germany in 1933, in Czechoslovakia in 1938 and in Spain in 1939. France looms as the next major country in which Stalinism will once more save the bourgeoisie and enable them to transform their rule from bourgeois-democratic to fascist.** This long series of defeats engineered primarily by Stalinism with the aid of all the other opportunist forces in labor's camp has left the proletariat today in a condition of complete political paralysis. The horrible slaughter of the

* We have presented a mass of evidence on the Stalinist betrayals in our previous Bulletins and in "Stalin, Trotsky or Lenin" by George Marlen.

** See our analysis of the desperate situation in France in IN DEFENSE OF BOLSHEVISM January 1939, Vol. II, #1. The roles of Stalinism, Social Democracy, Trotskyism and Lovestoneism are exposed as assisting bourgeois reaction and the task of revolutionaries in building a new Leninist party is outlined.

Spanish workers has already set the stage for a new wave of reaction. Throughout the world, the bourgeoisie prepare to take advantage of this new proletarian disaster. In America, the recent furious assault on the "relief" system by the Roosevelt regime is only one symptom of the black situation which confronts the masses throughout the world. The crushing of the proletarian upsurge in France since July 1936, a crushing effected by the Stalinist-devised Popular Front Government, and the present ascendance of the Daladier, pre-fascist regime leaves the French proletariat prostrate before bourgeois reaction. In the face of the deadly march of reaction, the world proletariat confronts its class enemy completely deprived of a revolutionary leadership. There does not exist anywhere in the world today a revolutionary party to lead the masses to victory over the bourgeoisie or even to put up some sort of effective defense against capitalist assaults.

THE TACTICS OF THE BOURGEOISIE

ASSISTED by the opportunists, Stalinist, Trotskyite, Social-Democratic, Lovestoneite, etc., in maintaining their rule, the bourgeoisie have been free to maneuver with their usual skill. The bourgeoisie, owing the capitalist state machine, exercise an iron dictatorship regardless of the form of their rule. Within the bounds of their dictatorship, however, the bourgeoisie under different conditions pursue different policies. During the Sacco-Vanzetti case, for example, the policy of the bourgeoisie was to assassinate these two radical workers under a judicial cover. Millions of workers all over the world participated in militant demonstrations of solidarity with the imprisoned anarchists. Nevertheless, all the enormous demonstrations could not force the bourgeoisie to change their course and Sacco and Vanzetti were murdered.

At times, however, the dictatorial nature of bourgeois rule, though not in the least altered basically, is not so readily apparent as in the Sacco-Vanzetti case. Since no genuine Bolshevik party has ever existed in the

United States, the bourgeoisie have been able to keep Mooney and Billings in prison for the past twenty-two years. At times, the workers have engaged in demonstrations and other forms of mass pressure but the bourgeoisie did not move an inch from their position. All the mass protests were opportunist-led and so did not in any way offer a serious threat to the bourgeoisie. The general confusion and disruption of the proletarian movement throughout the world since the ascendance of Stalinism resulted in recent years in the disappearance of even a shadow of a struggle by the masses to free Mooney. The whole Mooney case resolved itself into legal dickerings with the bourgeois courts. Nevertheless, in the face of the complete political paralysis of not only the American but also of the international proletariat, in the face of the recent series of colossal proletarian disasters in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Spain and France, in the face of ^{the} unprecedented universal triumph of bourgeois reaction, the American bourgeoisie have suddenly decided to set Mooney free. To what is this unexpected burst of capitalist "generosity" due?

At the present time, the American bourgeoisie, their hands untied by the opportunist-inspired paralysis of the entire proletariat, have reverted to liberalist demagogy as a way of retaining the support of the workers in the face of the unparalleled economic crisis. Mooney, framed and imprisoned for over two decades, is suddenly flung to the workers as a bone to strengthen their allegiance to the capitalist class. This "gift" costs the bourgeoisie little and gains them much. The disagreeable feature of Mooney in jail for so many years when the whole world is aware that he was framed was a blot on the "democracy" and "justice" alleged to exist in the U.S. Now this blot has been "erased". The bourgeoisie realize that they are perfectly safe in freeing Mooney, even though this is a plain admission of their guilt, for there exists no revolutionary party which will utilize this admission of bourgeois guilt to expose the fraud of bourgeois-democra-

cy. A genuine revolutionary party would use this admission of guilt to re-open the whole Mooney-Billings case. It would press for the prosecution of every one of the scoundrels who helped frame these two trade unionists and who is still running about loose. The whole system of capitalist "justice" would be torn apart and laid bare before the eyes of the workers. Further, on the basis of the impetus provided by the freeing of Mooney, the revolutionary party would spur the workers to demand the re-opening of the Sacco-Vanzetti case. No stone would be left unturned to avenge the murder of these two workingclass victims of bourgeois criminality.

It goes without saying that if such a revolutionary party existed, the bourgeoisie would not open the bars of Mooney's cell as readily as they have. They would realize the danger of such an admission of guilt, and would resist with every ounce of strength any move to free Mooney. Since the workers are today in the hands of the opportunists, however, the bourgeoisie are able to use Mooney as a trump card without even having to take the usual gambler's chance. Thus, the whole Mooney case, which, if a revolutionary party existed, would be used as a club against the bourgeoisie, has been turned into a triumph for the bourgeoisie.

Unfortunately, Mooney himself has greatly aided the bourgeoisie in their effort to create the illusion in the mind of the workers that the wrong done has now been righted. One of his first acts upon leaving prison was to join the Democratic Party. This is of course a great feather in the cap of the bourgeoisie. Naturally, Mooney deserves the respect of every worker for his rejection of the bribe (parole) offered him by the capitalists and his insistence on an unconditional pardon. But, on the other hand, his move to the Right in joining the Democratic Party must be recognized as an aid to the bourgeois demagogues who are using him as bait to snare the workers. Mooney's general attitude has been "let bygones be bygones" and — aside

from his desire to free Billings — has shown no intention to press the case any further so that the whole criminal affair can be exposed before the workers. This of course plays directly into the hands of the bourgeoisie who are only too willing to let the whole matter be quietly buried. Whether or not Mooney continues to let himself be used by the bourgeoisie in this manner remains to be seen. As matters stand now, however, the victory of the bourgeoisie and the confusion of the workers are immense.

HOW THE OPPORTUNISTS AID THE BOURGEOISIE

1. The Stalinists

STANDING at the head of the huge army of opportunist scoundrels who have been leading the toilers through a sea of blood are the Stalinist bureaucrats. The criminal crew works to prevent proletarian revolution which is a menace to the oppressive bureaucracy now strangling the Russian masses. Realizing that Marxism opens the path to successful proletarian revolution, the Stalinists' game is to shunt the workers under their domination away from the Marxist line into ultra-leftist and ultra-rightist directions. During an ultra-left zigzag, the Stalinists give the workers an extreme leftist orientation toward the other forms of opportunism in the workers ranks and toward the bourgeoisie. Thus during the last ultra-left zigzag (1929-1934), the American Stalinists tried to create the illusion that the bourgeois-democratic regime of Roosevelt was fascist in political essence:

"Roosevelt's program is the same as that of finance capital the world over. It is a program of hunger, fascization and imperialist war.... The New Deal is not developed fascism. But in political essence and in direction it is the same as Hitler's program." (Earl Browder, "Communism in the United States", p. 31. Our emphasis.)

This leftist zigzag was marked by the

Stalinist workers being hurled by their loaders into maniacal, adventurist assaults against the bourgeoisie and their armed forces. The Stalinist workers in the Leftist zigzag are also flung against the Social-Democratic workers, whose petty-bourgeois democratic organization is labelled social-fascist, by which the Stalinists meant that the socialists are socialists in words, but in deeds, in actuality, they are fascists:

"Socialists in words, fascists in deeds! That is what social fascism means. It is an accurate, scientific, descriptive term applied to the Socialist Party." (Earl Browder, "The Meaning of Social-Fascism", pp. 14-15.)

The wild battles staged by the Stalinist bureaucrats between their followers and the Socialist workers simply reflected the ultra-leftist orientation of this period of Stalinism. By such treacherous tactics, the Stalinist workers were naturally prevented from understanding the nature of bourgeois-democracy and social-democracy and the nature of Fascism, hence a Leninist struggle against them was effectively prevented.

When the bloody triumph of Hitler in 1933 made these ultra-leftist tactics a source of discontent and resentment amongst the Stalinist rank-and-file, the bureaucrats shrewdly dropped them so as not to lose their victims. Again an ultra-rightist maneuver (Popular Frontism) was substituted to divert the Stalinist workers from the Marxist road. In the ultra-leftist orgy of Stalinism, the bureaucrats describe the bourgeois-democrats and the social-democrats as identical with the fascists. But in the ultra-rightist zigzag, they sing an entirely different tune. The "fascist" Roosevelt now becomes a friend of the "people" who fights against reaction:

"In 1936 the people won a brilliant victory over the reactionary camp, in the overwhelming electoral successes of Roosevelt and the New Deal....." (Earl Browder, "The Democratic Front", p. 10.)

The "fascist" social-democrats must no longer be destroyed:

"No, we do not look upon the united front as a means of doing away with the Socialist Party." (Earl Browder, Daily Worker, October 19, 1935.)

On the contrary:

"Communists do not want a weak Socialist Party which is no asset to the working class. They urge the Socialists to join the struggle for the united front because it will strengthen both the Socialist Party and the Communist Party and thus strengthen the working class." (Earl Browder, "What is Communism", p. 111. Our emphasis.)

Here, then, is the essence of the zigzag method by which Stalinism prevents proletarian revolution. In the ultra-left zigzag, the workers are confused on the nature of bourgeois-democracy and social-democracy which they are tricked into identifying with fascism. Both bourgeois-democracy as a form of bourgeois dictatorship and social-democracy as a form of petty-bourgeois democratic opportunism acting in the interests of the bourgeoisie remain intact, for the workers are involved in futile and disastrous leftist struggles. Meanwhile, politically confused and under the illusion that they are pursuing a Leninist policy, the workers are left helpless in the face of the transformation of bourgeois rule from the bourgeois-democratic form to the fascist form. Germany of 1929-1933 is the outstanding example of this kind of Stalinist maneuver.

In the ultra-rightist zigzag, the workers are made to rely on and collaborate with the "fascists" of yesterday, the bourgeois-democrats and the social-democrats, and are told that they must strengthen them. The bourgeois-democrats are now the friends of the people and the social-democrats are a proletarian party which operates in the interests of the toilers. In the present ultra-rightist zigzag (Popular Frontism), the Stalinists, in order to corral the workers behind the bourgeois-democrats, have adopted the

old social-democratic trick of avoiding giving "democracy" a class characterization, as bourgeois-democracy, and speak of democracy-in-general. Thus, Browder tells the workers:

"The Communist Party is the most conscious, the most active, the most loyal, the most courageous, the most disciplined army in the struggle for democracy and peace, and through democracy, to socialism." (Earl Browder, "The Democratic Front", p. 94. Our emphasis.)

And again:

"We are forging ever stronger the indispensable weapon for every stage in the struggle, which will finally carry us through democracy to socialism - the Communist Party." (Ibid., p. 95. Our emphasis.)

Lenin pointed out:

"A liberal naturally speaks of 'democracy' in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: for what class?" (V. I. Lenin, Selected Works, Eng. Ed., Vol. VII, p. 121.)

This liberalist, anti-Marxist fraud of Browder's is perpetrated to conceal the class character of "democracy" under capitalism, its nature as a form of bourgeois dictatorship. Faith in "democracy" in general (as now taught by the Stalinists) is a petty-bourgeois illusion which, however, does not for a moment fool the big bourgeoisie. Lenin explained:

"Furthermore, faith in 'democracy' in general as a universal panacea, and failure to understand that this democracy is bourgeois democracy, historically limited in its efficacy and its necessity, have for decades and centuries held particularly strong sway over the petty bourgeoisie of all countries. The big bourgeois is case-hardened; he knows that under capitalism a democratic republic, like every other form of state, is nothing but a machine for the suppression of the proletariat. The big bourgeois knows this from his intimate

acquaintance with the real leaders and with the most profound (and therefore frequently the most concealed) springs of every bourgeois state machine." (V.I.Lenin, Selected Works, Eng. Ed., Vol.VIII, pp. 147-148. Emphasis in the original.)

Because of the economic structure of capitalism, there can be no such thing as democracy-in-general; there can be only bourgeois-democracy, a form of bourgeois rule which the bourgeoisie itself creates or abolishes in accordance with the necessities of the situation:

"Acquainted as we are with Marxism, we never for a moment doubted the truth that, owing to the very economic structure of capitalist society, the deciding factor in that society can be either the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. We now see many former Marxists — among the Mensheviks, for example — who assert that in a period of decisive struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie democracy in general can prevail....As though the bourgeoisie itself does not create or abolish democracy as it finds most convenient for itself! And if this is so, there can be no question of democracy in general at a time of acute struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat." (V.I.Lenin, Selected Works, Eng.Ed. Volume VIII, p. 167. Emphasis in the original.)

Unequivocally Lenin taught:

"The most democratic bourgeois republic was never, nor could it be anything else than a machine with which capital suppressed the toilers, an instrument of the political rule of capital, of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie." (V. I. Lenin, Selected Works, Eng. Ed., Vol. X, p. 35-36.)

In his effort to hogtie the workers to the bourgeoisie, Browder during the ultra-Right zigzag not only conceals the bourgeois nature of "democracy" under capitalism, but feeds the workers the stale social-democratic lie

about marching "through democracy to socialism." Lenin emphasized again and again that, if the workers are to be prepared for the proletarian dictatorship, they must have explained to them the bourgeois character of "democracy" under capitalism, that the slogan of "defense of democracy" must be exposed as a bourgeois slogan:

"Hence, preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat not only requires that the bourgeois character of all reformism, of all defence of democracy, while private ownership of the means of production is preserved, shall be explained, it not only requires the exposure of the trends which, in fact, imply the defence of the bourgeoisie within the labor movement, but it also requires that the old leaders be replaced by Communists in proletarian organizations of absolutely all types, not only political, but also industrial, cooperative, educational, etc. The more prolonged, complete and firmly established the rule of bourgeois democracy has been in a given country, the more has the bourgeoisie succeeded in securing the appointment to such leading posts of people whom it has trained, who are saturated with its views and prejudices and whom, very often, it has bought directly or indirectly." (V.I. Lenin, Selected Works, Eng. Ed. Vol. X, pp. 168-169. Our emphasis.)

It must not be thought that the Stalinist bureaucrats do not understand the true nature of bourgeois-democracy as a form of capitalist dictatorship. They are entirely familiar with the Leninist position. During the ultra-left zigzag, when their basically counter-revolutionary line was being camouflaged with some correct Leninist statements, the Stalinist bureaucrats wrote:

"What are the ideas, the misconceptions, with which the social-fascists confuse and disarm the workers? First, is the idea that fascism is the opposite of capitalist democracy, and this democracy is therefore the means of combating

and defeating fascism. This false idea serves a double purpose. By means of counterposing 'democracy against dictatorship', it tries to hide the fact that the capitalist 'democracy' is only a form of the capitalist dictatorship...." (Earl Browder, "Communism in the U.S." p. 28. Our emphasis.)

The aim of the Browders is to prevent the rise of a new proletarian dictatorship and therefore during the ultra-right zigzag they maneuver by concealing the bourgeois nature of "democracy" under capitalism and by feeding the workers the poisonous, "social-fascist" slogan of "defence of democracy." The ultra-right zigzag, like the ultra-left, fulfills the Stalinist aim of keeping the toilers chained to capitalism.

In the Mooney case, the criminality of Stalinism stands out in its usual hideous form. By its ultra-left and ultra-right maneuvers, Stalinism since 1923 has enabled the bourgeoisie to crush the working class into the dirt, so that millions of Mooneys have been sent to the grave and prison. To conceal from the toilers the political paralysis of the proletariat which has given the bourgeoisie an opportunity to turn the Mooney case into a bourgeois victory, the Stalinist bureaucrats cry:

"Mooney's release is correctly considered a great victory for the working people." (Pravda, quoted in the Daily Worker, Jan. 11, 1939.)

Loud howling about the "triumph of democracy" is part of the Rightist line of the Stalinist bureaucrats in the Mooney case. Tragically enough, Mooney himself has been caught in the Stalinist trap. He repeats word for word the Stalinist poison of the ultra-right zigzag:

"Today, the fight in the world is between democracy on the one hand and fascism on the other." (Tom Mooney, quoted in the Daily Worker, Jan. 9, 1939.)

But "democracy" under capitalism is al-

ways bourgeois democracy, and bourgeois-democracy and fascism fundamentally, in their class nature, are simply two forms of bourgeois rule whose aim is to effect the same ends, oppression and exploitation of the toilers. Bourgeois-democracy and fascism are not identical, as the Stalinists say in the ultra-left zigzag, nor are they opposed to each other, as the Stalinists say in the ultra-right zigzag. Bourgeois-democracy and fascism are both equally the instruments of the bourgeoisie for the exercise of their dictatorship. By supporting bourgeois democracy one supports bourgeois dictatorship and facilitates the transformation of this form of bourgeois rule into Fascism. In Czechoslovakia, Austria, Spain and France we see the disastrous results of the Stalinist and social-democratic success in tying the workers to bourgeois-democracy. The bourgeoisie in Czechoslovakia and Spain have already transformed their rule from bourgeois-democracy to fascism. And in France they are well on their way in this transformation, because there is no revolutionary party to halt this process by overthrowing bourgeois rule. Unless a revolutionary party arises in time, a bloody fate awaits all workers.

2. The Trotskyists

The Stalinist degeneration of the Russian Communist Party and the Comintern has given rise to a number of tendencies which pretend to stand in opposition to Stalinism but actually assist it each in its own way. Of all the "anti-Stalinist" cooperators with Stalinism, the Trotskyite bureaucrats are the leaders. Present-day Trotskyism has its origin in Trotsky's attempt to get into the good graces of the Stalinist clique despite their scheme to make him their chief scapegoat. From the very beginning of Stalinism, Trotsky performed every service in his power for the bureaucratic usurpers. Directly sabotaging Lenin's plan to remove Stalin from the post of General Secretary of the R.C.P. by his comforting assurance to Kamanev, Stalin's ally, that "I am against re-

moving Stalin" (L. Trotsky, "My Life", p.486); denying the existence of Lenin's "will" which called for Stalin's removal, with the outright lie that "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." (L. Trotsky, Inprecorr, Sept. 3, 1925, p.1005); avoiding any struggle against Stalin and preferring defeat at the hands of this renegade from Communism, as Trotsky stated himself, "To the last possibility, I avoided the struggle.....There are victories which lead into a blind alley, and there are defeats which open up new ways." (L. Trotsky, "What Happened and How", Six Articles for the Bourgeois Press, p.34), Trotsky greased the path of the criminal Stalin gang to its ghastly victory.* Ever since Stalin, pursuing his policy of raising himself to ever-greater bureaucratic heights by framing and destroying the other major political figures in the Soviet Union, finally kicked Trotsky out of Russia, Trotsky has been keeping up a false-saving "attack" on Stalinism. All his "anti-Stalinist" noise, however, did not prevent Trotsky during the first period of his exile from directly preaching confidence in the Stalinist "Party" up to and even for some time after the rise of Hitler. Thus, as late as 1932, on the eve of their being delivered to Hitler by the Stalin crew, Trotsky told the German workers, "All eyes to the Communist Party!" (L. Trotsky, "Germany, What Next", p. 185); and in the year before fed them the counter-revolutionary lie that to propose to create a new party in place of the criminal Stalinist outfit meant that the victory of the fascists was a certainty: "Hugo Urbahns, who considers himself a 'Left Communist', declares the German party bankrupt, politically done for, and proposes to create a new party. If Urbahns were right, it would mean that the victory of the Fascists is certain" (L. Trotsky, "Germany - The Key to the International Situation", p.30). Trotsky told the workers that he was unshakably convinced that victory over Fascism in Germany

* We have presented more material on Trotsky's treacherous role as an assistant to Stalin in our previous Bulletins, especially Vol. I, #3, March 1938.

was possible under the given conditions! In other words, with "corrected" Stalinism as the leader of the German workingclass:

"We are unshakably convinced that the victory over the Fascists is possible — not after their coming to power, not after five, ten or twenty years of their rule, but now, under the given conditions, in the coming months and weeks." (L. Trotsky, "Germany — The Key to the International Situation", p. 31.)

The Mooney case, like everything political, reveals to the core the rottenness of Trotskyist opportunism. Here is the Trotskyist picture of the forces that released Mooney:

"We are proud to recall, in welcoming Tom Mooney, that he was saved from the hangman's noose by the independent class action of the labor militants of Russia and the United States..... And at bottom, it was that kind of action that finally forced the ruling class, which planned his judicial assassination, to relinquish its prey." (Socialist Appeal, editorial, Jan. 14, 1939, p. 4.)

Nothing can be more profitable to the Stalinist traitors than this criminal fostering of the illusion that today there exists in the workingclass "That kind of action" that saved Mooney's life in 1917. Whoever conceals the fact that the paralysis of the workingclass engineered by Stalinism and other opportunist forces that placed the initiative in the Mooney case in the hands of the bourgeoisie renders Stalinism and the bourgeoisie the highest possible service. The Stalinist bureaucrats constantly drum into the head of the workers that the masses are passing from victory to victory. This lie, ofcourse, conceals the unbroken series of defeats suffered by the toilers since the rise of Stalinism. It also prevents the workers from seeing in advance the future defeats which stare them in the face unless Stalinism and every form of opportunism are destroyed and a new revolutionary party is created. Here is

how Shachtman enlightens Mooney on the cause of his lengthy imprisonment:

"Doesn't Tom Mooney know that the reason why American labor failed for more than 20 years to force his release from prison was that it did not act as an independent class force, was because it was tied hand and foot, because it was mentally subjugated to the two capitalist parties?" (Socialist Appeal, Jan. 21, 1939, Emphasis in the original.)

Thus, according to the implication in Shachtman's article Mooney was imprisoned for over twenty years because there was no independent class force. But apparently such a force has appeared on the scene today and forced Mooney's release. What force is that, then? Stalinism? Social Democracy? A.F.of L. and the C.I.O. — the opportunist trade unions tied to the bourgeoisie? The millions of unorganized workers, blind followers of the Republican and Democratic Parties? Or perhaps the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party itself? — which, of course, has not suddenly appeared on the scene. On the surface Shachtman's article sounds like powerful Marxist clarification. But after reading Shachtman's article, Mooney will still not know that American, (and international), labor was subjugated to the bourgeoisie, and for that matter still is, because Stalinism assisted by Trotsky and others, crushed Leninism and so assisted in keeping countless Mooneys in prison. Not a word will be found in Trotskyite writings on the Mooney case to point out that due chiefly to the criminal role played by Stalinism Mooney was kept in prison in the last 17 years.

It is of course no accident that the Trotskyites are silent on the relation of Stalinist treachery to the plight of the Mooneys of the world. A genuine exposure of Stalinism and of the reasons for its success would require an exposure of Trotsky's role as an aid to Stalinism. The consequence of such self-exposure by the Trotskyite bureaucrats is obvious. Every honest worker would shrink from these Judases in disgust and on the revolutionary day of reckoning would know how to

deal with them. And so the dastardly Trotskyite game remains to snipe at Stalin from time to time by telling the international workers that Stalin misleads them because he cannot understand Leninism, because he was too busy building socialism in Russia all by itself, because he cannot read French, etc., etc. But most basic of all is the Trotskyite desire to avoid the struggle against Stalinism by pursuing a sham "mass line" and concocting a bureaucratic outfit, the fake Fourth International. The workers of the world will never learn the truth from Trotskyism.

3. The Oehlerites and Mienovites

History shows that one can be twice-removed from Stalin's and Trotsky's "Internationals" and still walk in the Stalinist and the Trotskyist tracks. One line of political development in the present era of the collapse of Marxism as a living force in the workingclass is to pass from Stalinism to Trotskyism and from Trotskyism to "mass line" howling against capitalism in general. The origin of this variety of confusion is a lack of understanding of the nature of Stalinism, Trotskyism and the task of building a new revolutionary Party. The small group "mass line" opportunists, such as the Oehlerites, Mienovites, Fieldites, Stammites, etc., seek to win the masses of workers prior to destroying the major opportunist forces, Stalinism, Social Democracy, Trotskyism and Lovestoneism. Themselves confused on the nature of these brands of opportunism, the midget "mass liners" do not see the major opportunist forces as a stone wall standing between them and the masses. To the small group "mass liners" the road to the masses is not as Lenin proved it to be, through the vanguard of the proletariat, but is around the vanguard "directly" to the backward strata of the toilers. Therefore, the "mass liners" do not aim at winning the vanguard away from the major opportunists in whose murderous clutches they now lie prostrate. Naturally, these "mass liners" are not concerned with the exposure of Stalinism and the other opportunist gangs.

• Inevitably, a false political line results in a distortion of reality — and in assisting the opportunist forces and the bourgeoisie. Dancing after the Stalinists and Trotskyists, the small "mass liners" paint a rosy picture of the Mooney situation. The Oehlerites give the workers the comforting but utterly false assurance:

"Mooney's freedom is not the result of the 'good' governor Olson, or of the New Deal. It is the result of the same class pressure which was instrumental in committing Mooney's death sentence more than a score of years ago." (*The Fighting Worker*, Feb. 1, 1939, p.4. Our emphasis.)

This enthusiastic outburst of the Oehlerites almost conjures up in the mind of the reader the image of thousands of Bolshevik workers and sailors surrounding the Governor's mansion in California and threatening Olson — as they threatened the American ambassador in Petrograd. By a special effort the reader will be able to wish away the steady crushing of the toilers throughout the world since 1923 due to the rise of Stalinism and the resultant complete political paralysis which now pervades the working class. The Stalinist betrayal of the German, Bulgarian, Chinese, Czechoslovak, Spanish and French masses, to cite only the most hideous instances, will fade from his mind, and he will see only the "same class pressure" of April 1917 in the pre-Stalinist epoch.

But the serious reader will not permit himself to be bamboozled by this Oehlerite drivel. He will look about him with a keen eye, will observe the ascendance of bourgeois reaction the world over and will understand that that "same class pressure" of 1917 which was genuine class pressure under the leadership of Lenin, has long since been annihilated by the triumph of Stalinism.

The Mienovites (Marxist Workers League) are characterized not only by their general ideological subordination to Stalinist and Trotskyist fakery and by their "mass line" oppor-

tunism, but also by their inability to remember what they write from one sentence to the next. Thus, they state:

"Let us always be prepared to inherit some of the boundless courage that men like Mooney have possessed. Now with the labor movement so demoralized it is needed more than ever." (The Spark, editorial, "Tom Mooney", January 1939, Our emphasis.)

So far so good. But only one sentence farther on we are told:

"Governor Olson did not free Tom Mooney. Only the international protests of the world working class was able to accomplish his release." (Ibid.)

And so, in one breath the labor movement is "so demoralized" and in the next its "protests" freed Mooney. The truth of the matter is, of course, that Mooney would still be in prison if the bourgeoisie themselves had not decided to free him in accordance with their present line of liberalist demagoguery. The world working class whose protests through the years did not liberate Mooney due to the counter-revolutionary policies of Stalinism, Social Democracy and others, most certainly is in no position today to shake the American bourgeoisie. The Stalinist-engineered disasters which have befallen on the world working class in Germany, China, Czechoslovakia, Spain and France throw a black cloud over the bright picture so falsely painted by the Stalinists, Trotskyites, Lovestonites, and their tail, the Oehlerites and the Mienovites.

The gross chicanery of the Oehlerites and Mienovites is a result of their opportunist "mass line." They seek to avoid a struggle with Stalinism and other forms of powerful opportunism by their pretense of "going to the masses." Hence, willy-nilly they must create the illusion that the proletariat is in triumphant ferment and ready to leap into the new party they propose to create. If a true picture of reality were presented by them, on the other hand, i.e., if they were to

show that the masses, because of numerous opportunist forces, Stalinism primarily, lie prostrate at the feet of the bourgeoisie, then their "mass line" would not appear only ridiculous but positively criminal. For this reason it is that we find the "mass liners" babbling about that "same class pressure" which they allege is shaking the bourgeoisie on its throne now as in 1917. Reality shows, however, that the present treacherous leadership of the masses allows them to exert only one kind of pressure — downward into the grave. In July 1936, the Spanish masses rose in arms and threatened to exert the "same class pressure." But Stalinism, Social-Democracy, Anarchism, Trotskyism, Lovestonism, POUMism and the rest of the opportunist forces turned that threat of "same class pressure" into a bloody victory for the world bourgeoisie. And the "mass line" prattlers who give the workers the impression that with such a leadership as they now have they can exert pressure against the bourgeoisie and free the Mooneys are only helping to dig the grave of the working class.

The difference between the orientation of the "mass liners" and that of Marxism is centered about the question whom the masses follow. Marxism always evaluates the situation in the working class in terms of its leadership. The "mass liners" on the other hand are thoroughly imbued with the ultra-left fakery of the Stalinist "Third Period" and its shrieking about "mass action." During the ultra-left zigzag, the Stalinist bureaucrats, concealing the disastrous results of their opportunism, are wont to trump up even the slightest irrelevant occurrence as a great victory for the working class. The explosion of a water main on Broadway was thus hailed in Moscow as the beginning of the American proletarian revolution.* The masses were everlastingly proclaimed to be "storming the heavens" and on the verge of destroying capitalism. This ultra-left noise has put a disastrous imprint on the working class movement. Our present-day "mass liners," in this respect, as in some others, following in the foot-

* See STALIN, TROTSKY or LENIN by George Marlen, p.86.

steps of the Stalinist ultra-left zig-zag, fabricate triumphs for the working class with all the ease of a magician pulling rabbits out of a hat. Their criminal nonsense about that "same class pressure" freeing Mooney is not only outright fakery perpetrated by the "mass liners." The Oehlerite paper "The Fighting Worker" for Feb. 1, 1939 carries on its first page the following headline: "Negrette Free. World Pressure Brings Release From Loyalists." (our emphasis.) The article following this goes on to say: "Again the working class has scored another victory due to its class pressure and world wide protests." (our emphasis.)* The Oehlerites give the impression that the international proletariat rose to save Negrette as the Russian workers led by Lenin once did to save Tom Mooney. The fact is, it goes without saying, that the international proletariat does not know Negrette from Adam and was utterly unconcerned about his fate. The international proletariat is in the claws of Stalinism and Social-Democracy, the Johaux, Lewises and Greens. These criminal gangs, to mention only the greatest opportunist forces, have just sent some 2,000,000 wroosting workers to their grave in Spain and are preparing to repeat this feat in France. The "mass" movement for Negrette's release actually consisted, and under present conditions could only consist, of a handful of individuals. The Oehlerites trumpet:

"In New York and Chicago picketing of the Spanish Consulate was carried on with notable success by the New York Negrette United Front Sponsoring Committee." (Ibid. Our emphasis.)

The Oehlerites are careful not to explain that the "mass" picketing of the Spanish Consulate in New York consisted of about a dozen persons which after a while dwindled down to four. Naturally, this powerful "mass pressure" scared the international bourgeoisie and the Stalinist bureaucrats out *Negrette is an American radical who was jailed first by the Loyalist government and then by the Stalinists in Spain on trumped-up charges of being an agent of Franco.

of their pants and Negrette was promptly released. Nor do the Oehlerites explain that even if every person connected with all the organizations comprising the New York Negrette United Front Sponsoring Committee were mobilized for the picket line there would still not be enough mass pressure to frighten an intelligent cat.

It is with such crude hokum that the "mass liners" strive to create the harmful illusion that they too are "storming the heavens." Let this nonsense be set aside and have it plainly stated: Negrette was released because it was the policy of the Loyalist government to get rid of all the foreigners in its territories in preparation for its final betrayal of the Spanish workers to Franco. This is known in diplomatic lingo as "avoiding international complications." In spite of this, as a matter of fact, Negrette came within an ace of being finished off by the Spanish Stalinists. But nevertheless, the "mass liners", already head-over-heels in fakery, persist in their Arabian Nights tale of the international workingclass forcing Negrette's — and Mooney's — release.

The primary fact of the present epoch that the "mass liners" refuse to face is that in every crisis of capitalism which brings the masses up to the threshold of a revolutionary situation the proletarian vanguard and hence the masses generally fall into the ultra-rightist or ultra-leftist trap set for them by Stalinism. The notion that Stalinism is a revolutionary force must be eradicated from the mind of the proletarian vanguard. ^{As long as the workers can} have the illusion that the Stalinist movement, which has behind it the immense prestige of the first workers republic, offers a solution to its problems, so long will there be no hope of destroying capitalism. The strength of Stalinism lies not so much in its numbers at any particular moment as in this very illusion which causes the workers at the most crucial periods of history to rally behind the Stalinist and march straight to their doom. Only in the building of a new revolutionary party through the process of tearing away from the Stalinists

and other opportunists the vanguard elements which they have actually or potentially, and not in "mass line" howling against capitalism in general, is there any salvation for the toilers.

A POSITIVE LINE FOR THE PRESENT PERIOD

THE Mooney case, like all issues confronting the workers, raises the question: What positive action can revolutionary workers take in this situation. How are revolutionary workers to differentiate between genuine positive action and what only seems to be that but is actually a line of playing into the hands of the bourgeoisie.

The greatest blunder and the most insidiously negative action for revolutionary workers to fall into is to attempt, when they are only a small group, to act like a large party. This effort of a small group to act like a big party is the essence of the confusion of various "mass liners" on the question of what revolutionary workers must do in the present period. Such an effort must inevitably lead to some kind of fraudulent pretense. In the Oehlerite treatment of the Negrette case, we see a typical instance of this. Unable, because they are a tiny, unimportant group, to organize even the shadow of a world protest, the Oehlerites, playing at being a large party, must concoct a world protest out of thin air. Even their outlook on the political situation in general must become clouded by their false "mass line" orientation. Wishful fantasies of powerful ferment among the masses freeing Mooney flow from the pen of the "mass liners" who pretend that they too can arouse a ferment among the masses, under present conditions. And this is by no means the end of the hokum that the "mass liners" will perpetrate. The deeper they plunge into their make-believe of being a large party, the greater and more frequent will become their fakery.

In the Mooney case, the futility and harmfulness of the "mass line" approach becomes clear. For revolutionaries who are a handful in number to

raise a racket about freeing Mooney is obviously idiotic since the bourgeoisie themselves are able and willing to do so. The treachery of the opportunists gave the bourgeoisie ample room to pose as liberals and humanitarians. To stage "victory demonstrations" over the actual liberation of Mooney is again ridiculous since the Mooney case turned into a triumph for the bourgeoisie and the opportunists. When the whole affair is examined from every angle, it is clear that at the present historical juncture the only positive action in which revolutionaries can engage in regard to the Mooney case is to expose to the advanced workers the character of the opportunist forces which gave the bourgeoisie the upper hand. Any activity other than exposure of the opportunists and winning advanced workers away from them on this basis inevitably works in the interests of the opportunist traitors and the bourgeoisie.

Due to the influence of the opportunists over the proletarian vanguard, the whole Mooney case was poisoned with treachery. All the thousands of workers who were interested in fighting for Mooney were trapped and sold out by the opportunist leaders. In this situation, to fight for Mooney could mean only to tear down the political mask of the Stalinist and other opportunists which enables them to win over the most advanced section of the working class.

This could not be done by competing with the great opportunist organizations along "mass line" action. It is childish for a small group to try to compete with the opportunists who command huge and powerful forces. The Stalinist and other influential opportunists can win workers even without actually getting them any gains. Opportunism does not win the workers gains; it gets them losses. And still, the opportunists trap the most advanced section of the proletariat. It is their political mask — Bolshevism, Socialism, Communism — which lures the vanguard workers into the opportunists' trap. Because of this political mask, the workers in crucial situations are willing to accept losses at the

hands of the opportunists. In Spain, for example, the workers and peasants, at the urging of their opportunist leaders, Stalinist and others, surrendered the factories and lands they had seized. The small groups we have been discussing seem to imagine that opportunism traps the workers by getting them some benefits. Hence, these small groups set about to compete with the opportunists by "mass line" action. We'll get the workers more gains than the opportunists get them and the workers will come to us, the "mass liners" seem to reason. But this reasoning is utterly baseless. What opportunism gets the workers is one kick in the face after another, and still the workers follow the opportunists. Therefore, there is no foundation for a small group's competing with the opportunists through "mass" activity. Opportunism traps the advanced workers (and hence the toilers as a whole) because it wears the mask of Bolshevism or Socialism. The struggle against opportunism cannot be waged on economist, "mass line" grounds. This battle must be waged on a wholly political basis. The aim must be to tear the mask of Bolshevism and Socialism from the face of the opportunists, and primarily the mask of Bolshevism from the face of the Stalinist and Trotskyist bureaucrats. One may shout against capitalism from today until doomsday and "storm the heavens" — (like the Oshlerites) — till the cows come home, but as long as the opportunists can foster the illusion that they are Bolsheviks and Socialists, the workers will follow the opportunists and even accept losses — ("temporary", of course, their treacherous leaders tell them) — at their hands.

Because of the opportunists, and primarily the Stalinist gang, the whole toiling humanity is being held in the prison of capitalism or of the Stalinist bureaucracy that strangles the first workers state. Undermining the workers state in Russia and saving the bourgeoisie in the rest of the world, the Stalinist clique with its opportunist co-workers of every shade has

brought ~~the~~ workers and peasants throughout the world to an indescribably calamitous condition. Most of the countries are already under some form of fascist or military dictatorship. In this period, the "democracies", and in the first instance France, are moving to transform their rule to the fascist variety. The Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern crushing the Leninist trend in the working class has left the toilers bound hand and foot before the triumphant march of bourgeois reaction.

The task of the hour is to revive Marxism-Leninism as a vital force in the proletariat and to rally the proletarian vanguard into a new revolutionary party and international. But not the mechanical "Marxism" of the "mass liners", which resolves itself into abstract cries against capitalism in general, can accomplish this task. Nor will the pseudo-Marxism of the Trotskyite and Lovestoneite leaders, who conceal their treacherous role as assistants to Stalin beneath a mass of quotations from Marx-Engels-Lenin, perform this duty. Only living Marxism which tears to pieces every kind of opportunism, and primarily the Stalinist brand, will turn the tide and will lead the toilers to a socialist society. Alert workers will not let themselves be confused by the Stalinists, Trotskyists and the Left Trotskyist "mass liners" into accepting defeat for victory. They will look reality in the face and try to understand the reasons for the constant defeats of the workers. Advanced workers will reject all those who paint a false, though for a moment comforting, picture of reality as opportunist misleaders. Knowing that only a truthful analysis of reality can be of service to the toilers, vanguard workers will seek those who offer truth.

Enter the struggle to build a new revolutionary Party as a step toward international revolution and socialism.

JOIN THE LENINIST LEAGUE

A PROGRAMMATIC OUTLINE

By J. C. Hunter

I. The General Task

1. Due to the rise of the Stalinist reaction, the workingclass in the present historical period faces the complete collapse of Marxism-Leninism as a living force. The creation of a new Leninist international requires the restoration of all the revolutionary principles established by Marx and Engels and carried into effect successfully by the October Revolution under the leadership of Lenin.

2. The creation of a new Leninist international can be accomplished only in the process of exposing and destroying all the forms of opportunism which today paralyze the proletariat and keep it in bondage to the bourgeoisie. Since the vanguard of the proletariat is in the toils of opportunism, the building of a new Leninist international has as its basic task the winning of the proletarian vanguard away from the opportunists. Any attempt to turn away from the vanguard under the guise of going to the backward masses ("mass line") while the vanguard is poisoned by opportunism is itself a form of opportunism. The way to the masses is through the class-conscious advanced section of the workingclass.

3. The struggle against opportunism has as a basic prerequisite a precise analysis of every form of present-day opportunism and the establishment of its true character and method of operation.

II. The Character of Present-Day

O p p o r t u n i s m

1. The most dangerous and potent form of present-day opportunism is Stalinism. This treacherous force origin-

ated in the plot of Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev illegally to entrench themselves in power in the Russian Communist Party and the State, and to make their power permanent. The criminal path of these opportunists started with a break with the Bolshevik organizational principle of democratic centralism and the adoption of bureaucratic centralism as a method of operation. The removal of Lenin from active political life by illness and death and the cooperation of Trotsky, Radek and the rest of the leaders of the Russian C.P. with the Stalinist clique led to the triumph of Stalinism. Stalin and his henchmen recognized that international proletarian revolution would not tolerate the existence of any oppression of the masses and hence would most certainly destroy the Stalinist bureaucratic distortion of the first workers state. Hence the Stalinist clique from its very beginning (1921-1922) embarked on a path of preventing proletarian revolution. This it has been doing through the "Comintern" ultra-rightist and ultra-leftist zigzags. In the Rightist zigzag it binds the toilers to the bourgeoisie by means of a line which supports the "democratic" form of bourgeois rule in the advanced countries and the national bourgeoisie in the backward colonial countries. At the same time it openly collaborates with the social-democratic leaders by entering into agreements with them to work together in carrying out the Rightist line of supporting bourgeois democracy. In the ~~Rightist~~ zigzag, Stalinism plunges the workers into supporting bourgeois democracy. In the Leftist zigzag, Stalinism plunges the workers into adventurist, putschist battles with the bourgeoisie, and into suicidal struggles with the social-democratic and other workers whose organizations it now stigmatizes as

social-fascist and fascist. Stalinism began by using the Rightist zigzag (1922-1923, Bulgaria, Germany); this was followed by the Leftist zigzag (1923-1924, Germany, Esthonia); then by the Rightist zigzag (1925-1928, England, China); again by the Leftist zigzag (1929-1934, Germany, Austria, Spain); and further by the Rightist zigzag (Popular Frontism, — Spain, France, Czechoslovakia) of 1935 to the present. When the disastrous results of the present Rightist zigzag, Popular Frontism, will become obvious to workers, Stalinism will have to abandon it and resort to some form of the Leftist zigzag as a means of covering up the previous betrayals and of continuing diverting the workers from revolutionary channels. Since Stalinism is mistaken for a revolutionary tendency because of the prestige of the October Revolution which it has fraudulently appropriated, the most radical section of the proletariat is prone to fall into this opportunist trap, especially during revolutionary crises. Hence, Stalinism stands as the chief opportunist menace in the proletarian ranks and its destruction in at least one important country is an absolutely essential prerequisite to the launching of the world proletarian revolution which alone can lead humanity to a socialist society.

2. Several opportunist currents alive today are a product of the Stalinist degeneration of the Russian C.P. leadership. Chief amongst them is present-day Trotskyism. The origin of Trotsky's present-day opportunism is twofold: first, it arose in 1922 basically from Trotsky's effort to cooperate and establish friendly relations with the Stalinist clique. This anti-Leninist line is manifested in Trotsky's initial resistance to Lenin's campaign to remove Stalin from the position of General Secretary of the Party. "I am against removing Stalin," proclaimed Trotsky (*My Life*, p. 486). It is further manifested in its initial form by Trotsky's denial of the existence of Lenin's "Testament" wherein the proposal of Lenin to remove Stalin is set forth. ("All talk with regard to a concealed or mutilated 'will' is nothing but a despicable lie." L. Trotsky,

International Press Correspondence, Sept. 3, 1925, p. 1005). Secondly, Trotsky's present-day opportunism originates in Stalin's rejection of Trotsky's offer of friendship, a rejection based on Stalin's need to eliminate Trotsky, the most popular figure next to Lenin, and establish scapegoats to serve as smokescreens for his crimes. Up to 1933, Trotsky gave direct support to Stalin, considering himself a fraction of the Stalinist "Party." In 1934, Trotsky, abandoning the Leninist position on social-democracy, attached his followers to this opportunist current (French Turn, and more recently even further to the Right, support of the American Labor Party). Trotsky's launching of his "Fourth International" only serves to divert his victims from an understanding of his treacherous role and from the task of destroying all opportunist forces including the Trotskyist variety. Trotsky consciously avoids exposing the truth about the rise of Stalinism, for in doing so he would have to expose his own connivance with Stalin.

3. There are various small groups (Oehler, Stamm, Field, Mienov) which, not giving a clear picture of Stalinism and Trotskyism, avoid the struggle against opportunism by launching a "mass line" which diverts workers influenced by them from the vanguard of the proletariat since the latter is in the hands of the chief opportunist forces, Stalinism, Social Democracy, Trotskyism. Some of these groups, moreover, have adopted or are moving toward the position of denying that the Soviet Union is a workers state and of calling for its defeat. In this they play directly into the hands of imperialism which recognizes that the socialized economy of Russia, though being undermined by Stalinism, has not yet been abolished and which hence prepares for an attack on the workers state in the near future.

4. Another product of the Stalinist degeneration of the Russian C.P. leadership is the so-called International Communist Opposition of Brandler-Thalheimer-Lovestone. Originating as the open and direct lieutenants of Stalin

in the earlier stages of the Stalinist process, these opportunists now stand as part of the large group of scapegoats cast off by Stalin after they had outlived their usefulness. Brandler and Thalheimer carried out the first Stalinist ultra-Right zigzag, that in Germany in 1922-1923, and were cast off by their master and left to hover around the Stalinist movement in the shape of a "loyal opposition." Lovestone in America served Stalin as the executor of the Rightist zigzag of 1925-1928 and even began to carry out the Leftist line of Social-Fascism. Later, in the process of greater centralization of Stalin's power in the C.I., Lovestone was thrown out of office by Stalin and left stranded in the same position as Brandler and Thalheimer. These opportunists, now, like the Trotskyists, tend to lean increasingly towards the Social Democracy and other forms of reformist treachery (support of the American Labor Party, of Pivert in France, etc.)

5. The comparative smallness of the tendencies which originated as part of the Stalinist degeneration and as cast-offs from Trotsky should not be construed as unimportant. These tendencies are a menace to the proletariat at far in excess of their numerical size or immediate influence. The reason for this is that radical workers who become disillusioned with Stalinism and Trotskyism drift willy-nilly into these movements which appear to be anti-Stalinist and anti-Trotskyist. Hence the most radical section of the proletariat which breaks with Stalinism and Trotskyism is only misled into another form of opportunism. Not only must Stalinism itself be destroyed but also all of its opportunist by-products, direct and indirect, for, historically, they are an organic part of the Stalinist system.

6. Social Democracy is still a powerful opportunist force. It operates by tying the workers to the "democratic" variety of bourgeois rule. Since the world bourgeoisie is now in the process of transforming its "democratic" dictatorship to Fascist rule, Social Democracy only clears the road for this transformation. Stalinism since 1922

has served as the main stabilizer of Social Democracy, whose collapse the October Revolution initiated on an international scale. The Stalinist reaction stabilizes Social Democracy in two ways: 1. by the Rightist zigzag in which the Stalinist bureaucrats work hand-in-glove with the Social-Democratic bureaucrats and 2. by the Leftist zigzag in which, identifying the petty-bourgeois/democratic socialist movement with Fascism, the Stalinist bureaucrats launch ferocious adventurist assaults on Social Democracy and so increase the distrust of the Social-Democratic workers for Communism which they mistakenly identify with Stalinism.

7. Anarchism, beginning with its ultra-Leftist position of opposing all forms of the State invariably ends up with supporting the bourgeois variety of the State. The events in Spain during the Civil War, in which the Anarchists supported and participated in the Stalinist-inspired, treacherous Loyalist government, only confirms this analysis. Anarchism represents a petty-bourgeois reactionary tendency which in its theory is ultra-Leftist and in its practice supports the bourgeoisie.

III. The Day-to-Day Struggle for the New Leninist International

1. The first premise of the day-to-day struggle for the new Leninist international is an unequivocal break, ideologically and organizationally, with every form of opportunism.

2. In the details of the task of building a new Party and International self-clarification on the part of individuals stands today as the primary phase. Careful study of the various opportunist tendencies which exist, to determine scientifically their origin, nature and method of operation is part of this initial phase. The spread of this basic knowledge amongst the most advanced individuals that can be contacted is the next step. On the basis of such work a small Marxist group will be crystallized. The approach of this group will be to the most polit-

ically mature section of the vanguard which is now under the domination of the opportunists, and primarily of Stalinism. Lectures, forums, debates, symposia, regular educational meetings, distribution of literature in neighborhoods where vanguard workers are known to congregate, etc., constitute the most feasible methods of approach at this stage to the advanced workers which the Marxists will have to win over. The pressure of events and the disasters which befall the workers almost daily due to the treacheries of the Stalinists, Social Democrats and other opportunists — (Czechoslovakia, France, Spain) — are forcing vanguard workers to re-examine their political positions. Such workers will welcome to an ever-increasing degree the exposure which the true Marxists will have to offer. As the growth of the revolutionary group provides the requisite forces, greater and greater tasks will be tackled. Meetings held by the Stalinist bureaucrats and other traitors will be directly entered in full force, and the opportunists will be exposed before their own followers. When the Marxist force begins to take on the proportions of a political party, mass organizations, trade unions, fraternal and cultural organizations, now dominated by the opportunists, will become concentration points of activity with the aim of wresting them

from the opportunists. In this way, in the process of destroying opportunism, will the new revolutionary Party and International be created. All other paths are illusory, adventurist and misleading, playing into the hands of Stalinism, Social Democracy and other opportunist movements. To attempt to approach the backward masses of the workers directly while the vanguard is in the clutches of opportunism is itself only a form of opportunism. The backward masses can be approached only by a political party and the latter can be built by Marxists only out of the vanguard of the proletariat. Hence the approach to the masses is through the vanguard which must be freed from its present enslavement to opportunism.

3. The destruction of Social Democracy in Russia by Bolshovism opened the epoch of the destruction of Social Democracy on an international scale. The destruction of Stalinism in at least one important country will form the necessary breach in Stalinism internationally without which the bourgeoisie cannot be overthrown. Through this path alone lies the way to the saving of the remnants of October, to the international proletarian revolution, the destruction of world capitalism, and the establishment of a socialist society.

R E A D

STALIN TROTSKY OR LENIN

by George Marlen

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TROTSKY'S ROLE AS AID TO STALINISM
THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT TODAY

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* * *

Dear Comrade W:

Lenin never failed to point out clearly that one of the chief reasons why the October Revolution was made possible was because Bolshevism never ceased exposing the opportunists in the working class ranks.

The building of a revolutionary party can in the present period be accomplished only in terms of liberating the proletarian vanguard from every form of opportunist influence. Only in the process of destroying all opportunist forces will the new revolutionary party be created. This task requires a precise analysis of each political tendency in the working class ranks to determine its origin, nature and method of operation. To avoid in any way this task of establishing the character of every species of opportunism and of combatting it uncompromisingly is in itself a form of opportunism, in fact, as we shall see, one of the major types of present-day opportunism.

Long ago it was recognized by Lenin that in the historical period in which we live the proletariat is plagued with the cancer of opportunism in the form of conscious traitors to the workers and of agents of the bourgeoisie who pose as labor leaders. These opportunists constitute the chief bearers of bourgeois influence in the body of the proletariat and serve therein as the chief link in the chain binding the working class to its capitalist oppressors. Since the destruction of all forms of bourgeois influence is a basic prerequisite to the establishment of proletarian power, Lenin framed his entire struggle for the building of a revolutionary international in terms of a battle against the opportunism of his day. At the

historic Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920, Lenin defined opportunism as the principal enemy in the proletarian ranks and the struggle against it as the main task:

"Opportunism is our principal enemy. Opportunism in the upper ranks of the working class movement is not proletarian socialism, but bourgeois socialism. Practice has shown that the active people in the working class movement who adhere to the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie, than the bourgeoisie itself. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not have remained in power.....This is where our principal enemy is; and we must conquer this enemy. We must leave this congress with the firm determination to carry this struggle on to the very end in all parties. This is our main task." (V. I. Lenin, Selected Works, Eng. Ed., Vol. X, p. 196. Our emphasis.)

Without a break with opportunism, it is impossible to rise above the level of a mere repeater of phrases:

"It is not enough to have learned Communist resolutions by heart and to use revolutionary phrases on every possible occasion. That is not enough, and we are opposed beforehand to Communists who know this or that resolution by heart. The first condition of true Communism is rupture with opportunism." (Ibid., p. 275. Our emphasis.)

The success of the revolutionary movement hinges upon a victory over opportunism, for without such a victory the idea of proletarian dictatorship is a

hopeless one:

"One of the essential conditions for preparing the proletariat for victory is a prolonged, persistent and ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism, and similar bourgeois influences and tendencies, which are inevitable as long as the proletariat acts under capitalist conditions. Unless such a struggle is fought, and unless a complete victory over opportunism within the working class movement is preliminarily gained, there can be no hope for the dictatorship of the proletariat." (V.I. Lenin, Selected Works, English Edition, Vol. VI, pp. 484-485.)

Guided by reality and not by comfortable illusions, Lenin understood that only a minority of the workers can be genuinely class-conscious while capitalism exists. This minority constitutes the vanguard of the proletariat, that section which actively participates in the work of political parties that call themselves proletarian. Only this vanguard can lead the working class as a whole:

"As a matter of fact, in the epoch of capitalism, when the masses of the workers are constantly subjected to exploitation and cannot develop their human faculties, the most characteristic feature of working class political parties is that they can embrace only a minority of their class. Political parties can organize only a minority of the class in the same way as the really class-conscious workers in capitalist society can constitute only a minority of all the workers. That is why we must admit that only this class-conscious minority can lead the broad masses of the workers." (V. I. Lenin, Selected Works, Eng. Ed., Vol. X, p. 214.)

Hence Lenin, while capitalism existed, addressed himself primarily to the vanguard and not to the backward masses of the proletariat. Lenin conceived the task of Marxists to be first and foremost the winning of the vanguard to a Marxist position, for it is

only through the vanguard that Marxism can be brought to the backward masses of the toilers. And while the vanguard of the proletariat is in the toils of opportunism, the duty of Marxists is to destroy the influence of the opportunists over the vanguard, for

"Unless the revolutionary section of the proletariat is thoroughly and seriously trained to eject and suppress opportunism it is absurd even to think of a dictatorship of the proletariat." (V.I. Lenin, Selected Works, Eng. Ed. Vol. VI, p. 486. Emphasis in the original.)

Naturally, Lenin concentrated the main attack and exposure against the strongest and most dangerous enemy within the workers' ranks at that time — Social Democracy ("Kautskyism").

Why did Lenin concentrate on Social Democracy? Why didn't he fill most of his books with direct attacks on capitalism? Didn't Lenin want to fight capitalism? Didn't he realize that imperialism oppresses the toilers of the whole world? We see that Lenin understood the nature of imperialism and led its destruction in Russia. However, before this could be accomplished, the advanced workers had to be freed from their opportunist leadership by the exposure of its treachery. It must be pointed out to these vanguard workers that only by breaking with opportunism of every variety can the path be cleared for the proletarian revolution.

"It is impossible to carry out the tasks of Socialism at the present time, it is impossible to accomplish a really international unification of the workers without radically breaking with opportunism and without making clear to the masses the inevitability of its fiasco." (V. I. Lenin, "The War and the Second International," p. 61.)

*

THE MOST POWERFUL OPPORTUNIST FORCE IN
THE PROLETARIAN RANKS — STALINISM

The most powerful and most dan-

gerous opportunist force operating within the proletarian ranks since 1922 is Stalinism. This is true because Stalinism operates behind the mask of Leninism and has tremendous prestige among the world proletariat because it controls the first workers' state. Confusing Stalinism with communism, leftward-moving, politically advanced workers flock to the "Communist Party" Past events have shown us that even if the Stalinist Party in a country may be small at the moment, it grows at a tremendous rate in a pre-revolutionary period. The workers join the Third International because they still have the illusion that its aim is the same as it was under Lenin and that it will effect a revolution. If a successful proletarian revolution were achieved in an advanced country, it would set the world afire and be the signal for similar uprisings throughout the world. Successful revolution would sweep away all oppressors, both the world bourgeoisie and the Stalinist bureaucracy. To prevent proletarian revolution in order to safeguard the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, Stalin gives his Comintern an ultra-left "line" or an ultra-right "line". In 1923 the ultra-right zigzag of the C. I. prevented revolution in Germany and Bulgaria; in 1924 the ultra-left zigzag was used for a putsch in Esthonia; from 1925-1928 the ultra-right zigzag was employed in England and China; from 1929-1934 Stalin through the ultra-left zigzag prevented revolution in Germany and Spain; from 1935 to the present an ultra-right zigzag — Spain, Czechoslovakia, France, China.

After a section of the proletariat has been betrayed by Stalin, let us say with an ultra-left course (Germany, 1933) the ultra-right course is slowly introduced in order to cover up the ultra-left betrayal. If no Marxist force arises, then, after the betrayal of the Spanish and the French proletariat will be completed, and the present ultra-right "line" will have served its purpose, the C. I. will introduce, slowly and cautiously, the ultra-left "Line" which will be used until another section of the proletariat will have been betrayed into

Fascism—if Stalinism lasts that long.

Essentially both maneuvers achieve the objective of Stalin — to prevent proletarian revolution. Stalinism is neither reformist, centrist, ultra-rightist, nor ultra-leftist. It is a counter-revolutionary opportunist force. It is bureaucratic centralism of the workers State. Only those who do not see Stalinism as a whole define it as reformism, centrism, ultra-leftism, etc. Thus, those who see only the present ultra-right zigzag but forget about the past ultra-left zigzag, call Stalinism reformism. Those who do not see the rightist zigzag call Stalinism ultra-leftism. Nor does the term Centrism correspond to the totality of the essence of Stalinism. Centrism is a tendency in the working class within the capitalist countries which vacillates between Marxism and reformism, but under increasing pressure of events collapses into rightism. Stalinism, on the other hand, is a tendency which grows on the soil of a workers state and, to prevent revolution, plunges the workers into leftist and rightist zigzags whose extremes far exceed anything ever manifested by Centrism. Centrism, in its lurching to the left, never engaged in putschism, as Stalinism does, while in its lurching to the right, Centrism never indulged in the open, undisguised, rabid jingoism shown by Stalinism today. The historical roots of Stalinism which lie buried in the growth of a bureaucratic cancer on the body of a workers state are what make it different from Centrism, the latter originating in a labor aristocracy in capitalist society. To lump together tendencies whose historical basis and manner of operation are different can only cause confusion. Those who define Stalinism as Centrism see only the zigzags. They fail to see or to point out that the ultra-left and ultra-right "lines" have in essence, the same purpose — the prevention of revolution. They differ only in their surface features, i.e., as maneuvers they are different; their intent, however, is the same.

*

ON BUILDING A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

When you say that we have "the

position of destroying Stalinism first and then building a Marxist party" you do not state our position correctly. We maintain, as pointed out above, that the vanguard of the proletariat is within the camp of or under the influence of the opportunists — Stalinist, Trotskyist, Social-Democratic, Lovestoneite, etc. It is necessary to destroy the influence of these opportunist leaders by exposing their counter-revolutionary past and present political activities for only in that way is it possible to build a Marxist party. It is not a question of our personal choice in the matter. We do not say that we do not want to build a revolutionary party before Stalinism is destroyed but rather that it is not possible to build a revolutionary party without unmasking Stalinism and the other opportunists within the ranks of labor. It is a simultaneous process. Only during the process of winning over the vanguard from the opportunists by means of complete exposures can a revolutionary party be built. The chief reason why no Marxist party has arisen since the degeneration of the Bolshevik party in Russia which started in 1921, is that not one of the existing "opposition" tendencies have concerned itself with the Leninist policy of genuine exposure — genuine exposure especially of the most powerful and most dangerous force in the proletarian ranks — Stalinism. Trotsky and Lovestone are directly involved in the rise and growth of Stalinism and hence, by exposing the whole truth about Stalin and the bureaucracy, they would have to tell the workers about the assistance they gave Stalin. To do this obviously would mean political suicide for these conscious opportunists.

The second reason why the pseudo-Marxist organizations do not concern themselves with exposure of the opportunists is that they (Marxist Workers League, League for a Revolutionary Workers Party, Revolutionary Workers League, Revolutionary Communist Vanguard, etc.) either do not understand, or consciously avoid the Leninist tactic of genuine, consistent exposure. Their "exposures" consist of superficial "criticism" which does not expose

nor does it aid the workers to understand the rise of, nature, and method of operation of any of the opportunist forces, especially Stalinism.

*
"GOING TO THE MASSES"

Since all these pseudo-Marxist organizations avoid the task of exposing the chief enemy within the workers ranks — Stalinism — they have only one other path left. That path is — avoid the real struggle against opportunism and go to the masses. They all "go to the masses", (whom they have no means of reaching), the politically backward masses, and preach the A B C of anti-capitalism to them.

Obviously, every task undertaken must fit the means one possesses to carry it out. For a group consisting of a handful of people to undertake tasks which can be carried out only by a political party is adventurism. If we are to be guided by the requirements of reality and not by wishful thinking, at each stage of our development our objectives must be within our means of fulfillment. When we are still a handful we can only engage in individual contact work with the most advanced workers. As we grow larger we undertake larger tasks. Real mass work such as work in the trade unions, fraternal organizations, cultural organizations, etc., which can be undertaken organizationally as a programmatic concentration point requires means possessed by an organization having the size of a political party. During the process of reaching such a stage, however, we are forced to restrict our activity to more modest tasks. Naturally, though today our organizational work is of a purely propagandistic, individual-contact sort, we do not exclude the participation of our members in various mass organizations. In these mass organizations our members endeavor to make contacts with the most advanced elements and to win them over to our point of view. Such individual participation in mass organizations by members of our group in no way conflicts with our programmatic position that today to attempt mass work organizationally is adventurism.

WHAT IS A "MARXIST POSITION"?

Since very many of the advanced workers do not completely understand Marx, Engels and Lenin it is difficult for those workers to see just where and how their own opportunist organizations differ from scientific socialism and therefore actually play into the hands of the bourgeoisie. Therefore it is of great importance to restudy, reevaluate one's position in the light of what the three great founders of modern revolutionary theory and practice actually said and did.

You say that the Oehler position "is Marxist in that it has the correct position on Democratic Centralism the building of a party....." You seem to hold the idea that if an organization has one, two, or perhaps three correct positions it is Marxist. If that is the case then there are any number of parties or organizations in the field today which, according to your definition, should be labelled Marxist. This is a fallacy of a dangerous sort. In the present stage of history with the vast amount of material evidence and precedent available to those who are serious in examining the role played by all the parties in the Russian Revolution and since October, we see that unless an organization holds to Marxist principles on every question and at all times it will end up in the camp of the counter-revolution. Take the example of the Left-S.R.'s in Russia. This party accepted virtually every position of the Bolsheviks but in essence remained petty-bourgeois nationalist. On the question of Brest-Litovsk, these Left S.R.'s showed their basic petty-bourgeois nature which abhors internationalism, by not only opposing the peace but by actually going over to the counter-revolution against the proletarian State. The result of this "slight" and seemingly unimportant mistake on Lenin's part in allowing the Left-S.R.'s to enter the Bolshevik government was that the Russian Revolution was almost destroyed by the Left S.R.'s.

You state further that Oehler's position is very close to ours on the question of Stalinism. This is not

true. In the February 1938 issue of the Fourth International, organ of the Revolutionary Workers League of U.S. (Oehlerites) there appears on page 9 an article on the "Russian Question". This "analysis" does not tell the workers the whole truth about Stalinism. In fact there are false "theories" taken from Trotsky in this "expose". It states, for one, that the Moscow and later the Left Opposition put up a struggle against the reactionary developments in the S.U. This is not true. Trotsky, the leader of the "Opposition" not only did not fight against the bureaucracy but actually supported it as he objectively does to this day by not uncovering the real nature of the degeneration of the party leadership (See IN DEFENSE OF BOLSHEVISM #3). *

Further, the article states that his "struggle" culminated in, among other things, "the endorsement and adoption of nationalism and revisionism as the program of the C.I. and the Soviet State at the Sixth World Congress of the C.I. by the adoption of the theory of Socialism in one country." This is a Trotskyist explanation and hides the fact that in 1921 three years before this "theory" of Socialism in one country was introduced by Stalin the degeneration of the first workers state had already begun on the basis of bureaucratic centralism of power in the hands of Stalin. Lenin, in 1922 had prepared a "bomb" against Stalin which was entrusted to Trotsky who was supposed to carry out Lenin's line against Stalin. But Trotsky betrayed Lenin and made a deal with the bureaucracy. Oehler completely covers up this fact by not exposing it.

The R.W.L.'s definition "Stalinism as a movement in the ranks of the international proletariat is a new historic form of reformism" is incorrect and confusing. This definition sounds impressive but means nothing — it is not explained. Stalinism is not reformism (new or old), not centrism,

*A book containing a complete political expose of Trotsky is being completed by George Marlen.

not ultra-rightism, nor ultra-leftism. Stalinism is a counter-revolutionary opportunist force; it is bureaucratic centralism of the workers state. We emphasize that the Stalinist bureaucracy uses the C.I. primarily for one purpose — to prevent revolution.

We say that the main danger within the working class, no matter in what country, is Stalinism. As we have shown, and as history proves, Stalinism, mistaken by the workers for communism, grows at a tremendous pace in a country approaching a revolutionary crisis. Therefore, in order to prevent workers from going to the Stalinist camp, every class-conscious, politically advanced worker must be told the whole true story of Stalinism. Only then will he understand Stalinism and not be misled into joining it or giving it support directly or indirectly.

You support Oehler's position that the main danger in the U.S. at present is reformism. In the same issue of The Fourth International of the R.W.L. quoted above we read on page 13 that the C.P.U.S.A. as well as the S.P.U.S.A. are "social-reformists."

"Next and more important are the social-reformists. They are for a 'socialist' solution, but map out a road, in one form or another, of peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism, and thereby end up with the support of the capitalist state and against the proletarian revolution. The social-reformists in the United States are represented by such parties and men as: The Socialist Party and Norman Thomas and the Communist Party (sic!) and Earl Browder.

"Reformism (and social-reformism) is an instrument of the bourgeoisie in the camp of the working class." (The Fourth International, February 1938, p. 13.)

This kind of "exposure" is confusion and distortion of the worst kind. First, by saying that the C.P.U.S.A. is "social-reformist" and "they are for 'socialist' solution" it is clear that Oehler doesn't under-

stand the nature of Stalinism. He is fooled by their verbal utterances. There is an element of Trotskyism in this "analysis". Trotsky says that the Kremlin bureaucrats are ignorant, don't understand French, make errors, are narrow-minded, etc. etc., hence covering up the fact that Stalin and the bureaucracy are capable and know Marxism-Leninism but are consciously preventing revolution. When Oehler says that the Stalinists are for a socialist solution by way of a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism he is, in fact, saying that the Stalinists do not know that a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism is impossible, that it is a social-democratic fraud. The truth of the matter is that the Stalinists are interested in one thing chiefly and that is the prevention of proletarian revolution to safeguard the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

Another point in the above quotation is that Oehler sees, and even then sees badly, only the ultra-right period of Stalinism. He completely ignores the "line" of the Stalinists in the ultra-left periods. At present, on glancing at the "line" superficially, it would seem that the Stalinists are for peaceful, class-collaboration with the bourgeoisie. In the ultra-left period, however, on superficial examination it actually looked as if the Stalinists were yelling bloody murder against the bourgeoisie, for the forcible overthrow of capitalism. Such tactics fool not only the Oehlerite workers but the workers of every other opportunist organization which has failed to examine the truth. Whether the Stalinists use ultra-left or ultra-right tactics the primary object in both is to prevent proletarian revolution. One "line" is used to cover up the other. Remember that the primary object of Stalin is to prevent revolution. Only incidentally as a result does he thus aid the bourgeoisie. His tactics are an outgrowth of the needs of himself and the bureaucracy and not an outgrowth of the needs of the world bourgeoisie.

By inference Oehler says that the Communist Party U.S., being social-re-

formist, is an instrument of the bourgeoisie. This means that the various Stalinist Parties are serving each national bourgeoisie directly as does the Social Democracy. Nothing is further from the truth. The sections of the C.I., take orders only from Stalin. The bourgeoisie hasn't a word to say in the entire matter. By lumping the Stalinists in with the S. P. the advanced workers are not shown the tremendous difference between these two. The Socialist Parties, as was constantly pointed out by Lenin, are direct agents of the bourgeoisie operating in the proletarian ranks. These S. P. leaders do take their orders from the bourgeoisie, but the Stalinists are subservient only to Stalin. You see, therefore, that by such an "understanding" of Stalinism you can never expose it. It will continue to operate at full force. You must understand that which you are trying to expose. Merely throwing words around, even if they sound impressive, only blinds the workers and plays directly into the hands of the opportunists and the bourgeoisie.

With regard to Spain you have the same position as Oehler's. You say that if your line had succeeded in Spain and a workers government set up this would have been a greater blow to

Stalinism than our line. This statement might be made by any and every opportunist organization calling itself proletarian and yet proves nothing. We say, however, that without unmasking the chief opportunist force in the Spanish workers ranks (as well as in other countries) — Stalinism, no organization could have, can, or will be able to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. (See our Bulletin IN DEFENSE OF BOLSHEVISM Vol. 1, #5, on S P A I N.)

In conclusion we say again that only by exposing every form of opportunism in the workers ranks on the basis of a thorough and honest examination of the past and present, without leaving out anything and telling the politically advanced workers the whole truth can a revolutionary party be built consistig of the vanguard of the proletariat who will lead the rest of the proletariat in a successful assault against capitalism and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Comradely,

THE LENINIST LEAGUE, U.S.A.

A NEW LEFT-TROTSKYIST GROUP

(Cont'd from p. 14)

divert the workers from the struggle against the Stalinist reaction.

The true political face of the group is presented to the workers in the following statement:

"The Communist Workers Group stands on the line of the first and second conventions of the Revolutionary Workers League (Which includes endorsement of the line of the first four congresses of the Communist International)." (Ibid.)

The Fourth Congress was fundamentally a Stalinist assembly. Lenin, whom the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev clique

urged to stay away altogether (see Zinoviev's remark in the Communist International, #2. p.16), attended only one session, the eighth. He was near collapse when he had delivered his brief speech dealing almost exclusively with the question of the NEP. At this Stalinist gathering, Zinoviev, behind a cloud of "Bolshevik" phrases, handed down to the international Brandlers the anti-Leninist line of coalition government with Social Democracy. To fool the revolutionary workers, Zinoviev and his partners gave such coalition government the Bolshevik-sounding name: "Workers Government." In speeches and writings, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Trotsky, and other leaders of the

Comintern, knowing from Lenin's writings and their own experience that there can be no middle between a bourgeois dictatorship and a proletarian dictatorship, hailed the line of the Fourth Congress as a Leninist line. They lied to the workers that the "Workers Government," in reality a masked capitalist machine for disrupting proletarian revolution, was to be a stage towards proletarian dictatorship. It was precisely such government, formed by the Stalinist puppet Brandler with the German Social Democrats and supported by the workers at the instruction of the Comintern, that betrayed the German proletariat in the revolutionary situation in 1923.

The line of the first three congresses of the C.I. which was laid down under the direct guidance of Lenin was clearly and uncompromisingly against every non-Communist government and for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Fourth Congress sharply broke with Leninism when it declared in its resolution:

"....the Communists are prepared, under certain conditions and with certain guarantees, to support a non-Communist workers' government."

In line with this new position of the C.I., the Executive of the Comintern, with Trotsky as one of its most outstanding and influential members, adopted a resolution in which occurs the following opportunist trap, directly borrowed from Menshevism:

"The Workers Government can be established on the basis of EXISTING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS." (Communist International, #25, 1923, p. 110. Our capitals.)

As part of Trotsky's system of safety devices to prevent detection of his collaboration with Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev in disrupting the German and other revolutions, Trotsky, in hazy penned words, "bridges" over the unbridgeable gulf that separates the Leninist line of the first three Con-

gresses of the C.I. ~~from~~ the Stalinist Rightist noose of the Fourth Congress.

"The Third Congress was a great beacon. Its teachings are still vital and fruitful today. The Fourth Congress ONLY CONCRETIZED THESE TEACHINGS." (Leon Trotsky, Third International After Lenin, p. 90. Our capitals.)

Trotsky makes a definite impression that the line of support to a government headed by non-Bolsheviks, invariably agents of capitalism, is Leninist. In the expediency of shielding himself Trotsky unavoidably shields Stalin. He thus adds another political forgery to the long list of deep-rooted distortions and lies regarding the genesis of the Stalinist reaction and his own criminal role in promoting the destruction of Lenin's Bolshevik Party and the Comintern.

One who fastens upon the workers the counter-revolutionary line of the Fourth Congress of the C.I. ties them to Stalinism and Trotskyism. To distort the true character of the line of the Fourth Congress has been the opportunist practice of Cannon, Oehler, Stamm, Field and others. When the Stalinist and the Trotskyist misleaders hide the highly significant facts about the Fourth Congress it is understandable from both points of view. But if one defends the line of the Fourth Congress out of confusion and ignorance he is a victim of these political swindlers. And if he learns the truth and continues stubbornly clinging to the Stalinist-Trotskyist deception about the Fourth Congress he becomes himself a conscious disseminator of deadly lies among the workers.

The newly-born Communist Workers Group stands upon the line of the Fourth Congress, which forms also part of Oehler's basic position. A satellite of Oehler, who in turn is a satellite of Trotsky, the Communist Workers Group is well within the orbit of Stalin's political system.

G.M.