

THE BULLETIN

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FOR A NEW LENINIST INTERNATIONAL

The Present Situation and the Prospects
of the Proletariat

By J. C. HUNTER

Why Is Oehler Silent On Trotsky

By GEORGE MARLEN

An Ultra Leftist Line on Finland
and the U. S. S. R.

The Trotsky School of Falsification



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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

	Page
THE PRESENT SITUATION AND THE PROSPECTS OF THE PROLETARIAT by J. C. Hunter	1
WHY IS OEHLER SILENT ON TROTSKY by George Marlen	15
AN ULTRA-LEFTIST LINE ON FINLAND AND THE U.S.S.R. by D.S.	19
<u>THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION</u> Trotsky and Shachtman vs. History by S. E. Benson	23

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THE PRESENT SITUATION
and the
PROSPECTS OF THE PROLETARIAT

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THE SETTING OF THE HISTORIC STAGE

THE CONFLICT of the capitalists amongst themselves and of the entire international capitalist class against the world proletariat assumes ever-changing forms and from time to time, some quite complex outlines. In the international arena the conflicts amongst the capitalists themselves at times appear in their sharpest form and interfere most profoundly with the battle of the whole world bourgeoisie against the proletariat. In the present imperialist epoch, especially since 1917, this alignment of forces amongst the warring camps has reached the maximum of complexity and deceptiveness.

The year 1917 coincided with the simultaneous presence of the most profound struggle amongst the capitalists on the international front and of the

successful start of the proletarian revolution. The present epoch has been indelibly marked with this historic fact. Both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have been confronted with their class problems in a form unequalled for difficulty and significance. For the bourgeoisie the problem has become first and foremost to crush every vestige of the successful proletarian revolution and at the same time not to lose sight of the inter-imperialist conflicts. For the proletariat the task is to preserve the conquests of its successful revolution and to extend them on a world-wide scale.

To what extent has each class succeeded in carrying out effectively the policies dictated by historic necessity? Which class is ahead in the struggle for victorious domination?

HOW THE BOURGEOISIE IS SOLVING ITS PROBLEMS

The path of the bourgeoisie in the solution of its problems has been an unusually circuitous one. In order to organize a common war front against the remaining conquests of the first successful proletarian revolution, the system of state property in the means of production existing in the Stalinized Soviet Union, the imperialists have had to outflank, so to speak, the international conflicts amongst themselves. This outflanking movement has taken a unique form. It has passed

from an open formation of a common front against what remains of the October Revolution, a front which did not yet contain actual military operations, to the concealed continuation of this front which now does contain the inevitable military assault. Up to the Munich situation, the collusion of the imperialists, primarily the French, British, German and American, in their march against the Stalinized Soviet Union was clear to any realistic observer. This collusion was camouflag-

ed only with the most shallow verbiage and with some mock-military trappings designed to distract the attention of the workers from the machinations of the imperialists. Promises that Hitler would be stopped and the creation of a startling war scare served as the cover of the Munich schemes of the imperialists against the Soviet Union. With the aid of funds primarily from the British and American bankers the war machine of the German imperialists was rapidly revamped and was rushed toward the Soviet border. All who stood in the way of the Eastward march of the Nazi army were crushed by the imperialist united front, with German imperialism as the war arm and Franco-British imperialism as the diplomatic arm. Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland were sacrificed by Franco-British imperialism to the economic, military and political needs of the German war machine. World imperialism opened the door to the East for its German section to the maximum possible extent. As yet, however, within the confines of the Munich situation and its sequel, actual military operations against the Stalinized Soviet Union did not put in their appearance.

At the present moment it seems — (but only to the superficial observer) — that the Anti-Soviet drive of world imperialism has been disrupted. Are not Franco-British and German imperialism locked in mortal combat? Is not that titanic war in the West with huge armies assaulting each other ferociously, with colossal offensives repeatedly carried out, with millions killed and wounded on both sides, with the frightful destruction of hundreds of French, British and German cities, with fortifications pounded and razed to the ground by prodigious bombardments from land and air, with sweeping outflanking movements and the organization of multiple fronts, a clear symptom that the imperialist bandits have fallen out in their effort to organize a common front against the Soviet Union? And what is Stalin's pact with Hitler but a proof that the German imperialists have turned their tail on their former cohorts of Munich days, the Franco-British gang, and have embraced with firm friendship the land holding the property remains of the first successful proletarian revolution?

These "knockout" questions of the superficial observer have to be answered.

The reply to them is contained in the reality which they overlook. In the present "titanic war" in the West everything is peculiarly topsy-turvy. "All quiet on the Western Front" is the phrase best describing this "war." The "mortal combat" amongst the imperialists has a strangely peaceful air at bottom with no ferocious assaults by huge armies, no colossal offensives repeatedly executed, no millions killed and wounded on both sides, no destruction of French, German and British cities, no prodigious bombardments of fortifications, no sweeping flanking movements and no organization of multiple fronts. In view of the prodigious military powers at the command of the imperialists, the "war" in the West is a ghost. It cannot be said to exist even in the verbal sphere, for the chief report from the Western Front is "Nothing to report." The bourgeoisie have not even taken the trouble to fabricate stories of genuine battles on the Western Front. They are quite frank in their unanimous agreement that the "All quiet" sign is still hanging out. Up to the end of 1939, the British managed to lose a grand total of fifteen soldiers, of whom "thirteen were killed in action, one died of wounds and one is missing. Twenty-four have been wounded in battle." (New York Times, Jan. 31, 1940.) The "Second World War," as it is labelled by the opportunists, still has as its greatest danger traffic accidents at home due to the blackouts. There is no denying that the "war" on the traffic front is achieving major proportions. In fact, "The mounting toll, subject of much discussion, has inspired cartoons of British tommies in France congratulating themselves on being safe in the front-line trenches instead of back home where people are getting killed. (Ibid.) In France and Germany, the "titanic war" is having generally similar results.

If one is not aware of the basic policy of the imperialists and the way in which the "peculiar" nature of the "war" in the West flows from it, then he may hit upon all sorts of false ex-

planations for the "All quiet" which pervades the Western Front. He may imagine, for example, that the powerful fortifications erected by the French and German militarists on that front preclude combat of major proportions. In that case, he will overlook several important factors. First, the fact that with increase in defensive power there goes increase in offensive power. Or to put it the more correct way, as the imperialists develop their striking power, they are forced to increase their defensive capacities. The reason that the imperialists have been compelled to erect colossal fortifications on the Western Front is precisely because they have developed offensive power that over a sufficient period of time can batter to pieces any existing defenses. Secondly, the fact that land defenses can be circumvented by the enormous aerial weapons in the imperialists' possession. Only the naive will have the illusion that the imperialists have become too squeamish to deliver aerial bombardments of large open cities like Berlin, Paris and London. The punishment of civilian populations has become a major tactic in modern warfare, despite all the "humanitarian" protestations and denials of the bourgeois military butchers. A basic factor of modern armies is the organization of affairs behind the lines. Hence it is of fundamental necessity to disrupt the civilian cooperation with the armies at the front. Nevertheless, despite the tremendous striking power of the imperialist air fleets, no serious attack on the most important cities of the "combatants" has been attempted and, as a matter of fact, the chief occupation of the imperialists in this respect has been vigorously to deny that any such attack is even contemplated. Thirdly, even if it were to be granted that the fortifications on the Western Front preclude major operations, how is the remarkably peaceful air of such small doings as have occurred there to be accounted for? An outstanding feature of imperialist war is the ferocious spirit, the bloodthirsty urge which the propagandists whoop up. By means of every tactic conceivable, from the simplest and most plausible

to the most intricate and incredible, the imperialists when they really mean to defeat the enemy, egg on the masses, civilian and soldier. In not one of the "warring" countries is there anything that even remotely resembles an effort to whip up a war spirit. At the front, a perfectly "Alphonse-Gaston" air prevails. In a recent statement to the press, a German army officer gave the following description of how the German soldiers are made to conduct the "war":

"At fixed hours firing starts. We count the number of shots fired from French guns and reply with the same number: Not one more." (New York Post, January 31, 1940.)

It is true that the Germans have been noted for their mathematical precision. But the reasonable reader will easily perceive that there is something positively fantastic about this book-keeper's "warfare." The well-known French politeness has permeated the German soldiers, as the description by this officer reveals:

"We know the French observation posts and they know ours, but none of us fires on them." (Ibid.)

The French army is dominated by a veritable motherly spirit; fair play is all the rage in the Maginot Line, the German officer admits:

"We were fired on when we wore steel helmets, but not when we wore ordinary caps." (Ibid.)

French territory is a bountiful garden wherein the German soldiers gather rich fruits under the benevolent eye of the enemy:

"In our sector we gather fruit and potatoes with trucks in French territory." (Ibid.)

This pastime is made perfectly safe by the simple expedient of wearing ordinary caps instead of helmets. Small wonder that the soldiers prefer to be in the front-line trenches where one is free of mortal danger rather than behind the lines where one is likely

to be run over by an auto during a blackout!

This is the spirit in which this "war" is being "fought." The existence of enormous fortifications can in no way account for the totally pacific air of the "war" in the West. If the imperialists were serious about defeating each other, it is obvious that the powerful fortifications of the enemy would spur them on to create an atmosphere of super-human ingenuity and striving to circumvent the obstacles. They would compensate for their being blocked by the fortifications in a thousand different ways such as the experienced and highly capable military experts of the bourgeoisie can devise. The imperialists would outdo themselves in a drive to keep up an intense war spirit amongst the soldiers at the front; the troops would be exhorted to take advantage of every opportunity to inflict injury on the enemy; awards would be given to those who invented ways of striking the foe despite the fortifications; a premium would be put on skill out of the ordinary in devastating the enemy hiding behind his defenses. But nothing of this sort is found in this weird "war." On the contrary, the imperialists do not take too much trouble to keep it from being clear that their "war" is so much mumbo-jumbo. They keep up enough of a show to delude the masses and hold them under a military dictatorship. But the careful observer, steering clear of illusions, can pick the reality out of the present situation and realize that on the Western Front the "All quiet" is the result not of insuperable military obstacles but of the political line of the international imperialists.

There is another front, however, where real war rages in all its usual ferocity. In Finland where the Stalinized Soviet Union is involved, the cannon roar ceaselessly, the imperialists hurl in great quantities of armaments and numbers of men, the struggle is of a decisive nature, the combat is mortal with a stark reality. The lack of enthusiasm and furor on the Western Front is more than compensated for by the imperialists in the war against

the Soviet Union, for here despite Stalinism they face their primary enemy of the present historical period, the remaining economic conquests of the successful proletarian revolution. The sight of "poor little Finland," successfully resisting Stalin's assault, has aroused the "humanitarianism" in the bourgeoisie which not all of Mussolini's atrocities in Ethiopia or of Hitler's crushing of the masses in the Saar, in Austria, in Czechoslovakia and in Poland could stir up. Hoover, Roosevelt, Chamberlain and Daladier as well as Mussolini and Franco, have suddenly donned their saintly garments which gathered dust during the Hitlerian and Mussolinian depredations of only yesterday and have gone forth to do battle in Finland. Scores of American bank presidents and industrial magnates have quickly answered Hoover's call for aid to the Finnish bourgeoisie, thus adding "charity" to their other exploits. All the heroes of "non-intervention" in the Spanish Civil War have passed over to making it crystal clear that the organization of "volunteer" detachments for the Finnish army would proceed swiftly. The proponents of the "arms embargo" of not so long ago, of steering clear of entanglement in foreign conflicts, today unhesitatingly admit that huge shipments of arms to Finland have already taken place and will continue at all costs. In no way can these "humanitarians" be accused of a miserly or skinflint attitude. They have expressed little or no concern about being paid for their services to "poor little Finland." Indeed, they voluntarily renounce their claims even to past Finnish debts, a la Saint Roosevelt. This is bourgeois philanthropy with a vengeance!

It is in Finland in the war not so much against Stalin as against the Stalin-controlled socialized property that the imperialists are outflanking the conflicts existing amongst themselves.

The war which the bourgeoisie promised they would wage to "Stop Germany" turns out to be a war to "Stop Russia." On paper the bourg-

ecisie are supposed to be moving heaven and earth to stop "German aggression"; in reality one can barely observe them moving even a little finger. But to destroy the remnants of the October Revolution, the bourgeoisie are bringing into operation their mighty forces without even bothering to put anything on paper. Against "German aggression" the White Books and Blue Books fly thick and fast. But against socialized property, even though distorted by Stalinism, it is bombing planes, cannon, munitions, men and money that the imperialists are hurling. The paper "war" in the West is coupled with a real war in Finland. To save Poland from "German aggression" the Franco-British imperialists, long noted for ruthlessness and efficiency, were "somehow" unable to organize multiple fronts to outflank the Siegfried Line. But to restore capitalist economic relations open to exploitation by world imperialism they are "somehow" quite capable of organizing powerful forces on many borders of the Soviet Union, in Turkey, Irak, Afghanistan, held ready for future employment. The Allied imperialists "failed" to discover the slogan "To stop Russia we must defeat Germany." But they promptly hit upon the slogan "To stop Germany we must defeat Russia." Indeed, this "inspired" slogan seems to be on the order of the day as the guiding line of the imperialists. Just as the "stopping" of "German aggression" became a real war against the Soviet Union up to the first stage of the present developments, so the imperialists will contrive in the future to spoil the whole fairy story of "stopping German aggression" down to an actual defeat of the Soviet Union. The mock "war" in the West "against" Germany has been converted into a slogan to camouflage the real war against the Stalinized Soviet Union. This is the essence of the balance of power created by the imperialists in the present period. On the West, a deceptive appearance of a war amongst the imperialists; on the East, a genuine, bloody war to the death against the economic remains of the first successful proletarian revolution. Appearances must be

kept up, and the needs of reality must be met. On the West, the imperialists will have to level sham thrusts at each other, some cannon will have to be fired now and then, ships will have to be sunk. On the East, the real war against the Soviet Union will be fought by the bourgeoisie along decisive lines, the blows will be to the death, the struggle fought to the finish.

The policy of the imperialists since the October Revolution has preserved unbroken its fundamental aim of first and foremost destroying every remnant of the proletarian conquests. Superimposed on this basic policy there had been many deviations and detours which can deceive only those who are blind to reality. The first direct assault on the Soviet Republic in 1918-1921 failed. For many years thereafter the world bourgeoisie made repeated efforts to reorganize this attack. With the rise of Hitler to power in 1933, this rise occurring due to the Stalinist-Social Democratic betrayal of the German proletariat, the imperialists were free to re-forge German imperialism as the spearhead of the planned attack on the Soviet Union. Under a cloud of anti-Hitler phrases, the British, American and French imperialists brought Hitler to the borders of the Stalinized Soviet Union. The anti-fascist demagogy of the "democratic" imperialists, however, flew in the face of this open collusion with German fascism. "Democracy" promised the masses that Hitler would be stopped. But "democracy" was working hand-in-glove with German fascism to an extent which all the demagogy in the world could not prevent the masses from noting. Up to Hitler's invasion of Poland, the demagogy of the "democratic" imperialists was still peaceful in form; it did not exceed verbal promises that the Hitlerian depredations would be curbed and the creation of a war scare to give some more concrete appearance to these promises. The German imperialists' invasion of Poland, however, put an end to the usefulness of this peaceful form of "anti-Hitler" demagogy on the part of the "democrat-

ic" imperialists. Every sort of fakery has a definite life-time and reaches its end sooner or later. "Munichism" could not be continued indefinitely. Some stronger form of demagogy had to be employed by the "democratic" imperialists to keep up their hocus-pocus of "stopping German fascism." The peacetime demagogy had to be transformed into a warlike demagogy. A mere war scare could no longer make the promises to "stop Hitler" look bonafide. After the invasion of Poland by Hitler, the "democratic" imperialists had to resort to an actual "war." But this actual "war" is like all the promises of the "democratic" imperialists to "stop Hitler." It is a form of demagogy devised to make it look as if Hitler is being stopped. Meanwhile, the imperialists pursue their fundamental policy of reorganizing their assault on the Stalinized Soviet Union.

The Hitlerian military spearhead, now momentarily a "friend" of Stalin, stands on the Soviet border armed to the teeth and holds millions of Russian soldiers tied to that front. For Hitler as a "friend" of the Stalinized Soviet Union is the sort of "friend" against whom one must be protected. But while Stalin's major forces have to stand guard against "friend" Hitler, the imperialists are organizing the start of their renewed attack on the Soviet Union in Finland. Whether during inter-imperialist "peace," (pre-Poland), or during inter-imperialist "war," (post-Poland), world imperialism never loses sight of its fundamental task of the present historical period to hold the inter-imperialist conflicts in abeyance until the last remains of the conquests of the October Revolution have been destroyed.

THE BALANCE SHEET OF BOURGEOIS POLICY

The bourgeoisie are naturally concerned with preserving their social system on a world-wide scale. The October Revolution tore one-sixth of the world out of the capitalist system. The Russian and international bourgeoisie lost this tremendous portion of the globe as a field for exploitation. From this defeat the bourgeoisie have not yet recovered and cannot recover until bourgeois private property has been reestablished in Stalin's Russia. Great as have been the services of the Stalinist bureaucracy to the international bourgeoisie, there is one service which it has not yet performed. Bourgeois private property, a field for the investment and expansion of international capital, the only possible basis of capitalism, has not yet been restored in Stalin's Soviet Union. All of Stalin's friendly gestures, which the bourgeoisie may have utilized momentarily, do not provide them with a decisive solution of the dilemma into which the October Revolution threw them. Faced by profound and immediate international crisis, the bourgeoisie have a certain maximum task for the present period. They must at least restore capitalism where it once existed before. What problems

they may face after that, assuming they achieve their minimum aim, remains to be seen. This much, however, is clear: the bourgeoisie, who, like the proletariat, have to reckon in historical terms, must restore the international structure which their system had prior to the October Revolution. Capitalism, like the proletarian society, is an international system which cannot exist indefinitely side by side with an historically antagonistic economic and social system.

The bourgeoisie, therefore, have made great strides forward in the direction of solving their problems. The struggle against the proletariat, ever since the end of the Russian Civil War, achieved extreme and even military forms in several major places. In Germany, Austria, France, China, Poland, England, Italy, Spain and Czechoslovakia, to name only outstanding instances, the class war reached a white-hot pitch and a decisive stage. In every instance, the bourgeoisie was victorious. Today, the class war reaches a military stage once more at the borders of the homeland of the first, and so far only proletarian victory, the now, unfortunately, Stal-

inized Soviet Union. For a long time, since 1921 in fact, it was the various sections outside of the Soviet Union which bore the brunt of the bourgeois military assault, now in one country, now in another. In the present day, it is again the Russian section of the proletariat which will suffer the full weight of capitalist war. The paralyzed and betrayed masses of the

bourgeois world will be flung at the Russian toilers with a view to crushing them decisively. Whether or not the Russian workers will go the deadly way of the German, Spanish and Chinese masses, depends to a major extent on the situation in the proletarian camp. It is, therefore, to this camp that our examination must proceed.

THE SITUATION IN THE PROLETARIAT

Twenty-two years after the first successful proletarian revolution, the workers find themselves faced with having to start from scratch to create a Bolshevik movement. This sums up the blackest situation that the proletariat ever had to face. Never in its entire history has the proletariat suffered as colossal a series of betrayals as that initiated by the Stalinist degeneration of the Bolshevik movement. That unbroken series of proletarian defeats since the end of the Russian Civil War, of which we spoke above, was engineered primarily by deliberate Stalinist treachery in order to preserve the usurped power of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Seeing in the struggle of the international proletariat for socialism a deadly menace to its autocratic power and privileges, the Stalinist bureaucracy since its inception in 1921-1922 has utilized every means available to crush that struggle and assure the bondage of the toilers to Stalinism and the bourgeoisie. The workers in building a Bolshevik movement under present conditions have first to accomplish the preliminary task of eradicating pseudo-Bolshevism, i.e., the Stalinist system. The most advanced section of the international proletariat since the end of the Russian Civil War has consistently been trapped by Stalinism which because it is in control of the fruits of the first proletarian victory, has very effectively worn a Bolshevik-like camouflage. The struggle against the Stalinist system is therefore the specific form of the immediate struggle to create a new Bolshevik movement.

To add to the complexities of the

workers' problems, there is also pseudo-anti-Stalinist "Bolshevism" in the form of the Trotskyist movement and its various "Left" adherents which has to be destroyed. History proves that the most advanced sections of the Stalinist workers, those who subjectively break with Stalinism, have consistently fallen into the treacherous clutches primarily of Trotsky. Originally an organic part of the Stalinist conspiracy to usurp power in the workers state, a direct co-worker of the Stalin clique (Zinoviev—Kamenev—Stalin) and a defender and supporter of the Stalinist conspirators, Trotsky is fundamentally and everlastingly attached to Stalinism. Ousted by his double-dealing partner, Stalin, and converted into his scape-goat and whipping boy, Trotsky, for his own self-protection, has had to cover his irrevocable attachment to Stalinism with an "anti-Stalinist" mask. It is by this process and by the weight of his former revolutionary prestige that Trotsky became the nucleus of the pseudo-anti-Stalinist movement.

As the destruction of pseudo-Bolshevism (the Stalinist system) is preliminary to the creation of a new Bolshevik movement which will directly assault the bourgeoisie, so the crushing of pseudo-anti-Stalinism (Trotskyism and its "Left" adherents) is preliminary to a direct assault on the Stalinist system. Stalinism stands immediately in the way of leading the advanced toilers (and hence the masses in general) against the capitalists, and Trotskyism blocks the path to directly tearing the most advanced workers away from the Stalinist system.

The historic stream of the most highly political workers passes chiefly from Stalinism to pseudo--anti-Stalinism (the Trotskyist branch of the Stalinist political system). In our examination of the present situation within the proletariat, therefore, we must begin with and concentrate for the present on the various forms of deception practiced by Trotskyism and its supporters from the "Left."

For a movement to aid the workers in the fulfillment of their historic task it must clarify them on two basic factors in the present situation: 1) the maneuvers of the bourgeoisie to hold the major inter-imperialist conflicts in abeyance while still meeting the requirements of bourgeois demagogy (exemplified by the ghost-like cover "war" in the West), and at the same time to advance forward to re-organize an attack on the remaining conquests of the October Revolution (evidenced by the developments in Finland); 2) the nature of the Stalinist system and the tasks which must be accomplished for its overthrow. Without a precise understanding of these two factors, the preservation of what remains of the October Revolution, the system of state property in the means of production in the Stalinized Soviet Union, and its extension on a world-wide scale is an utter impossibility.

Turning reality inside out, Trotskyism blinds the workers with a story that the mock "war" on the Western Front is the real thing, the central feature of the present situation, a genuine "Second World War," while the fighting in Finland is only an incident:

"The invasion of Finland by the Red Army is an incident in the Second World War which is now only in its tentative and initial stages of development." (Socialist Appeal, Dec. 9, 1939. Our emphasis.)

The imperialists, according to Trotskyism, are preparing actually to defeat each other in the present period and what Trotskyism terms the "Second World War" on the Western Front will proceed from its "tentative and initial

stages" to combat of major and decisive proportions. But the actual war in Finland is only an "incident" which tags along with this "Second World War," Trotskyism tells the workers.

There are times when the bourgeoisie, who have no more desire to aid the workers than have the Trotskyite bureaucrats, blurt out some profoundly revealing information. Recently, Kerensky, an old-timer at the imperialist game, understanding perfectly the designs of the imperialists, expressed his fear that there was afoot an effort to slice up the Soviet Union:

"Since the events in Finland the fear of the Red Army has evaporated and we see the resurrection in some democratic countries of the idea of the partition of Russia." (New York Post, January 24, 1940.)

Kerensky, fearing that the Russian emigre bourgeoisie may be left out in the cold, understands that the assistance being rushed to "poor little Finland" has more than mere bourgeois "humanitarianism" behind it and may result in Russia being gobbled up by the international imperialists. Naturally, Kerensky, a spokesman of the Russian bourgeoisie, is in no way opposed to the defeat of Stalin's Soviet Union and the restoration of bourgeois private property therein, but he wants to make sure that it will be the Russian, and not the French, German, British, American and Japanese bourgeoisie who will profit from it. Hence, remembering how in the Russian Civil War the international imperialists coupled their aid to the Russian bourgeoisie with brazen seizures of Russian territory, Kerensky sounds a warning:

"It is of the utmost significance, therefore, for Russian emigres and for the people of the democratic countries as well to avoid entanglement in the fight of the Russian people against its oppressors along the lines of 1919-1921." (Ibid)

In the imperialist camp itself the nature of the present developments in Finland is altogether clear. The war in Finland is the start of the renewed

effort of the imperialists to wipe out once and for all the remaining economic conquests of the October Revolution, to restore bourgeois private property in the Soviet Union and to divide the country up amongst the major imperialist powers. In so far as the bourgeoisie is concerned, this, and this alone, is the solution of the present crisis of world capitalism, to give it a new lease on life.

Such is the character of the "incident" in Finland of which the Trotskyite bureaucrats speak to the workers. Diverting the toilers from reality with the story of the real war of the present period being on the so-called Western Front, the Trotskyites aid the imperialists by concealing the life-and-death significance of the genuine war in Finland. On the Finnish front, not on the so-called Western Front, is the war of the present historical period. The solution of the problem presented by this actual war is the fundamental task of the workers today.

On the Finnish front the international proletariat faces the world bourgeoisie. If the workers were led by a Bolshevik vanguard, the situation would be clear. Unfortunately, the toilers find themselves saddled with a counter-revolutionary leadership in the form of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The economic conquests of the October Revolution are not only under the military assault of the bourgeoisie, but have been subject to the depredations of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Stalinist political superstructure, usurping control over production for its own rapacious ends, has undermined and suffocated socialized production for the past seventeen years. Socialized production has been distorted into production for the benefit of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Stalinist production, consisting partly of sheer bluff and trumped-up statistics, partly of importation of basic elements of industry and agriculture from the bourgeois world, partly of incompetence and corruption of purely Stalinist origin and partly of a forced and monstrous squeezing of every last ounce of energy out of the toilers, contains nothing solid materially with which to

confront a bourgeois assault. The bourgeoisie may be outrageous swindlers when they face their class enemies, but in their productive system they stand on a rock bottom basis. There is very little fictitious about bourgeois production. The capitalists have amassed a prodigious stock of materials of every sort and are able to replace it at almost any pace they choose. Stalinist bureaucratic windbagism will be no match for the streamlined economic and military forces of the international bourgeoisie. On a purely military basis, the victory of world imperialism is assured. The only hope for the toilers in regard to preserving socialized property and spreading it universally lies in developing a genuine Bolshevik political leadership. During the Russian Civil War of 1918-1921, the political leadership was the key to the solution of the workers problems. On material grounds, the workers were infinitely weaker than the combined forces of the imperialists. The workers were victorious primarily because they had a Bolshevik leadership. Today, however, Bolshevism lies trampled under the treacherous boot of the Stalinist system and the workers face the bourgeoisie not only inferior in material means but lacking even a revolutionary leadership.

The key to the situation lies in the overthrow of the Stalinist system and the creation of a new Bolshevik leadership. Prior to this achievement, there is not even an atom of hope for the workers. Once the Stalinist system is overthrown and the revolutionary energies of the toilers liberated and directed by a genuine Bolshevik leadership, the workers will enter into a new phase of their struggle against oppression, a phase which will contain a strong possibility of victory.

What is the line that Trotskyism gives the workers with respect to this necessity of overthrowing the Stalinist system as a basic prerequisite for the victory of the toilers over the bourgeoisie? How does Trotskyism evaluate the Stalinist system? Trotsky knows that the Stal-

inist bureaucracy fears revolution as its mortal enemy. He himself states that the masses, breaking themselves free of capitalist bondage, would not stop at the Soviet borders but sweep on and wipe out the Stalinist bureaucracy:

"If those in Moscow could seriously hope to control the revolutionary movement and subordinate it to their own interests, Stalin naturally would welcome it. But he understands that revolution is the antithesis of bureaucracy and that it mercilessly sweeps aside the privileged, conservative apparatus.....On the wave of a new revolution a new international organization would inevitably arise which would wipe out the Comintern and deal a mortal blow to the authority of the Soviet bureaucracy in its national entrenchment in the U.S.S.R." (Leon Trotsky, Liberty, Jan. 27, 1940, p. 9.)

This is indisputable, -- at least in the mind of those who know the precise nature of Stalinism. Entrenched in positions of wealth and power against the revolutionary march of the masses toward Socialism, the Stalinist bureaucrats know that the proletarian revolution will dig their grave once and for all. Trotsky, too, as we see, is quite clear about this. It does not take much to realize that this powerful caste will take steps to prevent the occurrence of any proletarian revolution. Trotsky's evaluation of Stalinism leads directly to the conclusion that the Stalinist bureaucracy will utilize every instrument in its power, as the "Comintern," for example, to thwart any moves of the masses in the direction of proletarian revolution. Trotsky does not draw this conclusion, however, and not by an oversight but for a very good reason. When one realizes that the bureaucratic interests of Stalinism dictate inexorably the prevention of proletarian revolution, the question immediately arises: What was and is Trotsky's attitude toward Stalinism? Has he had a consistent policy of leading the workers to the overthrow

of Stalinism which stands in the way of the proletarian revolution? Such a question leads to an examination of the whole structure of Trotskyism, and is precisely because Trotsky wants at all costs to keep the workers from such an examination that he fails to draw the necessary conclusion from his present thesis on the nature of Stalinism. An examination of Trotskyism reveals that Trotsky has had a consistent policy of support to counter-revolutionary Stalinism.

To illustrate this contention, we have but to take two of Trotsky's enunciations of policy, one before he formed his "4th International" and one after. As late as 1932, when the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy had already reached overwhelming bounds, when the privileges and power it had to protect against the threat of proletarian revolution were already enormous, Trotsky was urging the workers to support the treacherous Stalinist organizations. "Vote for Thaelmann, the candidate of the C.P.G.," cried Trotskyism (The Militant, April 30, 1932, p. 3.) Trotsky himself put it even more strongly; the "Left Opposition" had to be in the vanguard in the effort to whip the workers under the aegis of Stalin's machine in Germany

"The candidacy of Thaelmann to the presidency is, self-evidently, the candidacy of the Left Opposition. In the struggle for the mobilization of workers under the banner of the official Communist (read: Stalinist-J.C.H.) candidacy, the Bolshevik-Leninists must be in the front line." (Leon Trotsky, "Germany--What Next," p. 191.)

And there is no doubt that the Trotskyite chieftains left no loophole in their campaign to corral the workers under the fist of Stalin's flunkoy, Thaelmann. Fiercely battling every tendency to form a new International, Trotsky proclaimed Stalin's "Comintern" to be his only home. The hideous victory of Hitler testifies to the success of the Stalinist bureaucracy in preventing the proletarian revolution in Germany. We have cited Trotsky's

policy in Germany only as a sample of his line on the whole international scene.

In those days, Trotsky kept quiet about the Stalinist bureaucracy's fear of proletarian revolution. In fact, he told the workers that the rapacious, usurping Stalin gang really had honest intentions, really wanted proletarian revolution but did not know how to achieve it. The reader may feel, Perhaps in those days Trotsky did not understand that the Stalinist bureaucracy feared proletarian revolution and had to take steps to prevent it. We have presented much material in other issues of this Bulletin to prove that Trotsky knew of the consciously counter-revolutionary nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy from its very origin in 1921-22. We have shown, moreover, that, knowing fully of the consciously criminal nature of Stalinism, Trotsky since its origin has consistently supported it.

Though the reader may for the moment question Trotsky's past knowledge of the consciously counter-revolutionary nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy, he cannot have any doubts about Trotsky's present understanding of this fact. We have already quoted Trotsky's present position on the dread of Stalinism for proletarian revolution, on the clear realization of the Stalinist bureaucracy that a successful development of the proletarian revolution will destroy it root and branch. It would seem therefore that surely today Trotsky must have a correct line of the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a prerequisite for the victory of the workers. Trotskyism frequently shouts that for the workers to be able to defeat the bourgeoisie they must have a genuine revolutionary leadership. Nothing can be clearer than that, while the Soviet Union and the proletariat are under the control of Stalinism which hates and fears proletarian revolution, the defeat of the bourgeoisie is impossible and the destruction of the Soviet Union an inevitability. The existence of the counter-revolutionary Stalinist system in the ranks of the toilers eliminates the very essence of the basis of a

proletarian victory. The center of the international political crisis has been moving in the last two decades from country to country, passing from Russia to Germany, England, China, Germany again, Spain, France. Had Stalinism been broken by Marxism in at least one major country, the workers might have been victorious against their class enemy. Unfortunately, Stalinism in every critical situation surmounted the danger and betrayed the workers. Now the international political crisis is again centering at the walls of Russia.

It is obvious that the first and most essential requirement for a proletarian victory has been and is the destruction of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the Stalinized "Comintern." This follows from Trotsky's own premise of the consciously counter-revolutionary nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The Trotskyite leaders tell their followers to approach the problem of defending the Soviet Union with this attitude: "We do not demand that the Soviet bureaucracy prior to our participation in the defense of the U.S.S.R. make any agreement or concessions." (The New International, February 1940, p. 23) In other words with the Stalinist bureaucracy exercising its rule, the Trotskyite worker is told to plunge into what is termed the "defense" of the Soviet Union. Placing the whole problem on a military basis, the Trotskyites palm off a "fight" against the imperialists - while Stalinism rules - as a real defense of the Soviet Union.

This is precisely the crux of the entire matter. While Stalinism rules, no genuine defense of the Soviet Union is possible. The workers may shoot at the imperialist armies, they may die by the millions, but they are not actually defending the Soviet Union. They are only digging their own grave, for the domination of the Stalinist bureaucracy makes nothing else possible. The problem of defending the Soviet Union is not basically military, but political. A Bolshevik policy alone is the fundamental prerequisite for a true defense of the Soviet Union. But the Trotskyite 'buro-

crats instill into the workers' minds the following piece of fatal illusion: It is true that Stalinism is counter-revolutionary, but we'll deal with Stalinism later. We can defend the Soviet Union prior to overthrowing the Stalinist bureaucracy. This is the real meaning of Cannon's thesis:

"Our motion calls for unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack. What does that mean? It simply means that you defend the Soviet Union and its nationalized property against external attacks of imperialist armies or against internal attempts at capitalist restoration, without putting as a prior condition the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy." (J. P. Cannon, New International, Ibid., p. 11. Our emphasis)

This is the essence of the Trotskyists' pro-Stalinist snare.

The workers must approach the problem of defending the Soviet Union not with the Trotskyist attitude, but with this Leninist attitude: The first condition, the inescapable prerequisite for any genuine defense of the Soviet Union as well as for world revolution is the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy within the Soviet Union and internationally. Pushing the political angle of the class struggle into a back seat, the Trotskyites are palming off a military struggle "against" im-

perialism, which can result only in defeat for the workers, as a real defense of the Soviet Union. A "defense" which for political reasons carries with it an inevitable defeat is obviously no defense.

The defense of the Soviet Union in a Leninist, as opposed to a Trotskyist sense means (1) the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy (2) which will make possible the defeat of the bourgeoisie. The Leninist defense of the Soviet Union is simultaneously along two lines: against Stalinism and against imperialism, with the success of the former line as the absolutely inescapable prerequisite for the success of the latter.

Concocting reasons to "postpone" the overthrow of Stalinism, the Trotskyite bureaucrats conjure up situations in which the "political revolution is subordinated to the task of defending the state property against imperialist attack." (Ibid.) The workers must know that the task of political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy can never be subordinated to a genuine defense of the socialized property of the Soviet Union. The political revolution against Stalinism is entirely synonymous with a true defense of the state property. Trotsky's "postponement" of the overthrow of Stalinism is an organic part of his support to Stalinism since its origin.

Among the various "Left" Trotskyist groups that stand closest to Trotskyism is the Oehlerite Revolutionary Workers League. Maintaining that up to 1934 Trotsky was a Marxist, Oehler conceals the pro-Stalinist line of Trotsky since the beginning of Stalinism in 1921-1922. On the present war situation, Oehler, although endeavoring to give an impression of opposing Trotsky's line, holds an essentially Trotskyist position of deceiving the workers into imagining that they can achieve victory without first overthrowing the Stalinist system. Trotsky's position teaches the workers to fight in the Stalinized "Red" Army

where they are supposed to achieve what he calls victory. "Then, at a good moment, when victory is assured, I would say: 'Now we must finish with the bureaucracy.'" (Leon Trotsky, "The Case of Leon Trotsky," p. 289.) Thus, according to Trotsky, the workers are first going to achieve victory under Stalinist control; then after victory they are going to turn around and wipe out Stalinism. With this sort of deception, Trotsky's aim is to prevent the workers from realizing that as long as the Stalinist bureaucracy still exists they cannot possibly achieve victory over the bourgeoisie. What we have just quoted is simply an earlier

variant of Trotsky's more recent formulation of "defending" the Soviet Union with unconditional support to the Stalinist bureaucracy. Oehler, following in Trotsky's footsteps, puts the matter this way:

"The Finnish workers must march separately from, but strike together with the Stalinist-controlled Red Army, to defeat Finnish Capitalism and to use this new base to develop the political revolution against Stalinism within the Soviet Union itself." (The Fighting Worker, January 15, 1940, page 3. Our emphasis.)

In brief, Oehler's support to the Trotskyist drug is his position that with the "Red" Army under Stalinist domination, the workers will possibly be able to defeat the Finnish bourgeoisie behind whom stands the gigantic power of world imperialism. Then, when, as Trotsky would put it, "victory is assured," the workers are to turn about and overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy. The inescapable prior condition for

proletarian victory, namely, the destruction of the Stalinist bureaucracy, is eliminated alike in the program which Trotsky, and that which Oehler presents to the workers. Both these gentlemen are howling for the building of a "New International." Both ostensibly are putting into practice the principle that without a genuine Bolshevik leadership the proletarian defeat of the bourgeoisie is impossible. Both shriek against Stalinism, and Oehler even berates Trotsky. And nevertheless, fundamentally both are organically within the Stalinist system by virtue of the support they give it from one angle or another. All those who, posing as Bolsheviks, do not provide the workers with a scientifically accurate picture of Stalinism, its origin, development and method of operation and the tasks of the proletarian vanguard in destroying Stalinism as the necessary prerequisite for the proletarian victory over the bourgeoisie are, historically and politically, part and parcel of the Stalinist system, regardless of how thick they coat themselves with "anti-Stalinist" camouflage.

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To the extreme ultra-Left in the proletarian camp stand those tendencies which deny the historically proletarian character of the system of state property in the means of production which exists in Stalin's Soviet Union. These counter-revolutionary groups are divided generally into two types: 1) those who maintain that in the Stalinized Soviet Union there is state capitalism, and 2) those who avoid giving a class characterization to the economy and state in Russia but nevertheless deny that any form of a workers state whatever is to be found there, who say that Russia is some kind of a "totalitarian state." In the first category are Mienov—Joerger heading the group they call the Workers Party and in the second, the League for a Revolutionary Workers Party, and the Revolutionary Labor Group of Negrette.

Those who deny the proletarian character of a system of state proper-

ty in the means of production, which was and can only be, established by a proletarian revolution, directly assault the economic basis of socialism and set themselves against the historical destiny of the proletariat. To confuse the Stalinist political superstructure which is wholly and without exception reactionary with the socialized economy which it criminally usurped but which is nevertheless historically progressive as compared with bourgeois private property is to blind the workers to their basic tasks of the present epoch. The duty and necessity of the proletariat is to save and extend the system of socialized property by destroying Stalinism and thus freeing itself to carry out the overthrow of capitalism on a world scale. The ultra-Lefts call for the defeat of this economic structure and thereby stand shoulder to shoulder with world imperialism. In their effort to appear as Leninists the ultra-Lefts generally call for revolutionary

defeatism in the capitalist countries. This, however, should not prevent class-conscious workers from realizing the counter-revolutionary character of these tendencies which have as a basic part of their program the destruction of what remains of the economic conquests of the October Revolution. The complexity of the present situation which has grown out of the Stalinist degeneration of the Bolshevik leader-

ship is such that a tendency can put forth literally hundreds of Leninist slogans and still be counter-revolutionary to the core. Ultra-Leftism, which mouths Leninist phrases by the ream and which at the same time programmatically and objectively strikes a blow at the economic achievements of the first successful proletarian revolution, is a vivid symptom of this complexity.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR THE WORKERS

To know the future we have to study the present and the past. The most complete disintegration, the most profound treachery in the workers' ranks to be found in the history of the proletarian struggle for liberation is the outstanding characteristic of the present situation. Since 1914, when world imperialism passed into the crucial stage of its crisis, conscious treachery on the part of leading sections of the proletarian organizations has played the major role in saving the capitalist system. Up to 1921, Social-democratic criminality stood in the forefront of this opportunist betrayal. Thereafter, during Lenin's illness, Stalinist renegacy, germinating in the very heart of the revolutionary movement, the Politburo of the victorious Bolshevik Party of the Soviet Republic, took the leading role in selling out the toilers to their class enemy. There is no hope of possibility of a proletarian victory over the bourgeoisie prior to the crushing of opportunist treachery and the creation of a new Bolshevik movement. In the present day, genuine Bolshevism will develop and gather strength and forces in an unrelenting and uncompromising fight to destroy the whole opportunist structure which strangles and paralyzes the proletariat. The major enemy of Bolshevism today is the Stalinist system with all its political o f f-

shoots, Trotskyism, "Left" Trotskyism, Lovestoneism, ultra-Leftism. The winning of the proletarian vanguard away from this center of opportunist corruption will open the path of Bolshevism to the masses in general and from there to a direct assault on the bourgeoisie. If the proletarian vanguard is awakened in time, the Socialist society will yet be achieved in the present historical age. If not, bourgeois reaction will take a form unparalleled in horror and destructiveness for decades to come. It is futile even to try to describe the misery in store for the toilers and oppressed nations and races should genuine Bolshevism fail to win the proletarian vanguard.

There are no other alternatives. Either Socialism and freedom, or indescribable and unequalled oppression. To get an inkling of what opportunism will bring upon the workers one has only to observe what it already has brought on them. An ocean of toilers' blood in China, Russia, Spain, Germany, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia testifies to the character of the end of the opportunist path. The overwhelming wave of liberation initiated by the Bolshevik Revolution and with it the dawn of a new society gives a glimpse of the goal of Leninism.

JOIN THE LENINIST LEAGUE

February 4, 1940.

WHY IS OEHLER SILENT ON TROTSKY

By George Marlen

OEHLER and his organization pursue a "mass line" which consists of peddling the paralyzing illusion among advanced workers that capitalism can be overthrown directly without the prior destruction of the gigantic opportunist forces within the working class.

Despite the fact that Oehler does his utmost to keep the eyes of his followers glued to this "mass line," with which he "combats" capitalism directly, he must now and again create the impression that he is not ignoring the political struggle against the large opportunist organizations. This is especially true of his attitude towards Trotsky and Trotsky's "4th International." Time and again Oehler must show his followers wherein lie Trotsky's opportunism and Oehler's "Bolshevism." Giving the lie to the pretension that his paper "The Fighting Worker" is designed as a mass organ speaking the language understood by the average factory worker, Oehler devotes nearly a whole page to the involved political situation within the Trotskyite movement.

In order to keep up his front of being a "scientific Marxist," Oehler is forced to take up at considerable length one of those "petty squabbles" within the radical movement which are so abhorrent to the "mass liners" because they do not interest the broad masses.

"The Fighting Worker," (February 1, 1940) purports to enlighten the reader as to the real political essence of Trotskyism. Let us take a close look at the evaluation of Trotskyism offered by the "Fighting Worker" and see how much truth and reality, if any, this evaluation contains. "The Fighting

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Worker" contends that the Trotskyites are pursuing an "anti-Stalinist instead of anti-capitalist orientation." Is such the case? A Leninist perusal of the files of the "Socialist Appeal," an examination of the resolutions of the S.W.P. Conventions, a study of the speeches of the Cannons and Burnhams and a survey of the activities of the Trotskyite Party clearly indicate that the Trotskyites are pursuing a mass line with a pseudo--anti-Stalinist coloration. One has only to recall Cannon's recent cry for trade-unionizing his Party. Actually the Trotskyites are doing their utmost to draw their followers' attention away from the problem of fighting Stalinism. They tell the workers "The Stalinist issue can be handled, but it can only be handled as what it is, an incidental obstacle in the fight for the program that workers and farmers need." (New International, March 1939, p. 78. My emphasis - G.M.) The article in the "Fighting Worker" itself says "The Trotskyite line is vicious IN WORDS against Stalinism, but actually IN DEEDS it gives Stalinism support"; and further on the article even flaunts a sub-headline to the effect that the Trotskyites are a "Left Tail to Stalinism." One would logically deduce from such formulations that political-ly Trotskyism, far from being anti-Stalinist, is in reality a branch of the Stalinist system. But no, that is not the conclusion offered by the analysis in the "Fighting Worker." It declares that the Trotskyist party is centrist. "The fact of the matter is that the whole Trotsky Party is centrist to the core, that it represents within the working class a petty-bourgeois tendency."

In an attempt to prove that Trotskyism is a petty-bourgeois centrist

tendency, the "Fighting Worker" cites some of the Trotskyite recent past. But the opportunist recent past does not happen to be a sheer bolt out of the blue. In politics, just as in nature, there are no miraculous transformations. The Trotskyite yesterday is rooted in the days which preceded it. And it is precisely in those preceding days that the unfolding of post-Lenin Trotskyism is recorded. This post-Leninist history of Trotsky beginning in 1921-1922 is told in terms of unbroken conscious treachery covered up with masterly concocted devices. But about this startling story of Trotsky's days before "yesterday" the "Fighting Worker" is silent. What of Trotsky's support to Stalinism during the ghastly betrayal of the German working class in 1930-33? At that time Trotsky told the workers to pin their hopes only on Stalinism, told them that the Stalinist bribed political adventurers and assassins of the proletarian cause were honest but misled revolutionists, assuring the victims that there was a possibility that these Stalinist mercenaries and, by implication, the Soviet Usurper himself, would return to Leninism. There has been a "queer" silence on the part of Oehler with respect to Trotsky's pro-Stalinist policy of those days. Unquestionably in the Oehler's silence enters a certain factor. Trotsky actively, and as the unearthed material conclusively establishes, quite deliberately, rendered a distinctive service to Stalin in the consciously-conceived scheme to betray the proletarian revolution in Germany. It must be noted that during those momentous days Oehler worked with Trotsky politically and organizationally. But nowhere have we seen Oehler's repudiation of the pro-Stalinist policy which as a Trotskyite leader he pursued. On the contrary, those years of Trotsky's base treachery and skillfully executed collaboration with Stalinist counter-revolution — in fact the whole stretch of Trotsky's opportunist activity from the infancy of the Stalinist reaction against October, Oehler covers up declaring that Trotsky and the loyal "Left Opposition" represented Leninism. Trotsky and the Opposition were "fighting" Stalinism in the same way that

the British Labor Party opposition is "fighting" capitalism. Yet Oehler peddles a long-established Trotskyite fraud, that Trotsky was a Marxist right along, embellishing it with his own false features by stating that Trotsky's "Leninism" contained mistakes, that Trotsky was a Marxist until he introduced the "French Turn" in 1934. By hiding the ghastly truth about Trotsky, and by accepting the fundamental Trotskyist theoretical distortion on the nature and the method of Stalinism, Oehler, to the extent of his influence, in actuality supports both.

It is a significant fact that Oehler, like Trotsky, stands with both feet on the theoretical ground of Stalinism because he palms off as Leninist the Fourth Congress of the Comintern. This was actually the first Stalinist congress. With Lenin in a state of physical collapse, the Stalinist bureaucrats, Zinoviev, Bukharin and Trotsky, who dominated the gathering, set the official stamp of approval on the subtly constructed Rightist trap called the "Workers Government." It was thru this trap that Stalin and Trotsky, working in harmony, consciously and deliberately chained the German working class in October 1923 to the Social-democratic governments of the capitalist States of Saxony and Thuringia. The line of the Fourth Congress represents the first Rightist zigzag of the Comintern, employed by the Stalinist clique in bloc with Trotsky to prevent successful proletarian revolution and thus safeguard the rising bureaucratic system in the first Workers State. It is clear that anyone standing on the line of the Fourth Congress is basically a Stalinist, no matter how anti-Stalinist-sounding his general phraseology might appear. Oehler and his tendency are not a Leninist current. They are a left twig of the Trotskyist branch of Stalinism.

Oehler has been receiving our literature. He knows, therefore, that we have raised very serious charges against Trotsky. If these charges were not true, it would be Oehler's duty, if he in all seriousness regarded himself as a Bolshevik, not to keep mum, as he does, but to come out open-

ly before the workers and brand us as a most vicious gang of scoundrels and calumniators. But if these charges are true — and we can substantiate every one of them with incontrovertible material — then it is his duty, if he seriously regards himself as a revolutionist, to spread these facts among the workers, warning them against one of the most poisonous and treacherous Judases within their ranks. But Oehler stays silent. And it is not due to having overlooked our existence and therefore our charges against Trotsky, because Oehler does discuss our group and its position (See the article "A Left-Trotskyite 'Analysis' of our Line" in our publication, formerly called In Defense of Bolshevism, Vol. 2, #3, April—June 1939.) No, there is a different reason for Oehler's silence with respect to our exposure of Trotsky, and that reason, we think, is not far to seek. Should Oehler make an attempt to refute our charges against Trotsky, he would get in reply a withering barrage of overwhelming documentary evidence, much of it from Trotsky's own pen. On the other hand, should he acknowledge our charges, he would have to admit much. He would have to recognize that his present position is false, that even before the "French Turn" the line in which he supported Trotsky was an opportunist line, that in fact, at no time since the Stalinization of the Comintern in 1922 has anyone in that organization held a truly Leninist position. Since Lenin's line on the question of Stalinism never left Lenin's sick room, and since Trotsky secretly betrayed Lenin and the working class at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern and at the 12th Congress of the Russian Communist Party, no one in the Comintern could have been aware of the terrible havoc of degradation of the Stalinist Central Committee and of the Comintern headed by one of Stalin's fellow-criminals, Zinoviev. In consequence, objectively, all those who blindly followed Stalin, Trotsky and the rest of the turn-coats were opportunists.

Marxism is not a matter of guesswork. It can be determined only scientifically. Unfortunately, the

scientific evaluation of Stalinism required a long time for massing of evidence and definite facts. It must be stated in all frankness that those who joined the Trotskyites in 1934, who split from them together with Oehler in 1935, and later, breaking from Oehler formed the Leninist League, did not at that time have an absolutely clear conception of the Stalinist system and its Trotskyist angle. Moreover, even our work "Stalin, Trotsky or Lenin" which was a considerable step in a correct direction, contained a very serious error on Trotsky. This book, although establishing the conscious nature of the Stalinist betrayals and the zigzag method thru which the betrayals were carried out, depicted Trotsky as being honest but confused. In reality, however, Trotsky is dishonest and is quite conscious as to the nature of the Stalinist reaction. From this point of view, the book "Stalin, Trotsky or Lenin" actually distorts Trotsky's true role in the development of the Stalinist reaction. It is after a more thorough investigation of the well-covered facts connected with the Stalinist counter-revolution that we discovered the real character of Trotsky's opportunism. Trotsky's role was that of a direct participant in the Stalinist conspiracy, actively helping to lay the foundation of Stalinism. When Stalin broke with him in the latter part of 1923, Trotsky became the chief scape-goat and, because of his complicity in the crime, was compelled to act as the foremost pillar of Stalinism. It is only when we discovered this angle and also found the essence of Lenin's line, which was buried by Trotsky, that we got a firm grasp of the central feature of the problem confronting the proletariat. The central feature is that in the task of breaking the Stalinist grip on the international working class and the first Workers State, it is necessary to unmask and destroy Trotsky politically. For he, as the chief savior of Stalinism, has been tying the subjectively anti-Stalinist revolutionary workers to the Stalinist system. At each desperate turn of history for Stalinism, whether it was Eastman's exposure, which Trotsky criminally and

consciously denied, whether it was Stalin's betrayal of the Chinese workers to Chiang Kai-shek, when Trotsky deliberately poured cold water on the aroused oppositionists, dreading that the collapse of Stalinism would bring about his own unmasking, whether it was the threat of revolution in Germany in 1932, or the beheading of the revolution in Spain, Trotsky, to save his own political hide, prevented the struggle against Stalinism. Now that the facts are known, not only to us but also to others, amongst them Oehler, those who are aware of them obviously cannot plead ignorance. The Oehlers face an alternative: either to make a clear breast of it — to throw aside all the illusions and some purest Trotskyist and Stalinist fakes; or to cling to them and pile upon them additional pro-Stalinist deceptions. It seems that Oehler is not at all ready to acknowledge facts. After Oehler left the Trotskyist organization, his group declared that altho Trotsky's line is "opportunist," today it is not "anti-working class." Even today Oehler avoids stating plainly that Trotsky is a renegade from Leninism and a conscious betrayer of the masses. Oehler speaks of "errors" of Trotsky's position ("Fighting Worker," February 1st, 1940). This is the old familiar song which in cogent words Trotsky sang for many years shielding the conscious and deliberate traitor Stalin, thus giving the anti-Stalinist workers the illusion that there was a possibility that Stalin could return to Bolshevism.

Oehler, as a "Marxist," naturally has to maintain that in working out his orientation and tactics he takes into basic account the situation within the working class. So far he, of course, keeps up his pretense that his evaluation of the situation within the proletariat is correct, and that therefore his present course, his "mass line," has a scientific basis. If Oehler, however, made an honest admission that he misunderstood the whole gigantic Stalinist system, including its Trotskyist aspect, he would have thereby to confess that he did not understand the situation within the working class. He would have to admit

that the basis of his present course was a product of error and illusion. Consequently, Oehlerism would go up in smoke, and Oehler, the mighty "mass liner," would have to learn the A B C of Leninist politics. This necessary "descent" from a self-inflated "mass liner" to a political schoolboy — a "descent" distasteful only to an opportunist, but welcome to a sincere revolutionary who knows the immense value of casting aside illusions — is another factor Oehler must take into consideration before rejecting his present course.

It is quite amusing and instructive to read in Oehler's publication, International News, Nov. 30, 1939, a complaint that in polemics against him Trotsky does not present Oehler's position. Is Oehler any the more fair to his opponents? Does Oehler present the position of his political opponents while pretending to analyze it? In an article on various groups, including ours, which appeared in Vol. V, #3 of "The Marxist" published by the Oehler group, not only is our position incorrectly presented, but is actually distorted ~~unrecognizably~~ beyond recognition. We took up this Oehlerite "analysis" in our publication (See "A Left-Trotskyite 'Analysis' of our Line," In Defense of Bolshevism Vol. 2, #3, April-June 1939) and indicated the monstrous doctoring to which Oehler subjected our line. But that is an ineradicable characteristic that is inherent in opportunism in general, and strikingly pronounced in Stalinist opportunism in particular. So, just as we have never seen Trotsky or his bureaucrats coming out with as much as one word in reply to Oehler's remarks about Trotsky not presenting Oehler's position, so have we never seen or heard of a single word from Oehler regarding his distortion of our position. We are not at all surprised. We realize that Trotsky and Oehler are too busy "fighting" capitalism, to carry on polemics in a Marxist manner. Well do we know the school of such method of polemics — it is the school of Stalinism to which political system Oehler, as well as Trotsky, belongs.

AN ULTRA-LEFTIST LINE ON FINLAND AND THE U.S.S.R.

HERE has been a heated discussion among many radical workers on the nature of the Russian State and the position to be taken in the present situation towards this State. Among ~~the~~ organizations as many positions will be found on this question. Quite unique, however, is the position presented by O. F. of the Revolutionary Communist Vanguard in The Truth, previously Creative Communism.

O. F. recognizes that capitalist economic relations do not exist in Russia and admits that, although undermined, a dictatorship of the proletariat is still to be found there:

".....the dictatorship of Labor was undermined and battered and bled, — but that it still survives is proven by the fact that capitalism in Russia is straitjacketed, cannot buy and sell as it requires, cannot exploit as it pleases, cannot trade with foreigners freely." (O. F., "For Finland's Freedom," The Truth, January 9, 1940, p. 1. My emphasis - D. S.)

O. F. recognizes that the basic features which characterize capitalist economy do not exist in Russia. Nevertheless, he declares that, while there is no private ownership of the means of production, a section of the bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeoisie, receives the essential benefit from the "Stalin machine."

"The Stalin machine (and this goes for the Communist International) is run essentially for the sake of the petty peasantry, skinflint proprietors." (Ibid. My emphasis - D. S.)

Consequently, according to The Truth what we have now in Russia is a

dictatorship of the proletariat run by the Stalin machine in the interests of an historically dependent group, the petty-bourgeoisie, which scientifically is not a class in itself, but only part of the capitalist class. Being part of the capitalist economy, the petty-bourgeoisie can exist only on the basis of capitalist economy relations. It requires bourgeois economy — private ownership of land and factories, private ownership of commodities which it can take to the open market. It requires the "sharing" of the "right" with the big bourgeoisie of hiring and exploiting labor. It must have commercial and industrial competition which exists to a greater or lesser degree in every capitalist country. And in Russia all that there is is monopoly by the State. It is not a limited petty proprietor who derives the benefits of the Russian proletarian economy. It is the million-headed Stalinist bureaucracy in industry as well as in land which, basing itself precisely on the socialized economy established by the October Revolution, has usurped political power and raised itself, in pyramid-like fashion, over the toiling masses as a privileged Russian labor aristocracy.

That O. F. has either no conception of what has occurred in Russia since Lenin's fatal illness or simply distorts the truth of what occurred, is indicated by his assertion that "the forces of the proletarian dictatorship fell under the control of Stalin-Zinoviev-Trotsky" (Ibid.). No such thing ever happened in Russia. The Triumvirate which conspired for, and seized control of the Party and the State, was Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev. Trotsky's role in relation to this Trio was an attempt to work in harmony with them, to aid them in concealing their conspiracy. But actual

control Trotsky never had during the rise of Stalinism. Unless one is clear on what happened it is impossible for one to determine what is. If O. F. does not know the development of what he is analyzing he can only confuse. If he does know, he consciously distorts.

Topping off the fantastic explanation of Russia being a dictatorship of the proletariat in the interest of the petty-bourgeoisie, O.F. puts forth the amazing conclusion that this conglomeration is under a Fascist rule! "Save Russia from Stalin Fascism," cries The Truth.

To boil down O. F.'s monstrous concoction to a single formula, what exists in Russia according to him is a dictatorship of the proletariat under a Fascist form of rule, operating in the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie. To "prove" that Russia has a Fascist form of rule, O. F. describes Fascism as "a rabble who capture power in order to violate capitalist constitutional law for the sake of capitalist social order." (Ibid.) But how can one speak of a capitalist social order in Russia and at the same time admit the fact that it is a "dictatorship of Labor" in which fundamental capitalist relations do not exist economically and therefore cannot exist politically.

What O. F. confuses with fascism is the prevention of workers democracy by the Stalinist usurpers and the establishment of a bureaucratic terror over the workers and peasants and, in fact, within the bureaucracy itself. The Stalinist bureaucracy rests parasitically on the economy established by a proletarian revolution, i.e., on a proletarian economy. This economy is misruled by Stalinism. O. F.'s contention that "the Stalin machine is run essentially for the sake of the petty peasantry, skinflint proprietors," flies in the face of the fact that Stalin drove the peasants into the collectives with a terroristic whip and thereby stifled the fundamental dream of the peasant, private ownership of a plot of land, and perhaps some day of his neighbor's plot

of land as well. As for the urban petty bourgeois, it was Stalin, strangely enough, who exterminated the N.E.P. and the conditions allowing the urban petty proprietor the private basis of his operations. While maintaining that Stalinist "fascism" rules for the petty proprietors, O.F. on the other hand admits the fact that the basis of the petty owner's thriving has been wiped out in Russia:

".....where factories and stores cannot be bargained for, where no man can charge rent, or mortgage property, or build banks and exchange commodities." (Ibid.)

Aside from all these obvious self-contradictions there is the utter falsity of his thesis that Fascism rules in the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie. Fascism takes power to save capitalist rule, and represents, as does bourgeois democracy, the rule of the imperialists. As a matter of fact, the petty-bourgeoisie is the first group within the capitalist class sacrificed by Fascism in its attempt at stabilization. This is a notorious and elementary fact about Fascism.

The Truth has a long way to go to fit its name. It confuses the entire problem of the Russian State, a decisive question today for the world proletariat. If Russia is Fascist, it is the duty of every worker to strive to overthrow both the political regime and the economy on which it rests. If, however, the economy of Russia is basically proletarian then obviously there can exist only some form of proletarian dictatorship. In actuality, the present form is one with a Stalinist bureaucratic distortion which is historically dragging the proletarian society back toward capitalism. This economy, basically proletarian, must be preserved by overthrowing the Stalinist bureaucracy. To speak of a non-capitalist country in terms which apply only to capitalism is to mislead the workers and aid the bourgeoisie.

Although recognizing a "dictatorship of labor" in Russia, O.F. sees fit to urge upon the Russian workers

a policy of "revolutionary defeatism."

"For Russia: revolutionary defeatism! Mass desertions, mutinies, For Finland: revolutionary defensism! fraternization, democratic militia, workers control of production!" (Ibid.)

By juxtaposing O.F.'s cry of "fraternization" for the Finnish soldiers and "mass desertions" for the Russian soldiers, one ends up with a picture probably unsurpassed in politics for sheer absurdity and ludicrousness. If the Russian soldiers following O.F.'s advice are leaving the front enmasse, how in the world will the Finnish soldiers, if they accept O.F.'s line, fraternize with them? The Finns will have to run after the fleeing Russians with arms outstretched, and shouting: "Hey, wait a minute, comrades, we want to fraternize with you!" And the Russians will have to reply: "Nothing doing; O. F. told us to beat it from the front enmasse." A policy of revolutionary defeatism was advocated by Lenin for capitalist countries. But Lenin did not pose desertion from the front as a Bolshevik slogan even for the soldiers in the imperialist armies. Lenin's slogan ^{was} fraternization with a view to turning an imperialist war into a proletarian war against the bourgeoisie. Small wonder that O. F., a million miles removed from Leninism, but powerfully anxious to look like a Leninist, utters outright gibberish in his "analysis" of the Russian question and the war in Finland.

Revolutionary defeatism as advocated by Lenin was a slogan applicable to imperialist wars waged by imperialists, wars which the workers have no interest in supporting. And in Russia the workers have an interest — the proletarian property relations established by the October Revolution, a fact which in a vague and evasive way is recognized by all sorts of O.F.'s. This form of property the proletariat is interested in saving, against the imperialists and against Stalin.

As to revolutionary defensism, this was the means whereby the Russian Mensheviks and S.R.'s, after the over-

throw of the Tzar, attempted to enveigle the Russian workers and peasants into resuming the imperialist war against Germany. These lackeys of the bourgeoisie proclaimed the war to be one no longer for imperialist annexations, but for "revolutionary" defense." The actual revolutionary defense of Russia began when the revolutionary proletariat seized power and established proletarian property. Then it became a war between the imperialists and the proletariat, led by a revolutionary party.

Finland is a capitalist country, exploiting proletarians and peasants. The workers of Finland have no Finland to defend. Finland as yet belongs to the Finnish capitalists and in a broad sense it is a semi-colony of American, British and other trusts. The only kind of Finland where the proletariat must apply the policy of revolutionary defense is a revolutionary, proletarian Finland. While capitalism exists in Finland the Finnish workers can have only one policy — revolutionary defeatism.

Finland is being used by the imperialists as the jumping-off ground in their attack against the proletarian economy of Stalin's Soviet Union. Materials, men and funds are being rushed by the imperialists to push the fight against the state-owned means of production. The task of the Russian workers is to save this socialized economic property, the saving of which requires as a basic prerequisite that the Russian workers rid the proletarian economy of the Stalinist bureaucracy. This is the prerequisite for victory not only of the Russian but also of the world proletariat.

The fundamental quarrel of the imperialists is not with the Stalinist bureaucracy which they know too well to be a counter-revolutionary force. The source of the antagonism here is the existence of an economy in the Stalinist Soviet Union which does not permit private ownership of retail shops, banks, of mines, factories or of their products, nor the importation of foreign capital as investment in industry as in Germany, Italy, France and all

other capitalist countries. Commodities cannot be taken by a capitalist to an open market and sold for a profit which reverts to his private coffers, for the capitalist system of production and exchange was eliminated by the proletarian revolution in 1917. This is the condition which the imperialists will attempt to replace with private ownership of the means of production — the restoration of capitalist relations in economy, and a capitalist state. They are aiming to open up Russia to the world market and imperialist exploitation, as under the Tzar.

Stalinism, whether at war or in peace, is reactionary and counter-revolutionary. In struggling to maintain its bureaucratic power it betrays the proletariat. It does not and cannot fight a revolutionary war for the benefit of the toilers. Only the Russian workers after they have removed the Stalinist bureaucracy can defend the October property relations. Stalinism, because it is at war, has not changed its reactionary nature. It has betrayed the proletariat from the moment it usurped power in 1921-22. Since that time wherever the proletariat has entered a revolutionary situation, it has been chiefly Stalinism which doomed it to defeat — in Germany, England, China, Spain, France. Stalinism has betrayed one section of the workingclass after the other and will inevitably betray the proletariat again in the present crisis. Since, war or no war, Stalinism does not change its nature, our attitude towards it also does not change. Just as in every revolutionary crisis since 1923, it is the need of the workingclass to rid itself of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Propaganda, not desertion, is the method of Leninism. Propagandize the Finnish workers on the basis of an understanding of the October Revolution, of the difference between the economy in Finland and Russia. Explain to them that the Stalinist clique, counter-revolutionary in nature and purpose, seized power bureaucratically and therefore the Russian as well as the world revolution has been prevented from

moving forward. Fraternize with the Finnish workers and peasants. They do not know that they are being used by their capitalists and world imperialists who are seeking to make a final end to what positive features remain of the October Revolution. Instead of poisoning them with the pro-capitalist opium called "revolutionary defensism" it is necessary to explain to them that any war which their capitalists pursue is not their war, that Russian workers and peasants and Finnish workers and peasants have no war with each other, that proletarian revolution is the road for the Finnish workers and peasants. That is the revolutionary road for the defense of what remains of the October Revolution. But only by removing the scourge of Stalinism can such a policy be pursued by the workers, and only such a policy can bring even the hope of success to the Russian and the world proletariat.

Those who seek the defeat of the Russian army advocate it only because of their un-Leninist reaction to the counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism. In reality they seek the defeat of the proletarianized economy established by the October Revolution a form of economy which can be established only by the proletariat taking power. To seek the defeat of this first step in the establishment of proletarian society is in reality to aid the imperialists and Russian White Guards who especially seek the defeat of socialized economy.

As against the ultra-Leftist counter-revolutionary defeatism for the Stalinized Workers State and counter-revolutionary defensism for the Finnish Bourgeois State, and against the Trotskyist "conditional" or unconditional support to the Stalinist Red Army, the Leninist League counterposes the policy for Russia: Overthrow of the Stalinist gang as the first condition for successful, revolutionary defense of the Soviet Union, fraternize at the front, offer peace;— For Finland: revolutionary defeatism, fraternization.

D. S.

February 10, 1940

THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION
"Trotsky and Shachtman vs. History"

When Lenin dropped out of the political picture, in 1922-23, the bureaucratic degeneration of the Russian Communist Party took definite shape. However, when the Trotskyites "explain" what happened during those crucial years, they tell different stories at different times and on different occasions. For instance: When did the Stalin clique gain control over the policies of the C.P.S.U.? - Which was the last Bolshevik congress and which was the first Stalinist congress of the Russian Party?

Posing as the genuine anti-Stalinist Bolsheviks, Trotsky and his aides must occasionally give some specific facts and dates bearing upon the rise of the Stalinist reaction. Trotsky tells the workers that the Twelfth Congress, which took place in April 1923, was the last Bolshevik congress, and that all subsequent congresses, beginning with the Thirteenth, were bureaucratic affairs.

"In reality, the last congress of the Bolshevik Party took place at the beginning of 1923, the 12th, Party Congress. All subsequent congresses were bureaucratic parades." (Leon Trotsky, "The Class Nature of the Soviet State," p. 25. Our emphasis)

Let us be clear about this. If the Twelfth Congress was, as Trotsky asserts, the last Leninist Congress, then according to Trotsky there were only seven Leninist Congresses held by the R.C.P. after the overthrow of the Tsar. The Eleventh Congress in March 1922, the Tenth in March 1921, the Ninth in March 1920, Eighth in April 1919, Seventh in March 1918 and the Sixth Congress of the R.C.P. in August 1917. This is a total of six Leninist congresses. Adding the Twelfth Congress of April 1923 as Trotsky does makes a total of seven Leninist congresses. But Trotsky's aide, Shachtman, gives a total of eight Bolshevik

Congresses from the period of the overthrow of the Tsar because he goes one congress further than Trotsky by including the Thirteenth Congress of May 1924 in the congresses that he says were Bolshevik. The first Stalinist congress, according to Shachtman was therefore the Fourteenth Congress:

"In the revolutionary period, between the overthrow of the Tsar and the death of Lenin, the party held eight regular party congresses (and seven conferences). The Stalinist record is quite different. The first real post-Leninist congress was the 14th, in December 1925; . . ." (The New International, January 1938, p. 9. Our emphasis)

The reader should note that when Shachtman calls the Fourteenth Congress the "first real post-Leninist congress" he does not mean it merely in a chronological sense, i.e., in the sense that it was the first held after the death of Lenin. The first Congress held after the death of Lenin was the Thirteenth Congress in May 1924. Lenin died in January 1924. By "first real post-Leninist congress" Shachtman means that the Fourteenth was the first real Stalinist congress.

Trotsky and Shachtman are obviously in contradiction with each other. In Trotsky's version the Twelfth Congress was the last Leninist, and the Thirteenth was the first Stalinist congress. In Shachtman's version, the Thirteenth was the last Leninist, and the Fourteenth was the first Stalinist.

Which one is telling the truth? Which was the last Leninist and which the first Stalinist congress of the R.C.P.?

Facts reveal that both Trotsky and Shachtman are falsifying the history of the R.C.P. History proves that the last Leninist Congress was the Eleventh and the first Stalinist Congress was

the Twelfth.

The Twelfth Congress was the one for which Lenin wrote his voluminous letter on the National Question (the "bomb" against Stalin) and at which he planned the removal of Stalin from his post, together with a complete exposure of the Stalin clique on all questions:

"Lenin was now preparing not only to remove Stalin from his post of general secretary, but to disqualify him before the party as well. On the question of monopoly of foreign trade, on the national question, on the question of the regime in the party, of the workers-peasants inspection, and of the commission of control, he was preparing to deliver AT THE TWELFTH CONGRESS a crushing blow at Stalin as personifying bureaucracy, the mutual shielding among officials, arbitrary rule and general rudeness." (L. Trotsky, My Life, pp. 480-1. My emphasis, S.E.B.)

Due to his illness, Lenin was unable to appear at the Congress. Lenin's "bomb" against Stalin was entrusted to Trotsky. On March 16, 1923, Lenin's secretary wrote Trotsky and Kamenev (then president of the Politburo), an official communication stating that Lenin authorized Trotsky to defend Lenin's position at the Twelfth Congress. (L. Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 70)

For the Twelfth Congress, therefore, there were two diametrically opposed, mutually exclusive lines: one, that of the Stalin gang aimed at bureaucratically usurping power; the other, the line proposed by Lenin and entrusted to Trotsky to carry out the political and organizational destruction of the Stalin faction. A close study of historical facts reveals that at the Twelfth Congress Trotsky, instead of exploding Lenin's "bomb" in Stalin's face, in actuality gave his unreserved support to Stalin and the Stalinist line. The Twelfth Congress was marked by the unanimous acceptance of all the policies of the Stalinist Central Committee.

"The XII Party Congress was the first conducted without Lenin. All the resolutions of the Party Congress were passed unanimously. When the Party Congress accepted the general resolution on the policy of the Central Committee without a single abstention or contrary voice, all the delegates arose and sang the 'International.' All felt the historic significance of that moment." (Die Internationale, June 1, 1923, p. 325)

Zinoviev, Stalin's ally in the Troika, proclaimed with regard to this Congress "All our resolutions have been adopted unanimously." (Pravda, April 26, 1923).

The Stalin gang was victorious because Trotsky did not carry forward the line entrusted to him by Lenin. That victory was possible, that victory was in Trotsky's hands during the period of preparations for the Twelfth Congress is admitted by Trotsky himself.

"And what is more, I have no doubt that if I had come forward on the eve of the twelfth congress in the spirit of a 'bloc of Lenin and Trotsky' against the Stalin bureaucracy, I should have been victorious even if Lenin had taken no direct part in the struggle." (L. Trotsky, My Life, p. 481)

"If I had come forward," says Trotsky, thereby clearly indicating that he did not do so. Trotsky's not coming forward with Lenin's line to carry it forward to the victory which was in his hands was precisely the piece of treachery that made the victory of Stalinism possible. With Lenin's line buried by Trotsky at the Twelfth Congress, the Stalinist line of usurpation of power in the workers state became the dominating keynote of the new epoch that has set in, the epoch of the Stalinist conspiracy. Trotsky's betrayal of Lenin's line and ~~of~~ the workers in favor of an effort to work in harmony with the Stalin clique became at the same time the es-

sence of post-Leninist, pro-Stalinist Trotskyism.

Like the competent criminals they are, the Trotskyite bureaucrats are careful to divert attention from the scene of their crimes. If the workers imagine that the Twelfth Congress was a Leninist affair it will not even enter their mind that this was precisely the occasion ~~at which the partnership~~ of Trotsky and the Stalin clique was officially established in the development of the Stalinist degeneration of the workers state. One of the milestones of the Trotskyite system of treachery will therefore remain concealed, and the role of Trotsky as an ally of the Stalinist clique will remain unexposed.

serious thought to the question of the congresses — knowing the facts which we reveal — they can see from the Trotskyites' inconsistencies that all was not Leninist at the Twelfth and Thirteenth Congresses in which Trotsky actively participated. It is in order to cover up for Trotsky's anti-Leninist actions at the Twelfth Congress that Shachtman for good measure throws even the Thirteenth Congress into the Leninist category.

The game of concealing Trotsky's pro-Stalinist role often forces the Trotskyites to the point where they forget that they should consult each other in order, at least, to peddle a lie consistently.

Naturally, if the workers give

S. E. Benson

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