

FIVE CENTS

JAN.-FEB. 1945

THE BULLETIN

APOLOGISTS FOR IMPERIALISM

(ON THE NAZI ADVANCE IN BELGIUM)

THE TROTSKYITES IN THE RECENT ELECTIONS

-ARTHUR BURKE

CANNON'S "STRUGGLE FOR A PROLETARIAN PARTY" **Concluding Installment**

-GEORGE MARLEN

THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION

AN ALIBY AND WHAT IT CONCEALS

THE RED STAR PRESS

P. O. BOX 67 STATION D

NEW YORK

HXI
W6 B8
v. 8-9

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Address Communication to:

The Red Star Press
P.O.B. 67
Station D
New York City

APOLOGISTS FOR IMPERIALISM
(As Seen in the Light of the Nazi
Advance into Belgium)

THE ways in which the opportunists render service to the bourgeoisie are diverse and numerous. One way is to cover up the "strange" and "mysterious" features of the so-called "Second World Imperialist War." These mysterious features characterize all phases of the imperialist machinations since Chamberlain read his declaration of war on Nazi Germany. The "mystery" of no aid from the "Allies" to Poland while the Nazi butchers were sweeping through Poland, the "mystery" of the "Sitzkrieg," which lasted from September 1939 to May 1940, the "mystery" of the opening of the gates to the Nazis in France in May 1940 were either hushed up or explained away by the capitalist press. And that tactic was invariably followed by the opportunists within the working class. A most recent example is the "mystery" of the Nazi establishment of the "bulge" in Belgium. Let us briefly review the event, trace the tactic pursued in that case by the imperialist newspapers, and then examine the line applied by a certain "Marxist" organization on the Nazi move into Belgium.

* * *

ON December 17, 1944 the world was startled by the news that on the previous day the Nazi army had launched what was described as a huge counter-offensive in Belgium. The news of the Nazi advance was particularly shocking to the masses since the "Allied" imperialists for a long time had assiduously spread stories that the Nazi army was on its last legs, that the Luftwaffe had been knocked out of the skies, that the munitions industry in Germany had been badly crippled if not obliterated.

Be it recalled that in 1940 following the rapid Nazi occupation of Holland, Belgium and France, one of the major "explanations" for that amazing situation was the alleged overwhelming Nazi air superiority. Conversely, when the "Allies" landed on the

continent, and effected a rapid advance through France, the official cry was that the Luftwaffe had virtually disappeared. It is a patent fact that the British and American air forces as well as all the material resources of these two powers are not only overwhelmingly superior to anything now in existence but are also the greatest that history has ever seen. Hence, when on December 16, 1944 the Nazis began an advance into Belgium it was simply impossible for the capitalist propagandists to pretend that the Nazis had achieved air superiority or even equality with the "Allies."

Consequently, the very first reports on the Nazi advance into Belgium played up the overwhelming Allied air activity. Two days after the Nazi move opened up, the following general picture of "Allied" aerial activity was presented:

"Outnumbering the German fighters as much as 10 to 1, the Allied fighters along the entire front accounted for at least 113 out of 550 planes put over the lines by the Germans yesterday and the night before." (New York Post, December 18, 1944)

The Nazi ground forces, especially their tanks and armored vehicles, were reported as having been violently attacked by the "Allied" air force:

"Ninth Air Force Headquarters in Belgium said hundreds of Thunderbolts and Lightnings pounced on concentrations of as many as 300 to 400 tanks and armored vehicles with rockets, bombs and machine guns as part of the Allied reaction." (Ibid.)

While the Nazi air force was reported to be unusually active, the first dispatches spoke of this renewed activity having been successfully met and already on the downgrade:

"The German air force continued

its bombing and strafing last night, but its diminished effort indicated that possibly the Luftwaffe already was spent as a result of prohibitive losses." (Ibid.)

The next day, a lead editorial in The New York Times presented a similar picture of the air situation :

"The American Armies have struck back in force, and the American and British air forces have thrown thousands of planes into the battle, outnumbering the Luftwaffe ten to one." (December 19, 1944)

What was forthcoming in this particular imperialist game, however, was a rapid Nazi advance into a part of Belgium. When the moment came to report publicly the geographical scope of this advance, the "Allied" propagandists were immediately ready with their excuses to confuse and befuddle the masses. Naturally, the moment they began to give excuses they had to contradict themselves and give the lie to the previous stories. We have seen in the above-cited initial reports a picture of the Nazi air force successfully repulsed and powerful attacks made on the Nazi ground forces, particularly on the tank and armored divisions. All of a sudden, in line with the flood of excuses, came an entirely different story which declared that "Allied" bombing of the Nazi forces had been prevented by fog. In the report covering the first week of the Nazi advance, The New York Times editors declared:

"For seven straight days the Germans had the protection of dense fog covering the whole area. Their tanks and motorized infantry had raised havoc within the battle area and the Allies had not been able to use their great air superiority for reconnaissance and attack." (December 24, 1944)

The new story about "General Weather" became one of the main excuses to explain away the rapid Nazi advance:

"General Weather, with one sweep of his foggy, dripping hand, nulli-

fied an air superiority that had been built up at great cost and over months of effort." (The New York Times, December 26, 1944)

At the same time that the fog story was being used to talk the Anglo-American air-power out of existence, the picture was being presented of the Nazi air force suddenly having at the start of the move into Belgium unusual facility of operation. For example, a New York Times report on the Nazi advance spoke of "The Luftwaffe, which at the opening of the offensive was dive-bombing and strafing the American ground forces with a freedom it had not enjoyed since 1942-43 in Tunisia, is being brought to battle all along the front." (December 24, 1944. Our emphasis)

The alibi presented by the imperialists is not only self-contradictory but ludicrous. It is obvious that if there was a fog for the "Allies," there was also a fog for the Nazis. Yet somehow, if we believe the reports, this very peculiar fog showed a very mysterious partiality, acting against only the "Allied" air force. It is interesting in this connection to note the sarcastic remark made by General March, a former Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army:

"General March would not accept the theory that the weather interfered especially in Allied operations.

"I never saw it snow on one side and not on the other," he said. "(The New York Times, December 28, 1944)

* * *

ACCORDING to an editorial in The New York Times of December 22, 1944, "the present German drive is being conducted by some 200,000 men, comprising five to six armored divisions, and eight to nine mixed infantry divisions." The assembling of such a big attacking force took place over a period of weeks, and, as is seen from the capitalist press, was made fully known to the "Allied" Command through its air reconnaissance:

"An offensive as big as that launched by Marshal von Rundstedt cannot be mounted in a few days. It takes weeks. During the period when central reserves were being moved up from the Reich, while heavy guns and armor were being transported, and Luftwaffe units mobilized within fighter distance of the front line, this activity must have been noticed by U.S. and British aerial reconnaissance. It was, they tell us. Our flying observers duly reported that there was plenty going on back of German advanced echelons." (PM, December 22, 1944. Original emphasis)

Confirmation of this report is given in The New York Times of December 19, 1944 which shows that the Nazi preparations had been noted two weeks in advance: "On the other hand, the German movement into the area where the counter-offensive is now taking place had been observed in the past two weeks."

It was shown in the capitalist press that the idea of a Nazi forward move was clearly in the mind of the "Allied" command and they even indicated explicitly its locale:

"Three weeks ago the commanding officers of the U.S. 1st Army, now bearing the brunt of the Nazi offensive, told CBS correspondent William S. Shirer that they were fully aware of the possibility of a German attack and guessed correctly where it might come." (PM, December 22, 1944. Original emphasis)

The correspondent, William S. Shirer, stated that the area of the Nazi "breakthrough" of December 16 was clearly delineated on maps shown to him by the First Army leaders at the time he spoke to them, about two weeks before the "Attack:"

"At the time I spoke to these 1st Army men, they pulled out maps to show where the Germans might strike — and where they eventually did strike." (Ibid.)

In former situations on the "West-

ern Front," the alibi of "surprise" was given in an attempt to explain away the lack of real opposition. THE BULLETIN has exposed this fraud and shown that both the Nazi and Allied leaders had complete advance knowledge of each other intended military movements.

In the present situation, too, the often used fable of "surprise" has been pulled out again to explain away the ease with which the Nazi armies advanced into Belgium:

"The initial successes of the enemy in this battle, which may stop or considerably delay the Allied winter offensive and may lengthen the war, have been directly the product of surprise." (The New York Times, December 20, 1944)

Thus, in the face of advance knowledge by the "Allied" leaders of the existence of a large concentration of Nazi forces facing the American First Army, of the exact area where the Nazi drive was to begin, the fraudulent excuse of "surprise" is offered by the hirelings of the bourgeois press.

* * *

FROM the camp of certain self-styled Marxists the usual echoes of the fakery of the imperialists were promptly forthcoming in connection with the December 16th Nazi advance into Belgium. We may take as an example the "explanations" offered by Shachtman's Workers Party. In the face of the reported "Allied" knowledge two weeks in advance of the intended Nazi movement, the Shachtmanites put out the explanation of—surprise!

"The complete surprise and brilliant gains won by the German army stand as a sharp criticism of the Allied military leaders, who were caught flat-footed by the offensive." (Labor Action, January 1, 1945, p.3)

Even in the bourgeois press, as we have shown, the news filtered through that well in advance of December 16 the "Allied" command had the

idea of a forthcoming Nazi forward move and even indicated on maps its specific locale. Shachtman, however, ignores this. Shachtman's paper peddles the excuse so convenient for the imperialists that the "Allied" command "totally misinterpreted" the forthcoming Nazi moves:

"Significantly, there had been reports of German 'reserves' pouring into the front. These movements had been seen. But they were totally misinterpreted. The Allied high command assumed that these German troops marching to the front were replacements." (Ibid.)

Obviously the Shachtmanites' explanations are just word-for-word repetition of the fakery spread by the imperialists and used to cover up their machinations. In spreading the alibis of "surprise" and Allied "misinterpretation" of Nazi movements to account for the Nazi advance in Belgium the Shachtmanites act as a transmission belt for the imperialists amongst the subjectively anti-imperialist minded workers.

* * *

I N the Shachtman press the line of explanations for every "mysterious" occurrence in the "Second World War" closely follows the pattern established by the capitalist press. Indeed, this method is not confined to the Shachtman tendency alone but is common among all the pseudo-Marxist parties and groups, beginning with the Browder crew and ending with the Oehler group (Revolutionary Workers League). From the very start, when the Nazi panzer divisions blazed their bloody path across Poland, while the British and French imperialists did not lift a finger against the Nazi forces, it was obvious that the "war" was totally unlike the real war of 1914. The 1939 "war" was in reality the continuation of the previously elaborated policy of grooming the Nazis for the role of a spearhead in a military assault upon the Soviet Union. Prior to September 1939 this policy was cloaked with the fraud of "appeasing" Hitler; in September 1939 it was cloaked with

a pretense of war "against" Nazi Germany.

No sooner had Chamberlain read his paper declaration of war than all the opportunists within the working class in chorus supported the illusion. The Comintern gang, pretending that Stalin's "wise foreign policy" had turned the Nazi spearhead to the West, announced that a new imperialist war had broken out. Once the Stalinists launched this fakery they had to continue with it even after the Soviet Union was attacked. The pernicious fraud of a real war amongst the imperialists which completely distorted and concealed the truth of the situation, was immediately echoed directly and indirectly by the Shachtmans and all the other "Bolsheviks."

The unfolding "war" was the very opposite from 1914. There was not even a show of fighting. That phase, lasting almost eight months, was ridiculed even by the capitalist correspondents who labelled it "the phoney war," "the sitzkrieg," "the second bore war." But the Stalinist Comintern and its "revolutionary" "opponents," the Trotskyites and half-Trotskyites, persisted in stressing that the situation represented a real war amongst the big imperialist powers.

All the opportunists and also the capitalist spokesmen were soon relieved of their uncomfortable position when the stage of movement superseded the "sitzkrieg." But now they were confronted with the problem of explaining how it was possible for the Nazi panzer divisions to cross the hundred and some miles of sea and descend on Norway under the very nose of the powerful British Navy. It was a troublesome moment both for the opportunists and the imperialists. One correspondent, Leland Stowe, spilled the secret that the British had sent a handful of young recruits, without anti-aircraft guns and minus necessary equipment to "stop" the Nazi army. The Norway affair caused a scandal in Britain and was instrumental in the removal of Chamberlain. But the main secret, that of the sham war "against" Nazi Germany, was preserved, and the Browders, Can-

nons, Shachtmans and Oehlers helped to preserve that secret.

A similar situation, only on an infinitely larger scale than in Norway obtained when the "democratic" imperialists flung open the gates of France and brought in the Nazi butchers to crush the workers and plant a Fascist regime in that country. Echoing the whole gamut of the bourgeois "explainers" whose basic tone was "France" suffered a military "debacle," the Shachtmans of all shades sang about the "superiority" of the Nazi war machine, about the "sell-out" of the French generals, about the "division" within the ranks of the French imperialists. The truth that the Nazis were brought in through the collaboration of all the world imperialist ruling gangs was concealed with the smoke-screen of these fake explanations.

Similarly the farcical "defense" of Greece and Crete performed by the British in 1941, the two-year game in the African desert, the "mysterious" ways in which Rommel transported his army and brought supplies across the

Mediterranean which was under the complete control of the British Navy, the "mysterious" Pearl Harbor affair, the amazing "feats" of the Japanese imperialists who in a few days landed without opposition on the most vital spots in the Far East and who took over Malaya, Burma, "captured" Singapore, probably the mightiest fortress in the world, the "strange" refusal on the part of the British to give permission to a large Chinese army to attack the smaller Japanese force — all was covered up by the Browders, Cannons and Shachtmans who echoed the capitalist journalists. At times the Shachtmans attempted to give a "Marxist" color to the "explanations." In such cases they would concoct "facts" of their own and present them to the workers as true historical events (see "Labor Action's Own 'Facts' On Malaya and Burma," THE BULLETIN, September 1942)

There can hardly be any doubt that the imperialists could never play their terrible game if it were not for the political aid given them by the opportunists within the working class.

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* * *

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THESE ISSUES ARE FREE

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY
and the
WORKERS PARTY
in the
RECENT ELECTIONS

I - A TYPICAL TROTSKYITE POLICY
IN READING, PA.

IN October 28, 1944, The Militant informed its readers that the Socialist Workers Party (Cannonite) Branch in Reading, Pa. told the workers to vote for the Socialist Party during the recent elections:

"The Reading Branch of the Socialist Workers Party in Pennsylvania is giving critical support to the local candidates of the Socialist Party in the November elections" (p. 3)

As a rationalization for this line The Militant advanced the following:

"Many workers in Reading still believe that the S.P. represents, in some vague sort of way, the idea of 'socialism.' In going through the experience of the election with the advanced workers of Reading the Socialist Workers Party does not cease its irreconcilable criticism of the policies and program of the S.P." (Ibid.)

Thus, a hazy idea on the part of the misled Social Democratic workers in Reading that the S.P. "in some vague sort of way" represents Socialism is palmed off by the Cannonite leaders as an excuse to counsel support to this treacherous agency of imperialism. According to the logic used by the Cannonite leaders, the S.P. should have been supported not only in Reading but on a national scale as well. The belief that the S.P. represents the idea of Socialism is prevalent not only amongst its misled followers in Reading but wherever followers of the S.P. exist.

The erroneous faith of some workers in the "Socialism" of the S.P. is beyond doubt a justification for exposing the S.P., but only the "logic"

of the Cannonites can distort this situation into grounds for urging support to the reactionary "Socialist" outfit.

The same sophistry can be used to peddle support to the Stalinists for there are many workers who believe that Stalinism represents Socialism. As a matter of fact, the argument used for supporting the admittedly counter-revolutionary organization of the Social Democracy was applied by the Cannonites in the past to explain support to other reactionary outfits of widely varying natures. For example, when the Cannonites supported the Stalinist stooge, Eugene Connolly, in March 1941, they employed an identical method of argumentation:

"I can hear the sectarians shout that Connolly is not really against the imperialist war; his program is an isolationist and pacifist program. To that we answer that the workers supporting Connolly THINK that he actually will be a fighter against the imperialist war. We don't like the program and we have not hesitated to say so. But the fact remains that the ALP is CONSIDERED by the workers as an anti-war party." (The Militant, March 15, 1941, p. 4. My capitals - A.B.)

In this particular instance, then, the tragic illusion of the Stalinist followers concerning their own leadership was used by Cannon and Co, as a basis for urging the workers to vote the treacherous Stalinist bandits into office.

So agile are the Cannonite leaders that at certain periods not even mistaken ideas among the workers about Social Democratic and Stalinist parties are put forth as an excuse for giving aid to these counter-revolution-

ary organizations. For example, in October 1942, the Cannonites had the line of supporting Dean Alfange, a Tammany Hall hack backed by the Rose-Antonini gang in the ALP. In that situation neither the candidate nor the rotten crew supporting him pretended to represent, even remotely, socialism in any form. This did not at all deter the Cannon leadership from backing Alfange with essentially the same excuse given for supporting Connolly:

"The Socialist Workers Party gave critical support to Dean Alfange when he ran for Governor of New York State in 1942 as the ALP candidate, despite the fact that his program was a reactionary one. Alfange was an independent candidate of the ALP, running in 1942 in opposition to the candidates of the capitalist parties. A vote for Alfange was a blow at capitalist politics, and served to rally the working class behind the idea of independent labor politics and an independent labor party." (The Militant, February 26, 1944, p. 2. My emphasis - A. B.)

From one viewpoint, the Cannonite policy has its ludicrous as well as its reactionary aspects. If mistaken ideas of rank-and-file workers about "independent labor action" or "Socialism" is a basis for whipping up support to a counter-revolutionary organization, then just imagine the plight of a naive follower of Cannon who accepts wholeheartedly this criterion and attempts to apply it when the Labor Party, Socialist Party and Stalinist Party all run candidates at the same time for the same posts!

The Cannonite workers who accept the Trotsky organization as revolutionary are being misled by their leaders into supporting opportunism in one form or another. That this support has a "critical" cover is only a reflection of the fact that the Trotsky leaders have to foist their policies on their own followers who have already broken subjectively with Stalinism and Social Democracy, and know full well that these forces are counter-revolutionary. To follow the politics of the Trotskyist leadership

means to render aid to reaction. This truth is concretely shown in a continuous line of "critical" support given by the Trotsky leaders to Stalin's Comintern from 1923 to late 1933, to the rotten Social Democracy in the "French Turn," to the capitalist Loyalist Government in Spain, and since that time to various union bureaucrats like John L. Lewis, Homer Martin, again to the Comintern as exemplified in the support to the Stalinist stooge, Connolly, to labor fakers like Rose-Antonini, and continuing, as we see, to the rotten Social Democracy.

II - THE APPLICATION OF THE TROTSKY LINE TO MICHIGAN

In February, 1944 a Michigan Committee For The Promotion of A Farmer Labor Party issued a call for a state-wide study Conference to be held on March 4, 1944. The outcome of this Conference was the Michigan Commonwealth Federation, headed by Matthew Hammond, a CIO pie-card artist flanked in the leadership predominantly by minor bureaucrats of the Reuther caucus in the United Automobile Workers Union.

Some revelations appearing in The Militant about the politics of these leaders of the M. C. F. give a clear indication as to the true character and role of this movement. For one thing, the leadership of this new outfit went along with the Stalinists and top CIO bureaucrats in pledging adherence to Wall Street's Democratic party in the 1944 elections. This was reported by The Militant in a discussion of a Convention of the Michigan State CIO in July 1944:

"No resolution in opposition to the class collaboration policy of the CIO leadership was broached by the MCF head. The failure of the MCF leadership to carry the battle into the trade unions finally reached its logical conclusion when to the astonishment of the Convention delegates MCF head Hammond agreed with the Stalinist Ganley, business agent of Local 155, that the CIO endorse the Democratic ticket in November." (The Militant, July 22, 1944, p. 5)

The Militant had no illusions as to the mainspring of the crooked policy of the MCF leaders. It was a policy fashioned to conform with that of the patrid top leaders of the CIO:

"Those leaders of the MCF who under cover of a fake militancy refused to conduct a real struggle for the support of the union ranks during the formation of the MCF revealed at the Michigan CIO convention the true source of their hesitancy and false policy. They fear to clash with the top CIO bureaucrats." (The Militant, July 29, 1944, Editorial)

Does the MCF, then, answer the Cannonite qualifications for an "independent labor party"? History shows that Cannonite qualifications are extremely flexible. Indeed, the openly class-collaborationist MCF is pictured by the S.W.P. leaders as an Independent Labor Party, though not fully developed:

"It would be an exaggeration to call the MCF a full-fledged Independent Labor Party." (Ibid., August 12, 1944, p. 1)

Developing this fraud further, the Trotskyite leaders, approximately six weeks after this statement appeared, assured the workers that a vote for the MCF was equivalent to a vote for an "independent labor party"!

"The results of the Michigan elections will be closely watched by the entire labor movement. A vote for the MCF, therefore, is not only a vote cast in favor of an independent labor party in Michigan but a vote for labor's independent political action on a national scale." (The Militant, October 28, 1944, p.3, Emphasis in original)

It is clear that the SWP line on a labor party is a device chaining the workers to opportunism. Adherence to the Trotskyist leadership is direct support to these crooked "labor" politicians who are a prop to capitalism.

III - SHACHTMAN IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SWP

THE Michigan Commonwealth Federation has come in for close scrutiny also on the part of the Workers Party (Shachtmanites). Like the Cannonites, the Shachtman Trotskyites are well aware of the reactionary character of this movement. Labor Action quoted Matthew Hammond, leader of the MCF, to show his reactionary line:

"But Hammond, unable to restrain himself, took the floor on a point of special privilege and stated with some heat: 'As far as I am concerned the best way of re-electing Roosevelt is the formation of this party. That is the only way he will carry the state.'" (Labor Action, March 20, 1944, p. 2)

And on March 27, 1944 (p. 2), Labor Action noted that:

"Not a single leading member of the committee took the floor to challenge this point of view."

Behind the scenes, the rotten MCF gang worked with the top CIO bureaucrats for the common aim of tying the workers to Wall Street's rule. At the Michigan State CIO convention, R. J. Thomas' crooked negotiations with the MCF leaders, taking place behind the backs of the naive MCF supporters, became visible:

"R. J. Thomas threw a bombshell into the MCF when he reported that at a meeting with Sidney Hillman in New York, held at the request of 'leading members of the MCF,' the latter pledged to support the candidates endorsed by the PAC and that this was the policy of the MCF. NOT ONE SPOKESMAN OF THE MCF CHALLENGED THIS REPORT ON THE FLOOR OF THE CONVENTION. On the contrary, their role at the conference sessions confirmed Thomas." (Labor Action, May 8, 1944, p. 3. Capitals in original)

Thus, the new MCF already exhibits a characteristic inherent in every op-

portunist organization: a group of bureaucratic leaders who engage in shady back-door deals and dirty intrigue.

And what conclusion did the Shachtman Trotskyites draw for the workers concerning the MCF? Only those blind to the real role of the Shachtman tendency will be surprised:

"For independent labor candidates UNDER THE MCF BANNER." (Ibid. My capitals - A. B.)

The Shachtman leaders are preventing the workers from realizing that any candidate under the banner of the MCF or any similar disguised bourgeois party is not an independent labor candidate, does not symbolize independent labor action, but represents and works for capitalism. The rottenness of the MCF leaders who struck up a horse-deal with Hillman to support Wall Street is supplemented by the political double-dealing of the Shachtman leaders.

IV - SOPHISTRY IN THE SERVICE OF WALL STREET

THE Shachtman leaders have scores of methods of supporting reactionary movements which bolster capitalism. Shachtman's sophistry is that an organization whose mass base consists of workers and which if organizationally separate from the bourgeois parties, is a threat to capitalism even though that organization politically supports capitalism. A case in point is the Shachtmanite attitude toward Hillman's PAC. Speaking of the powerful campaign that reactionary outfit whipped up in the recent elections, the Shachtmanites recognize that the workers who fell into the snares of the PAC were simply chained to Wall Street:

"But all of this was done for the Democratic Party." (Labor Action, November 20, 1944)

That is on the one hand. On the other hand, the Shachtman leaders gave Hillman a left-handed support by spinning a tale that his PAC, an appendage to the Roosevelt machine, represented a threat to capitalist society — no less!

"The leaders of the Republican Party are perfectly aware of the dangers which the PAC represents to capitalist society as a whole." (The New Internationalist, October 1944)

History holds many examples of workers being gathered together in separate organizations on a reactionary political line invariably for the support of capitalism. The outstanding example of all times is that of the Stalinist workers in Germany prior to the rise of Hitler to power in 1933. The most radical workers were gathered by the millions around a party which organizationally was separate from all other organizations, bourgeois or Social Democratic. This party was the Stalinist Party. In elections, the candidate of this Party was Ernst Thaelmann, who ran organizationally completely independent of all parties in Germany. In this respect, the German workers were far more "independent" than those around the PAC who were tricked into supporting the candidate of another, openly capitalist organization. Thus in the case of the radical workers of Germany, the condition set by Shachtman as constituting a threat to capitalist society as a whole were completely fulfilled by the case of the Stalinist Party of Germany. Did that situation constitute in reality a threat of any sort whatsoever to German capitalism? Every Shachtmanite worker knows that the answer to this question is NO!

What was the crucial factor? Obviously it was the political line which the workers followed that determined the outcome. The Stalinist political line was a prop to capitalism, and the organizational independence of the Stalinist Party led the workers to imagine that they stood opposed to capitalism. Incidentally, in that situation, the Trotsky leaders, including Shachtman, urged the workers to vote for the Stalinist candidate.

What is crucial in the case of the PAC is not the feature that it gave the workers organizational "independence." The point is that the PAC tied the workers to the bourgeoisie politically. The organizational inde-

pendence was merely a blind used for fooling those workers who are disgusted with the bourgeois parties and who are sick-and-tired of voting directly and unblushingly for the Wall Street candidates. By means of partially satisfying these workers by giving them organizational independence, the Hillman gang was able to cheat them into following the old line of voting for Wall Street.

The workers who supported the PAC did not act in the interests of the proletariat; these workers are exactly where they were before politically, only they falsely imagine that they have moved forward. They have fallen hook, line and sinker for Hillman's ruse about "organizational independence." In that job of trapping the workers the Hillmans were aided by the sham Marxist, Shachtman.

* * *

It is a tragic fact that there are many confused workers who believe that in voting for these fraudulent "independent" labor parties they are voting for the idea of independent labor action. The correct line for advanced workers is to counter-act this mistaken notion and to create the understanding among the workers that in voting for swindle outfits such as the MCF they are actually voting not only against independent labor action concretely, but even against the idea of independent labor action. The Trotskyite leaders, on the other hand, reinforce the illusions of the workers that a vote for certain specific "labor" crooks symbolizes a vote for the correct idea of independent working class action against the bourgeoisie. The sophistry of the Trotsky leaders in practice ties the workers to the "labor" crooks and prevents the correct idea from ever being concretized.

realize the reactionary political nature of the "labor" parties of the MCF type, but accept the Trotskyite sophistry that the workers in supporting these parties in that action symbolizes their desire for independence from the bourgeoisie. It must be realized, however, that the political life of the working class does not consist of going about symbolizing things. Support of the reactionary "labor" parties is a concrete act. In voting for the MCF the workers are concretely supporting capitalism. Regardless of what the workers who come to support the MCF may feel, concretely they have only continued their previous condition of subservience to the bourgeoisie, only now in a disguised form. The bourgeoisie on their side also act concretely. They disregard entirely the "symbolical" aspects of the situation and behind the scenes make deals with the "labor" party leaders who betray the workers. The capitalists know that the fraudulent "labor" parties are part and parcel of their own political machinery and use them accordingly.

The task of Marxism is to make the action of workers who are moving Leftward correspond with their sentiments. Shachtman and Cannon's line reinforces the separation which exists between the desires of the workers for independence and their actions perpetuating adherence to the bourgeoisie. The Leftward moving workers must from the very outset of their transformation be led away from the various political traps which operate under the organizational cloak of independence while supporting the capitalist class. The workers must be imbued with the understanding that only an organization which rejects such sophistry as employed by the pseudo-Marxists can stand on the ground of proletarian independence.

Some politically advanced workers

A. Burke

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THE TROTSKYITES VOTE INDEPENDENT

THE BETRAYAL OF THE MINERS

DEFENDERS OF THE TRADE UNION BUREAUCRACY

CANNON'S "STRUGGLE
FOR A
PROLETARIAN PARTY"
(Concluding Installment)

TO the Shachtman-Abern-Burnham forces the results of the October 1939 Plenary Session of the Political Committee, which gave the Cannon majority full control of that body, were neither a surprise nor cause for dismay. The outcome only steeled their determination to break the organizational link with Cannon. The ranks of the Minority saw further proof of their fixed conviction that Cannon held the S. W. P. under an unbreakable bureaucratic control. The American Trotskyites were reaching a point in their history when it would no longer be possible for Cannon and his Opposition to continue under one roof.

Following the Cannon-Shachtman split in May 1940, the story was systematically spread inside both groups and among the workers on the periphery of the Trotsky camp that the key to the rift lay in the difference on the question of the nature of the Russian state. This fable has been cultivated also by the leaders of the Revolutionary Workers League (Oehlerites). They say "Max Shachtman broke with Trotsky and Cannon in 1940 over the question of the nature of the Soviet Union." (International News, September 1944) This statement holds no truth whatsoever.

A close investigation will uncover the actual reason for the breach. Divested of the verbal camouflage, the documentary material issued by both sides during the factional struggle indicates clearly that the only factor involved was the factor of leadership. This issue of bureaucratic rivalry between the two foremost leaders of the American Trotskyist movement was euphemistically referred to by both factions as the "question of the regime." While the leadership of both factions generally pretended that the fight was on grounds of "theory" and "principle" each side accused the other of pushing forward to first place the "regime"

issue. Thus Cannon accused Shachtman:

"In reality the opposition tried from the beginning of the dispute to make the question of the 'regime' the first issue; the basic cadres of the opposition were recruited precisely on this issue before the fundamental theoretical and political differences were fully revealed and developed." ("The Struggle For a Proletarian Party," p. 10. Emphasis in original.)

And Shachtman accused Cannon:

"The initiative in introducing the question of 'regime' was taken not by the minority but by the Cannon faction." (The War and Bureaucratic Conservatism, reprinted in Cannon's "The Struggle For a Proletarian Party," p. 264)

In their own perverted way, both were telling the truth on this point, for they both fought in reality first and foremost — entirely, to be completely accurate — on the question of regime. The accusations and counter-accusations on this score were simply the device by which each group of leaders tried to shift the blame for the faction squabble on its rivals. This is known in the inner circles of bureaucrats as "strategy."

Since the faction fight in the S. W. P. had been going on before Stalin's attack on Finland, prior to the Stalin-Hitler partition of Poland, before the Nazi attack on Poland and even before the Stalin-Hitler Pact which initiated this whole series of events, it is plain that the "Russian Question" was the subsequently cooked-up "theoretical" cover of that fight. The factional cauldron had been simmering for more than two years and the actual fight had broken out on the eve of the so-called "auto crisis" when the Political Committee was numerically domin-

ated by the Shachtman-Abern-Burnham bloc.

That the question of the class character of the Soviet Union was of no basic importance to either side can be found in the records. The denial of the proletarian nature of the Stalin-dominated state was neither a splitting nor an expulsion issue with the whole Trotsky leadership for many years. In their unprincipledness, the Cannon-Shachtman coalition welcomed into their party and even into its leading posts people who had a blurred view of the Russian question or who rejected outright the Trotskyist position on the Soviet State. In 1937, before the S. W. P. had been formed, Burnham, within the Trotsky group, had openly dissociated himself from the Trotsky line on the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, Cannon did all he could to gratify Burnham's opportunist ambitions. That bourgeois intellectual adventurer was freely accorded "...all the recognition and the 'honors' of a prominent leader of the party..." (J.P. Cannon, "The Struggle For a Proletarian Party," p. 20) While in receipt of Cannon's high favors, Burnham not only did not abandon his own position on the Russian state, but proceeded to systematize it.

Significantly enough, Cannon shut his eyes to the fact that Burnham rejected the basic proletarian materialist philosophy. Moreover, Cannon "overlooked" Burnham's repudiation of the Trotskyist position on the Soviet Union and placed him on the editorial board of the official Trotskyist magazine, The New Internationalist.

That the position on the Russian question had very little import in the mind of the leaders of the Abern-Shachtman-Burnham bloc was brought out with damning sharpness at the October 1939 Plenum of the Political Committee. The positions of Shachtman-Abern-Burnham on the Russian question criss-crossed the factional lines in the most hilarious fashion. All this occurred, be it remembered, just when Stalin had divided Poland with Hitler. Burnham, consistent with his old views, argued that "It is impossible to re-

gard the Soviet Union as a workers' state in any sense whatever." Shachtman avoided "raising at this time the problem of the class nature of the Soviet State." Abern was altogether in a ridiculous position. While organizationally lined up with Burnham and Shachtman, Abern voted with Cannon!

The Cannon faction, naturally, was in noisy merriment at the astonishing self-inflicted plight of the opposition in having three leaders with three conflicting positions on what is now pictured as the "split question." In his report to Trotsky, Cannon described how he had cornered his opponents: "I simply put to the audience and to the leaders of the minority this question: What will be the position of the party on this question if the minority becomes the majority at the convention?" (J. P. Cannon, "The Struggle For A Proletarian Party," pp. 100-101) The leaders of the minority realized that they were in a mess and had to compose their divergent views and adopt a uniform attitude on the Russian question. Unless they did so, and quickly, the Russian issue would become a deadly weapon in Cannon's hands. In his report to Trotsky, Cannon wrote with glee:

"You can imagine the devastating effect on the minority bloc of such questions. A political observer might say very confidently that such a political attack, conducted with the necessary persistence and militancy, is bound to break the bloc. To a certain extent this impression is already being realized. We are witnessing now a very noticeable shift of rank and file comrades from the untenable position of the bloc over to the support of the majority.

"But what about the leaders? From numerous indications, they are attempting to extricate themselves from their impossible position, not by each defending his own standpoint and letting the bloc go to the Devil, but by readjusting their principles to the exigencies of bloc politics. That is, they appear from all signs to be working out a common position by making mu-

tual concessions, in order to arrive at uniform answers to the questions in dispute." (Ibid., p. 101)

It was absolutely essential for the survival of the Shachtman-Abern-Burnham faction to wrest from Cannon's hands the tremendous advantage which their disunity on the Russian question produced. In an unhappy frame of mind, they worked hard to find a unifying formula.

Stalin's war on Finland, begun weeks after the October 1939 Plenum, provided the leaders of the minority with the opportunity to work out a more or less coordinated stand on the Soviet Union. Abern performed a prodigious feat by changing his "theoretical" color overnight. Shachtman pretended to have seen the light and accepted the chief features in Burnham's theory later supplementing it with borrowings from other creators of "neither bourgeois nor proletarian" modern states. Some years afterward Shachtman attempted a disarming admission: "We do not hesitate for a moment to say that this or that element of our theory as a whole is taken from numerous other sources, including if you please, Burnham (the Burnham of 1937-38, of course, and not the Burnham of 1940 or today." (The New International, August 1944, p. 267)

Thus the Opposition bloc could clothe its secret objective with ideological garments cut to Burnham's pattern.

If Cannon appeared as more consistent and "principled," it was because his task was simpler. He had merely to stick to the standard positions of the Trotsky movement and parade as an "Old Guard." It was Shachtman who had the more difficult task of introducing some new verbiage with which to snare followers. Between the two of them the "Russian Question," which in itself is a legitimate, principled issue, was degraded to a shameful level.

In his fight with Shachtman, Cannon was energetically aided by Trotsky.

In the first stages Trotsky's tactic was designed to subdue Shachtman by means of a discussion of the "Russian Question." But Trotsky's intervention, unlike that in 1933, bore a one-sided character. Back in 1933 he threatened both Cannon and Shachtman with ex-communication and castigated the Cannon faction for bureaucratically depriving Abern of his vote (Trotsky's letter of March 7, 1933). Now Trotsky threw his entire influence on the side of Cannon. But Shachtman appeared to be rooted in his new position on the Russian question and refused to be budged even by Trotsky himself. It became clear to Trotsky that Shachtman's goal was independence from Cannon.

The convention of the S. W. P. was to be held in the Spring of 1940. To insure Cannon's supremacy in the final phase of the struggle, Trotsky, on December 15, 1939, openly entered the arena with a blazing attack upon the Shachtman-Abern-Burnham bloc. Trotsky's blast bore the title, "A Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in the Socialist Workers Party." With this article Trotsky gave Shachtman to understand that there would be no repetition of the 1933 compromise line and that if Shachtman wanted to maintain his status of a bona fide Trotskyist spokesman he had better submit to the supreme authority.

Following the tactics of all the bureaucrats in the faction fight, Trotsky's policy was to keep the rank-and-file entangled in "theoretical" hocus-pocus so as to conceal the essence of the whole affair, the clique squabble for power. He wrote some articles on the "Russian Question," but his trump card was "dialectics." The latter was an unusually powerful dodge for Trotsky to resort to for two reasons; first, and in general, the rank-and-file knows little about this subject and the naive can be most easily impressed by high-sounding verbiage; and secondly, and more important in this specific faction row, it so happened that Burnham had for a long time openly proclaimed his refusal to adhere to the philosophical aspects of Marxism. Hence, the Marxian philosophical foundations were unhesitatingly

degraded by Trotsky to the status of an attention-distractor, like a magicians's patter which conceals his moves to hoodwink his audience. In long-winded, seemingly scientific articles he proved what needed no proof, namely, that Burnham was an avowed anti-Marxist. The latter, who knew precisely what Trotsky was up to and who in his own mind had already dropped the business of being a "labor leader" and therefore had nothing to worry about from a careerist angle in the Trotsky movement, gave Trotsky a reply which is unsurpassed for cynicism and shrewdness, and deserves to be quoted at length:

"But your account of 'who believed what?' is, shall I say, a little incomplete. You turn a couple of pages of somersaults explaining away the awkward fact that Liebknecht did not accept dialectics while Plekhanov did. But how about the Mensheviks pretty much as a whole, Comrade Trotsky? I have always read that they devoted as much or more attention to writing about and defending dialectics as even the ultra-dialectical Bolsheviks. And, much more pertinently: what of the Stalinist theoreticians, Comrade Trotsky? The bibliography of Stalinist writings on dialectics would fill a shelf or two, I assure you. And, very conspicuously, the sectarians. Did you know, Comrade Trotsky, that of those who have been in our ranks during the past decade, the one by far most concerned of all over dialectics was Hugo Oehler? (It was Oehler, come to think of it, who was the only predecessor of yours in attacking me for anti-dialectics during a political dispute. That was over the problem of S. P. entry; somehow, at that time, you, Cannon, and even Comrade Wright, failed to recognize that your bloc with me was unprincipled and that principled politics demanded that you should line up with Oehler until the 'fundamental question' of dialectics was cleared up. Instead, we hung together on the 'conjunctural,' episodic, merely empirical tactic of entry. Fortunately, we have learned princi-

ples since that day.) Isn't it remarkable that when our bookstore, under its new impulse, begins advertising treatises on dialectics, the list is mostly of Mensheviks, Brandlerites, Stalinists even...? And how about Shachtman and Abern, whose dialectics haven't prevented them from going astray with me? Now I naturally understand that all these turncoats — 'are not really dialecticians,' are just giving lip-service to dialectics, etc.

"Can it be, Comrade Trotsky, that the only really real (conscious and unconscious) dialecticians are: those who agree with you politically?" (Quoted in L. Trotsky's "In Defense of Marxism," p. 193)

In the history of polemics, it is doubtful if anybody was ever called a political crook as deservedly and as brilliantly as the target of Burnham's repartee. Trotsky offered no reply to the above character sketch.

Cannon discreetly left "dialectics" to Trotsky and busied himself with the practical end of the affair. To support the fraud that the internal clique war between him and Shachtman was a reflection of the class struggle, he issued a work, "The Struggle For A Proletarian Party." In this document, appraised by Trotsky as "the writing of a genuine workers' leader" Cannon wheeled up every available "proof" to show that his opponents were pretty low dogs. He dealt extensively with the charge of bureaucratism the opposition levelled against him. Many of his arguments were typical of the bureaucrats of other opportunist organizations. One of the most misleading, although seemingly puncture-proof, was his boast that the oppositionists received posts in his apparatus:

"What kind of a bureaucracy is it that 'has not the least objection' to anybody having any function he can 'handle' even in 'prominent posts'? Try to discover such a situation in a real bureaucracy — the Stalinist or Lewis-Green bureaucracies, for example. Their 'posts' are almost invariably assigned to supporters of the regime,"

and by no means to 'anybody.'" (J. P. Cannon, "The Struggle For A Proletarian Party," p. 65)

People not too familiar with the history of the Stalinist degeneration will hardly suspect that this line of argument was followed by Stalin and by all the putrid Lovestones in the Comintern. The "Trotsky Opposition" leaders for many years held some of the most important posts in Stalin's Government, in his Party and in the Comintern. During Lovestone's bureaucratic control of the American Stalinist Party, Cannon, though a faction foe of Lovestone, was given a post in the highest body of that organization and was placed in charge of the ILLD, an auxiliary of the Stalinist party. Yet Cannon never renounced his factional charge that the corrupt Lovestone leadership was dishonest, careerist, treacherous and bureaucratic. In the Trotskyist organization Cannon, of course, always gave representation to all sorts of bureaucrats who were not directly supporting him, even to those who were his inveterate organizational enemies as for example Abern. But he always managed to keep his hand on the lever of control. In his document "The Struggle For A Proletarian Party" Cannon devoted a whole chapter to Abern, calling it "Abernism: The Case History of a Disease." When the essence of this chapter is extracted from the volume of words, it shows nothing except that "Abernism" was really an undisguised fight against the Cannon domination by one of his most intimate political collaborators in the founding of the original Cannon caucus within the Stalin party, and later the Trotskyist group.

In his defense of the regime, Cannon drew largely upon the former writings of Shachtman from the period when that ambitious political adventurer worked in a bloc with Cannon against other cliques and factions in the Trotsky organization.

The convention, held April 5-8, 1940 brought a definitive victory to the Cannon forces. No sooner was this fact established by the counting of the delegates — 55 to 31 — than the

Cannon leadership, prompted by a "noble emotion," adopted a resolution in which it extended the usual bureaucratic olive branch to the opponents by calling upon them to accept their fate and be disciplined comrades under Cannon's "democratic centralism." The unprincipled horse-trade bid to Shachtman and other leaders of the minority, these "petty-bourgeois hypocrites," "stinking office-holders," "traitors" and anti-Marxists, was jobs on the leading committees of Cannon's "Proletarian Party." Here is the plank in the resolution adopted by the Cannon-controlled convention which speaks louder than our words:

"No measures are to be taken against any party members because of the views expressed in the party discussion. Nobody is obliged to renounce his opinion. There is no prohibition of factions. The minority is to be given representation in the leading party committees and assured full opportunity to participate in all phases of party work." (J. P. Cannon, "The Struggle For A Proletarian Party," p. 240)

Since no leader of the opposition was singled out for exclusion from the condition covered by the plank, it is obvious that even Abern, who according to Cannon represented a special plague on the body of Trotskyism, "an internal disease which poisoned the bloodstream of the party organism", was to be given a place in the S. W. P. leadership.

With respect to Burnham, Trotsky's personal policy was to woo that fly-by-night "revolutionist." In a letter to a leading Cannonite he criticized an article written against Burnham. "The article is very sharp and in the case of the opposition remaining in the Party and Burnham on the editorial board of The New International the article should possibly be rewritten from the point of view of 'friendliness' of expression." (L. Trotsky, "In Defense of Marxism," p. 165)

But neither the "friendly" attempts of Trotsky nor the "noble emotion" of the Cannon faction had an ef-

fact on the leaders of the Opposition. They understood only too well that if they submitted and stayed with Cannon, they would not only fail to strengthen their influence, but would inevitably lose those innocent followers whom they had corralled through systematic, deft and unscrupulous efforts. To expect that these forces would grow more solidified inside the S. W. P. would have been foolish. They had done very well as it was. Their only answer to Cannon's invitation could be No!

The dissident Trotskyist leaders went ahead with their plans and broke the discipline imposed upon them by the Cannon majority who enjoined them from issuing a public paper of their own. Disciplinary action followed, as was to be expected, but it was no outright expulsion. The Shachtman-Abern-Burnham bloc was suspended from Cannon's "Proletarian Party." Meanwhile the Opposition leaders stole the Trotskyist "theoretical" organ, The New International. Upon hearing this, Trotsky let loose a stream of strong words against his former adulator. Of course, Cannon's faction was once again painted by Trotsky as the "proletarian party" and Shachtman as the "petty-bourgeois": "In the name of a 'moral ideal' a petty-bourgeois intellectual has picked the proletarian party's pocket of its theoretical organ." (L. Trotsky, "In Defense of Marxism," p. 169)

Trotsky's labeling him a thief did not disturb Shachtman. He retained the magazine, formed a "Workers Party" all his own, and adopted a program which, except for the position on the Russian question, is difficult to differentiate basically from Cannon's. However, that position, as we recall, was not incompatible with membership in Cannon's Party, and therefore, politically, did not constitute a splitting issue at the time of the split.

Even after the Shachtmanites proceeded putting through their scheme of launching their "Marxist" Party, with a distinctly "anti-Trotsky" point on the Russian issue, the Cannon leadership did not expell them but left the door open for them to return. The Cannon statement (Socialist Appeal, April

30, 1940) declared that "At the same time the terms of the suspension leave the way open for the suspended members to reconsider the question and return to their places in the party leadership and its editorial boards on the basis of the convention decisions." The Cannon leadership was even willing to let the Shachtmanites air their ideas in the official S. W. P. press. "The resolutions offered them the opportunity to continue the discussion in defense of their point of view in the Internal Bulletin and in The New International, on the condition that they refrain from issuing an independent publication in opposition to the press of the party."

The Shachtman faction was allowed several months to reconsider its refusal to accept the deal. Having exhausted all the means to save the Shachtman wing which held no brief for the Trotsky position on the Russian issue and which contained the "Abern disease," the Cannon leaders were forced to expel the Shachtmanites. The official expulsion was effected at the end of September 1940, when the "Workers Party" was already an established organization.

WHAT, then, is Cannon's "Proletarian Party"? In order to give the correct answer it is necessary to have the exact understanding of the present Trotskyist tendency.

This tendency was born and developed within the bureaucratic decay of the revolutionary leadership. Authentic evidence, much of it from Trotsky's own pen, established that from the very start of the bureaucratic degeneration in the Soviet State, Trotsky actively aided in the process. Together with Kamenev and Zinoviev, who were partners of Stalin in the Triumvirate, Trotsky collaborated in bureaucratizing the Soviet Union and the Comintern. At first directly, and after his expulsion from the Soviet Union, indirectly, Trotsky participated in every Stalinist betrayal of the proletariat.

Facts add up to establish that

the entire Trotsky movement which includes the Shachtman and Oehler groups, is resting upon a mountain of conscious omissions of truth, on frauds, distortions and subtle treachery. Trotsky was a discarded Stalinist bureaucrat, and like most of the other discarded companions and aides of Stalin in the Soviet Union, perished at the hand of his former ally.

Due to its historical origin and politics, the Trotsky tendency is a link in the Stalinist system.

History establishes that opportunists, whether Comintern bureaucrats or those of Social Democracy or Trotskyism, cling to their opportunism through thick and thin. They fill the prisons of the capitalist countries, they are tortured by the Fascists and often by the "democratic" hangmen, but they never abandon their treacherous politics.

The German Trotsky leaders perished in Hitler's concentration camps—after they had aided Stalin to open the path for Fascism in Germany. In Spain they were felled by the bullets of the Stalinists and of General Franco while aiding the sabotaging People's Front Government to stifle the Spanish masses and thus secure the victory for Franco. In the Soviet Union all of

the Trotsky leaders have been destroyed by Stalin whom they assisted to power,

The tragedy of it all is that from 1923 on, Trotsky and his lieutenants, both in the Soviet Union and the international field, while contributing politically to Stalin's triumph and therefore to the forces of bourgeois reaction, have been capturing the most advanced revolutionary workers. This section of the proletariat represents the key to the entire vanguard captured by Stalin. Although these sincere workers, shocked by the black betrayals of Stalin's Comintern, in their mental attitude are in irreconcilable antagonism to Stalinism, in reality they are kept confined within the Stalinist system. Due to this hidden fact they are doomed not only politically but also physically.

Only the crystallization of a force completely liberated from the Stalinist meshes can rescue the whole proletariat from the clutches of pseudo-Marxism. To this historical task of the present epoch every true revolutionist will devote his attention and energies. This alone is the real struggle for a proletarian party.

George Marlen

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A SYMBOL OF COURAGE

DURING the crisis which convulsed the coal fields from March 16 to June 22, 1943 the capitalist and Stalinist press whipped up a virtual frenzy against John L. Lewis. That Lewis was nothing but a putrid flunkay bound hand and foot to the bosses was, of course, obscured by the stream of abuse levelled at him by the bourgeois and Stalinist press. The vituperation in the former was interrupted but once by a show of sympathetic concern for Lewis when on June 5, 1943 he broke the strike situation for the third time by calling for a "truce" and thereupon faced a wholesale revolt of the militant miners for the next few days.

The conclusion of the whole situation found the exploitation of the miners intensified. They were given a stretch-out of their working hours in return for a very small hourly increase which didn't even remotely approach the modest demands offered to the coal owners on March 10, 1943 at the beginning of the strike situation. Only the strike-breaking policies of Lewis made possible this stinging defeat for the militant miners who were ready for a fight to the finish with their bosses.

The denunciations of Lewis, particularly by the perfidious Stalin leaders, was a factor which lent a seemingly logical basis to the fiction spread among the revolutionary anti-Stalinist workers that Lewis was in some way conducting a struggle against the bosses. The strike-breaking conduct of Lewis in the mine crisis specifically and concretely served as an ironclad refutation of this capitalist and opportunist myth about Lewis.

Finally, as a finishing touch to this matter, Lewis himself has come out openly with an explicit statement of his strike-breaking position in the July 15, 1944 issue of the magazine Colliers in an article entitled, "Not Guilty." The burden of this article by Lewis is an attempt to refute the idea that he is not patriotic (to the interests of the bosses) or that he is for strikes. The Shachtmanite Labor

Action of July 31, 1944 analyzes this article by Lewis and takes him to task for his openly reactionary stand:

"Lewis doesn't discuss these things but resorts to some very reactionary positions. For instance: 'Countless strikes, many for reasons shocking in their essential triviality, have disrupted and are disrupting the nation's war effort, but neither leaders nor strikers have been named and pilloried.'" (p. 2)

In other words, complains Lewis, here am I loyally serving the bosses and yet I am attacked and slandered as a strike leader by the very people I serve. Why not get after the real strikes and their leaders, Lewis urges. Actually, Lewis' lynch-rousing campaign was placed in operation a long time ago by the bosses and their agents.

Another point in which Lewis clearly shows his reactionary scab role is quoted by Labor Action where Lewis takes pride in the increased speed-up of the miners:

"He (Lewis) says the record gives the lie to the charge that the miners are not patriotic. He says that despite the 1943 strikes, the union mined nine million more tons of soft coal than in 1942 and that for the first four months of 1944 ten million more tons of anthracite were mined than in a like period in 1943." (Ibid.)

Even more, boasts Lewis, when he signs rotten contracts he binds the workers and hamstring them not solely for a week, or a month or even a year, but for two-year periods at a time:

"Also the UMWA is the only labor organization which enters into agreements for a two-year period." (Ibid.)

The real face of Lewis revealed in this article presents an ugly picture. Labor Action comments in dis-

pleased tones on this picture of Lewis:

"We don't care for the very reactionary John L. Lewis who assumes such a pious air of shock and patriotic fervor over strikes that have taken place." (Ibid.)

It is not the voice of a labor leader which is heard here, says Labor Action, but one typical of a big capitalist:

"Lewis here sounds like the New York Times, Henry Ford or a Republican congressman." (Ibid.)

Clearly, the facts presented here by Labor Action dictate a task of exposing and casting out this agent of the bosses in the ranks of the workers. Let us see, then, how this task is pursued in the pages of Labor Action. In the very same issue, on page four, we read the following in an editorial: the Shachtmanites make a distinction between the "trade union" Lewis and the "political" Lewis along the lines of the mythical Jekyll-Hyde:

"In Lewis' case, you have a labor leader with great imagination and courage on purely trade union questions, who despite that, is a hopeless reactionary politically." (Ibid. Original emphasis.)

Where, may we ask, is this great imagination and courage exhibited by Lewis on "purely trade union questions"? In his boasts about the increased speed-up of the workers in his union? In his condemnation of strikes? In his incitement of the capitalists to condemn these strikes and terrorize the militant workers concerned in them? To the Shachtmanite editor all this symbolizes great imagination and courage in the trade union sphere!

A word must be said about this Jekyll-Hyde hocus-pocus peddled by the Shachtmanites. There is no such duality as a "trade union" Lewis and a "po-

litical" Lewis. There is only Lewis, a bribed agent of Wall Street who loyally serves the bankers in all spheres. Moreover, the political line is always decisive. A "hopeless reactionary politically" can be no other than a hopeless reactionary in every other phase of the class struggle, whether in the trade unions or any other field.

During the mine crisis the Shachtmanite press identified Lewis with the militant miners whom he betrayed and played him up as waging a struggle, and waging it correctly, in the interests not only of the miners but of the whole American working class:

"Lewis is the leader of a union that is waging a battle for all labor — and waging it properly." (Labor Action, May 17, 1943, p. 4)

This statement was made when Lewis had already clearly shown his hand, having twice called off the strike, breaking the back of the miners' militant spirit.

The Shachtman leadership acts as a "left" cover to the swindler Lewis. Their support to this strikebreaker is covered up from time to time by "critical" verbiage. In a crucial situation such as the mine strike the Shachtman leadership, to the extent of its influence, participated in the betrayal of the miners along the indirect line of supporting the immediate betrayer, Lewis. Today, the influence of the Shachtman leadership in the trade unions is an insignificant factor, so that their reactionary policy is carried out primarily along such indirect lines. If the Shachtmanites directly controlled important sections of the trade union movement this would give them the opportunity to carry out in person and at first hand major betrayals of the workers.

A.B.

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MORE ON THE CANNONITES
AND
HOMER MARTIN

WHEN Shachtman adopted a line of supporting the rotten Dubinsky gang of labor fakers as a "lesser evil" to the Stalinists in the recent ALP faction fight, he was subjected to a bitter scolding by the Cannonites. They sharply reprimanded their former colleague for such an unprincipled maneuver, pointing out that support to a reactionary, red-baiting line actually functions to strengthen Stalinism in the labor movement. As a fitting example of such a rotten policy the Cannonite leaders called attention to the situation in the auto union in 1938. In this situation, said the Cannonites, it was the now defunct Lovestoneites who pursued precisely this opportunist policy in supporting the crooked, red-baiting Homer Martin crew as a "lesser evil" to the Stalinists. This policy only misled the auto workers and lent added power to the Stalinist criminals. In THE BULLETIN of May 1944 ("The Pot Calls the Kettle Black"), we exposed this bit of history and showed that the so very "principled" Cannonites omitted the key fact that together with Lovestone, Cannon was urging support to Homer Martin, to be given "openly, frankly and aggressively." Cannon used the same "lesser evil" grounds that Shachtman does today in supporting Dubinsky. (See J. P. Cannon, Socialist Appeal, May 14, 1938, p 4)

The malodorous adventures in the auto union of the then united Cannon-Shachtman leadership of the S.W.P. were not confined to the month of May when open and aggressive support to Martin was urged. It seems that the Homer Martin-Stalinist faction fight was not by any means settled in May 1938 but continued with unabated ferocity. The Stalinists, ever thirsty for the key positions of power, continued to conspire and connive against Martin and attempted to discredit his gang before the membership in every conceivable way. In this war, the Stalinists were aided enormously by the fact that Martin himself was a hardened bureaucrat, an accomplished sell-out artist, who in that particular

period was framing up those militants who were waging "unauthorized strikes" against the provocations of the auto barons.

In June 1938, Martin, in a typical bureaucratic fashion, arbitrarily suspended five leading pro-Stalinist officials, Frankenstein, Hall, Mortimer, Ades and Welles. This typically bureaucratic action was so putrid that Cannon and Shachtman who urged the workers to support Martin "openly, frankly and aggressively," were constrained gently to chastise Martin and lecture to him the necessity of going to the rank-and-file so as to assure them that he had no intentions of violating unions democracy:

"To overcome at least in part the bad effects of this move, the Martin leadership must go to the membership at once, explain what policies it wishes to carry through, explain the role of the Stalinists, and why disciplinary action was taken, and assure the membership that no campaign of red-baiting or violations of democracy is under way." (Socialist Appeal, June 18, 1938, p. 2)

In other words, Martin, the conscienceless bureaucrat, was asked by Cannon and Shachtman to stop being a bureaucrat and become mindful of the rank-and-file whom he hated and feared.

The friendly Cannonite "advice" given to Martin was, of course, ignored. Meanwhile, the factional pot really began to boil. Martin's bureaucratic suspension of the five pro-Stalinist officials gave the Stalinists a perfect issue. Every time they howled for "democracy" against the Martin machine they pointed to the bureaucratic suspension of these five officers. On the basis of a program to reinstate these officials the Stalinists brought the faction fight to a crisis in late June 1938. Faced with a crisis, the Cannon-Shachtman leaders precipitately jumped on the Martin band-wagon and again urged the workers to swallow Mar-

tin's bureaucratism as a lesser evil to the Stalinists!:

"There can be no neutrality in this battle. Non interventign means support to the Stalinists. They thrive on the position of the fence-sitters. We are not advocating support of everything the Martin administration has done in the past or will do in the future. We have ourselves made the most unsparing criticisms in the past when we disagreed with the administration. But all of these bureaucratic missteps fade into insignificance compared to the danger presented by the Stalinist campaign." (Socialist Appeal, June 25, 1938, p. 2-3. Emphasis in original.)

However, it was precisely the acts of Martin bureaucratism that gave power and strength to the Stalinist pack yapping at his heels. Expulsions and frame-ups by Martin were intensified. Any worker who dared to criticize the rotten sell-out policies of the Martin gang was classified as a "Red" and promptly expelled. Intense dissatisfaction seethed among the rank-and-file as a result and finally the Cannon-Shachtman writers had to take official notice of it. On August 20, 1938 the Socialist Appeal wrote:

"It is time to say a word about the chair-warming reactionaries and opportunists copped in Martin's own backyard. It was their stupid, bone-head policies which built up the inordinate strength behind the Stalinists. Now they imagine that they have a field day to clean the militants— all militants — out of the union. What is this but the reverse side of the Stalinist medal which aims to clean out the militants via its traditional methods."

Did this mean that Cannon was finally finished with Martin? Let us see. In late August the Stalinists threatened a rump convention to oust Martin and again a crisis was created for the ruling Martin clique. What line did Cannon-Shachtman pursue? Did they expose both bureaucratic gangs and urge the workers to reject and

cast out both gangs of crooks? By no means! Any course but support to the Martin gang would constitute treachery to the auto workers and their union, declared the S.W.P. leaders:

"Differences with Homer Martin or other members of the Board — however serious or justified — are not at issue now. Progressives must realize that every ounce of support must be thrown in the scales of the Martin forces against the Lewis-Stalinist complot. Any other course is treachery to the auto workers and their union." (Socialist Appeal, September 3, 1938, p. 2)

The conclusion of this crisis was the beginning of the end for Martin. John L. Lewis, then working with the Stalinists, stepped into the picture and arranged a compromise which secured a firm foothold for the Stalinists. Martin never succeeded in dislodging them and not long afterward faded out of the picture entirely. Meanwhile the Trotskyite leaders in October 1938 were confronted by unity between the Martin forces and the Stalinists. To call for support to Martin now "against" the Stalinists was patently absurd since the temporary conclusion of the faction fight had simply unified all the reactionary forces in one solid lump. Left now without a "leader," Cannon-Shachtman hastily unhitched their wagon from Martin and having tasted sour grapes, sagely observed that Martin's policies could never have defeated the Stalinists anyhow:

"The temporary conclusion of the present factional fight has demonstrated with unmistakable clearness that the Martin supporters on the International Executive Board were incapable of leading a fight against the Stalinist menace, of providing leadership for progressive, militant unionism, of building the union and conducting an effective campaign against the automobile manufacturers." (Socialist Appeal, October 8, 1938, p. 2)

Notwithstanding all the facts presented black on white in the So-

Socialist Appeal file of 1938, the Cannonites today, with a cynicism that is truly matchless, lecture their erstwhile Shachtman comrades on the evils of supporting reactionary swindlers against the Stalinist betrayers and point to the auto union in 1938 as an illustration where this line was pursued by — the Lovestoneites! Can anything show more concretely and clearly what brazen liars and scoundrels constitute the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party?

* * *

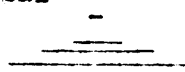
A word about Shachtman's role in this whole situation. In answering the Cannonites, Shachtman with biting sarcasm accuses them of being shameless and perfidious. (The New International, April 1944) To prove his point he quotes Cannon's statement in the Socialist Appeal of May 14, 1938 where support to Martin is urged on the grounds of "lesser evil" to Stalinist leadership. However, the main burden of Shachtman's answer is to defend his own present policy of supporting the rotten Dubinsky clique as a "lesser evil" to the Stalinists. Therefore, in the course of his criticism, Shachtman explicitly defends the support given to Martin in 1938 as perfectly correct. At least the Cannonites recognize a pitfall when they see one and diplomatically keep mum about their treacherous support to Martin in 1938. But Shachtman is not ashamed to admit his support to Martin, and pictures that treacherous action as in the interests of the workers. Thus, the characterization shameless and perfidious applies to Shachtman no less than to Cannon.

While Shachtman and Cannon seem to be engaging in a bitter political

war, sparing no invectives in accusing each other of betraying the workers, in actuality they both pursue the same fundamental policy of supporting and maintaining opportunism in the labor movement. Here and there in certain local situations, Cannon and Shachtman differ as to what kind of labor faker to support. Today Shachtman supports the Dubinsky gang while the Cannonites oppose it. However, in October 1939 both Cannon and Shachtman supported Dubinsky in the A.L.P. That opportunist move was exposed by us in the article, "The Trotskyites and the A.L.P." (THE BULLETIN, May 1941) No worker should be misled by these superficial differences.

Today, both Cannon and Shachtman are calling for a labor party based on the present reactionary-led unions. It is axiomatic, confirmed by all history of workingclass politics under capitalism without exception, that every party, other than a true Marxist party, be it called "Labor" party, or any other name, can function only to uphold capitalist slavery. Thus, both Cannon and Shachtman, despite their specific day to day tactical differences on what opportunist to support generally pursue the same line of supporting reaction in the labor movement by their espousal of a labor party and specifically in their day to day opportunist "mass work." Both Trotsky factions therefore stand as an obstacle to the revolutionary workers who must move in the direction of combatting and defeating all opportunism in the ranks of the working class so as to lay the foundation for a true Marxist party to lead their class to overthrow the bourgeoisie.

A. Burke



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AN ALIBI
AND WHAT IT CONCEALS

THE first systematic account of the Troika's (Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenév) conspiracy to usurp power in the Soviet Union was published in 1925 by an American "Left" journalist, Max Eastman, under the title, "Since Lenin Died." Eastman presented a picture of the behind-the-scenes bureaucratic machinations of the wielders of power in Russia. There was one basic point, however, which Eastman did not present, namely, the real role of Trotsky in the conspiracy of the usurpers. Eastman either did not know it, or he deliberately concealed it. In any case he published his book in an effort to aid Trotsky against the Stalin clique which was maneuvering to oust Trotsky from power. The unexpected happened with a vengeance when Trotsky himself led the outpouring of abuse on Eastman for his book, "Since Lenin Died."

During the faction fight of 1940 between Cannon and Shachtman, Trotsky had occasion to reply to the accusation that he had deceitfully denied the authenticity of one of Lenin's last anti-Stalin documents which Eastman in 1925 published and quoted in his book. In the course of excusing his action, Trotsky harked back to that period of 1925 and the situation which he claimed gave rise to his disavowal of Eastman's revelations.

"Eastman published the document on his own initiative in a moment when our faction decided to interrupt all public activity in order to avoid a premature split. Don't forget it was before the famous Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee and before the Chinese Revolution, even before the appearance of the Zinoviev opposition. We were obliged to maneuver in order to win time. On the contrary, the Troika wished to utilize Eastman's publication in order to provoke a kind of oppositional abortion. They presented an ultimatum: Either I must sign the declaration written by the Troika in my name or they will immediately open the fight on

the matter. The opposition center decided unanimously that this issue at this moment is absolutely unfavorable, that I must accept the ultimatum and sign my name under a declaration written by the Politburo." (L. Trotsky, "In Defense of Marxism," p. 160. Emphasis in original)

If a worker's knowledge of this affair is limited to this apologetic declaration, then Trotsky's excuse may seem quite plausible and may even be considered acceptable on the whole. An examination of what was actually occurring among the leading circles of the bureaucratized Russian Communist Party, however, will place the entire affair in a totally different light.

Trotsky speaks in the above-quoted passage of "the declaration written by the Troika" which he alleges he was forced to sign. This makes it appear that there was one such declaration by Trotsky denouncing Eastman. The fact is that there were two statements published under Trotsky's signature; one followed the other by a very brief period of time (Inprecorr, 1925). A very peculiar circumstance attaches to this fact. The first statement was published and an objection was raised to it by the bureaucrats of the French section of the Stalintern on the grounds that it was not emphatic enough against Eastman. If the first statement was written by the Troika, then this means that Stalin's own flunkys in France were objecting to a document emanating directly from the Stalin sanctum itself. From all that has ever been noted of the workings of the Stalinist bureaucracy, Stalin's flunkys were not in the habit of shooting their mouth off at Stalin and telling him how to run his affairs. The question is, therefore, was this first document really written by the Stalin clique — or was it written by Trotsky himself? In any case Trotsky issued a second statement, essentially of the same contents as the first, but stronger in tone. According to the

documentary evidence, then, the notorious Trotsky statement on Eastman — the second one, the more abusive one, which is traditionally referred to — appeared at the demand of the bureaucrats of the French section of the Stalintern. Trotsky never went into details of this tangled affair.

We shall now examine Trotsky's apology point by point.

(1)

"Eastman published the document on his own initiative in a moment when our faction decided to interrupt all public activity..."

The implied meaning of this remark is that prior to the appearance of Eastman's exposure Trotsky had been carrying on a struggle against the Stalin clique and then suddenly decided to cease fighting publicly presumably for the purpose of consolidating the anti-Stalin forces for further struggle. The question that must be raised is: What anti-Stalin public activity had Trotsky carried on which he decided to interrupt?

It is a fact substantiated by the testimony of historical records that Trotsky neither before nor after the Eastman exposure presented to the membership of the Russian Communist Party a single statement revealing that Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev had organized a factional Trio to usurp power and were pursuing counter-revolutionary policies in the Soviet Union and the Comintern. Let us present evidence from Trotsky's own pen showing the kind of "public activity" he pursued. A sample of such testimony is his letter of resignation from the post of War Commissar, dated January 15, 1925. This letter was published in Pravda before the whole Russian working class. Trotsky therein declared that during the hullabaloo just raised by the Stalin clique against "Trotskyism" — a sheerly factional invention to discredit Trotsky and weaken his power — he had remained silent and, he maintained, rightly so:

"And at the present time, estimating the whole course of the dis-

cussion and notwithstanding the fact that there have been advanced against me a multitude of false and actually monstrous accusations, I think that my silence has been right from the standpoint of the general interests of the party." (Pravda, January 20, 1925)

In this letter Trotsky looked back over the immediately preceding period which was the aftermath of the Thirteenth Party Congress (May 1924) and presented his line to the masses. It must be recalled that the monster of Stalinist bureaucratism had already profoundly penetrated into all phases of life in the Soviet Union and in Stalin's Comintern. The bureaucratic fakery of "socialism in one country" had already been introduced by Stalin and Company (Autumn of 1924). The apparatus of Stalinism was already enormous in the Party, the Government and the Soviets. But such was Trotsky's role, according to his own admission, that Stalin and all his allies and flunkys in the high bodies of the Party and Government knew perfectly well that Trotsky had advanced no policy whatever differing from that of the Stalinist center of bureaucratic power. To the uninformed reader who has in mind the usual picture of Trotsky as a veritable lion against the Stalinist Central Committee, Trotsky's description of his role will come as a distinct shock. Here are his own words:

"After the Thirteenth Congress there arose, or became more clearly defined, certain new problems of industrial, or Soviet, or international character. The solution of them has been a matter of exceptional difficulty. The idea was completely foreign to me to oppose any 'platform' whatever to the work of the Central Committee of the party in the solution of these problems. To all those comrades who were present at the meetings of the Politburo, the Central Committee, the Soviet of Labour and Defence, or the Revolutionary Military Soviet, this assertion needs no proof." (Ibid. Our emphasis)

At the very outset it becomes clear that Trotsky's alibi is distinct-

ly dubious, for one must ask skeptically: What "public activity" against the Stalin clique had he been conducting that he should offer the interruption of this alleged "public activity" as a justification for his slanderous attack on Eastman.

Let us look further into the real story of Trotsky in the rise of Stalinism to examine still earlier samples of his "public activity."

Stalin's public activity had long been a stench in the nostrils of many politically advanced workers. At the beginning of 1923 Lenin had proposed definitely to oust Stalin from the post of General Secretary and had outlined a fight to the finish against Stalin's bureaucratic assault on the various national minorities in the Soviet Union. In the Spring of 1923 the Stalinist Central Committee sent a member of the Politburo to address the 7th All-Ukrainian Party Conference upon the issues to be dealt with at the forthcoming Twelfth Congress of the Russian Communist Party. This member was Trotsky. As he himself showed after his exile from the Soviet Union, he had been thoroughly familiar with the counter-revolutionary nature of the Stalin Central Committee, and particularly so in connection with Stalin's reactionary organizational and national policies. He knew that Lenin was preparing an attack on the Stalin Central Committee's policies personified in its leader's treacherous role; indeed, Trotsky indicates that he had given Lenin the impression of forming with him a bloc to fight Stalin at the Twelfth Congress. In the light of these background factors, it is highly significant to see what the records of history tell about Trotsky's report to the Ukrainian Conference on the eve of the Twelfth Congress:

"As a result of Comrade Trotsky's report, a resolution was adopted, in which the Conference greets the correct line of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party and with satisfaction records the firm and capable leadership." (Izvestia, April 11, 1923. Our emphasis)

Trotsky had not told the Ukrainian

Bolshevik workers at the Conference a single word about the treacherous bureaucratic policies of the Stalin Central Committee, not a word about Lenin's proposed struggle against Stalin at the forthcoming Twelfth Congress. Trotsky had sold the workers a line of support to Stalin's Central Committee. Such was Trotsky's "public activity" in this earlier period.

At the Twelfth Congress of the bureaucratized Russian Communist Party held in April 1923 Trotsky was to present the documents Lenin had given him against Stalin and fight for the latter's removal. Lenin's documents were concerned with Stalin's disruptive policies on the national question and were to serve as a keynote in a campaign to disqualify Stalin completely before the whole Party and the whole working class. Lenin, due to severe illness, was unable to attend. But Trotsky was present in all his still enormous prestige and power before the masses. At the Congress Trotsky kept completely silent about the campaign Lenin had authorized him to launch against Stalin. News had circulated unofficially that Lenin had written a "bomb" against Stalin, and when some of the delegates inquired why this material was kept from the Congress, a most significant revelation was entered into the written record of the Congress. It reads as follows:

"The presidium of the Congress of the Party adopted on this question a unanimous decision; not to publish for the time being this document." (Stenographic report of the proceedings of the XII Congress, in Russian, p. 541. Our emphasis)

The most outstanding member of the presidium which unanimously voted to keep Lenin's anti-Stalin document out of the Congress was — Leon Trotsky. The remark about not publishing Lenin's document "for the time being" was, of course, a subterfuge. It was never published by the bureaucrats and though Trotsky had this momentous document in his possession for many years in his exile, he, too, never published this document on the national question. It was probably amongst that collection of Lenin's unpublished letters

which Trotsky sold to a bourgeois university with the strict stipulation not to publish them until 1980.

The latter part of the year 1923 was marked by the rise of a severe crisis in German capitalism. A revolutionary wave swept over the German toilers whose most advanced sections, unfortunately, were in the grip of the German agents of the Kremlin usurpers. The bureaucratic leadership foisted upon the German workers a treacherous line of support to the bourgeois-democratic parliamentary government of imperialist Germany. In Saxony and Thuringia where the revolutionary crisis was at its peak, the Stalinist agents, Brandler, Thalheimer and Boettcher, actually entered the bourgeois government, forming a coalition with the Social Democrats. What was Trotsky's "public activity" in this connection? In a speech to the Metal Workers Congress in Moscow Trotsky had the brazenness to compare the coalition of the Stalinists and Social Democrats formed on the basis of the bourgeois state to the proletarian dictatorship established in Russia after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie!

"At the present time the situation is clear. The coalition of the Communists with the Social Democrats in the government of Saxony and Thuringia is comparable to the coalition of the Communists and Left Social Revolutionaries in Russia." (Izvestia, October 21, 1923)

This was word for word the Stalinist ultra-rightist "Comintern" line on Germany, a line which paved the way for the bourgeois hangmen to let loose a bloodbath of the workers.

Trotsky's real public activity — support to Stalinist policies — was never interrupted. In 1924, after Lenin's death, Stalin packed the Russian Communist Party with hundreds of thousands of hand-picked stooges and backward elements upon which to rest his bureaucratic power. This maneuver the Stalin gang labelled the "Leninist Levy." In 1937, many years after the event, when the actual occurrences were completely dimmed in the memory of the workers, Trotsky wrote: "By

freeing the bureaucracy from the control of the proletarian vanguard, the 'Leninist Levy' dealt a deathblow to the Party of Lenin." ("The Revolution Betrayed," p. 98) This is absolutely true. But Trotsky in 1937 "forgot" to mention one little detail about his "public activity" in 1924 with respect to that Stalinist recruiting. At the Thirteenth Congress in 1924, speaking after Stalin had described the "Leninist Levy" in glowing terms, Trotsky echoed the treacherous bureaucrat's demagoguery in these words:

"Without a doubt the Leninist recruiting, as has been correctly stated here, [by Stalin] has brought our party closer to being an elective party." (Pravda, May 27, 1924. Our emphasis)

This is another sample of Trotsky's "public activity" which was directly fostering Stalinism.

What was the meaning of Trotsky's line? He had stood amongst the top leadership of the bureaucratized Soviet power. The Stalin clique had launched a campaign of bureaucratic centralization of power and had sounded as its keynote a drive to oust Trotsky, the most outstanding figure next to Lenin, from the commanding positions of the bureaucracy. The insidious transformation which had come over Trotsky since the past truly revolutionary years when he had fought the Czarists, the bourgeois-democrats, the White Guards and the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionary opportunists showed itself in the fact that on the question of the bureaucratic centralization of Soviet power, he adopted a policy of conciliation with the Stalin clique. To promote peace in the circle of bureaucratic leadership, Trotsky collaborated with Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev in every aspect of their counter-revolutionary political line. The slanderous attack on Eastman, an outstanding example of Trotsky's direct shielding of Stalin from exposure, was characterized by Trotsky himself in these revealing words:

"In any case, my then statement on Eastman can be understood only as an integral part of our then

line toward conciliation and peacemaking." (The New International, November 1934, p. 125)

Peacemaking and conciliation on the basis of a treacherous line in Stalin's interests! This line of support to Stalinism was the real source of Trotsky's 1925 statement on Eastman.

We have already shown that in his letter of resignation of January 15, 1925 Trotsky was still talking of his having no policy whatever opposed to the Stalinist Central Committee. This brings our narrative up to the period of his notorious attack on Eastman. What was Trotsky's "public activity" subsequent to the publication of "Since Lenin Died"?

(2)

"Don't forget it was before the famous Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee..."

Presumably Trotsky meant that the Committee so flagrantly betrayed the workers that it opened their eyes to the treacherous nature of Stalinism and facilitated their rallying around the "Opposition." If so, let us see whether at the time of the existence of the Committee (the period of the General Strike in Great Britain, May 1926) Trotsky had a line of exposing the Committee and the opportunist Stalinist line with respect to it. The Anglo-Russian Committee was a Stalinist creation; at its head stood Tomsky, Stalin's loyal ally. The collaboration of the Stalinist bureaucrats with the reactionary British trade union leaders had as one of its purposes the betrayal of the prodigious strike sentiment that was then brewing in England. Trotsky, as well as his various cohorts, the Cannons and Shachtmans, in later years tried to give the impression that from its very inception Trotsky had fought the Anglo-Russian Committee and the whole Stalinist line surrounding it. But documentary records of that period turn up a speech by Trotsky to the Congress of Textile Workers in January 1926 in which he praised the Committee in enthusiastic language:

"The Anglo-Russian Committee of Unity of Trade Unions is the highest expression of that shift in the situation in all Europe, and especially in England, which is occurring before our eyes and which is leading toward the European revolution." (Pravda, January 31, 1926. Our emphasis)

This "highest expression" of the revolutionary development of that period of 1925-26 was soon to carry out the betrayal planned jointly by the Stalinist and trade union bureaucrats. The above was uttered by Trotsky before the sell-out of the General Strike was consummated. After the completion of the betrayal, Trotsky made another speech in which he pictured the Stalinized "Comintern" of 1925-26 as transferring to England the same principles and methods employed by the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1917. These remarks were made in the course of an exceptionally long-winded rignarole from which we cite only the relevant expressions to show the line Trotsky had on the Stalinist policy in the General Strike situation:

"Such was the voice of official British socialism in 1917 in the sharpest moment when the Bolshevik party was struggling against the imperialist war. And now, when the Comintern transfers the same principles and methods upon the soil of England... when all these circumstances transfer the methods of Bolshevism upon the English soil..." (Pravda, June 2, 1926. Our emphasis)

Not only was there not one single syllable of exposure from Trotsky during the infamous double-dealing of the Stalinist in connection with the Anglo-Russian Committee, but Trotsky's "public activity" in this sphere consisted of direct aid to Stalin.

(3)

"Don't forget it was before...the Chinese Revolution, even before the appearance of the Zinoviev opposition."

Apparently with this remark, also, Trotsky tried to give the impression that his line on the Chinese Revolution and the Zinoviev opposition, with which he formed a bloc, were milestones in a real fight against Stalinism which Eastman with his 1925 book anticipated with indiscreet haste. Therefore it is necessary to show exactly what kind of "public activity" Trotsky engaged in during the bloc with Zinoviev and the Chinese Revolution.

These two events fall into the same period, the years 1925-27. The specific line which Trotsky had during the Chinese Revolution arose through a remarkable series of circumstances out of the bloc which he formed with Zinoviev and Kamenev. These two bureaucrats with Stalin had been partners in the scheme to centralize power in their hands. They had initiated the maneuver to oust Trotsky from power so as to seize the lion's share themselves. In 1925 Zinoviev and Kamenev realized that they had miscalculated, for it turned out that Stalin through his post of General Secretary had accumulated the bulk of bureaucratic power in his own clutches. Zinoviev and Kamenev were in danger of being left completely out in the cold. These two wily connivers cast about for clique allies to resist Stalin's pressure against them. Trotsky's opportunist policy of conciliation with the Stalinist bureaucratic center was first hand knowledge to Zinoviev and Kamenev. Further, Trotsky was in the same dilemma as Zinoviev and Kamenev for like them he had attempted to adapt himself to the bureaucratic process but had been caught short by the unforeseen placement of the real key to power in the hands of Stalin. Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky were all ousted bureaucrats, double-crossed by the central figure, Stalin. With this natural merging of their several paths, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky formed a self-protective bloc in 1926, rallying many anti-Stalin workers to serve as a bargaining card with the onrushing Stalin spearhead of bureaucratic centralization of power.

Zinoviev and Kamenev, however,

were in a very embarrassing predicament at that point of the factional game. For some time previous, they had taken the lead in the scheme to destroy Trotsky's power in the bureaucracy. As a "polemical" cover — to make the swindle look like a fight for principles — they together with Stalin had dug up Lenin and Trotsky's old, long dead differences on the theoretical question of Permanent Revolution. On this profoundly important question, Lenin had proved wrong and Trotsky right, and in 1917 they had liquidated their differences. Trotsky in later years related Lenin's admission that the former had been correct on the question of the Permanent Revolution. The admission had been made to Joffe, a very close friend of Trotsky:

"Joffe told me of his conversation with Lenin — it took place in 1919, if I am not mistaken — on the subject of permanent revolution. Lenin said to him: 'Yes, Trotsky proved to be right.'" (L. Trotsky, My Life, p. 535)

Hence, when Trotsky formed the bloc with Zinoviev and Kamenev, he had to render them a certain "diplomatic" service along lines which reveal the opportunist character of these people. Zinoviev and Kamenev, by their factional noise against Trotsky from 1923 to 1925 had turned their followers against him, and particularly on the question of the Permanent Revolution. The deceived followers of Zinoviev and Kamenev had taken the anti-Trotsky demagoguery seriously, and when a bloc with Trotsky was broached, the rank-and-file followers of Zinoviev and Kamenev were in an uproar of indignation. Many years later Trotsky gave a vivid description of the predicament of his new clique allies:

"Zinoviev's position at that time was truly tragic. Only yesterday a recognized leader of anti-Trotskyism, he on the next day bowed to the banner of the 1923 Opposition. At the sessions of the C.C., all the speakers took every occasion to fling in his face his own declarations of yesterday to which he could say nothing in reply. The

same thing was done day in and day out by Pravda. On the other hand, the advanced Petrograd workers, followers of Zinoviev, who had engaged honestly and seriously in the struggle against 'Trotskyism' could by no means reconcile themselves to the sudden turn of 180 degrees. Zinoviev was confronted with the danger of losing the best elements of his own faction." ("Archives of the Revolution," The New International, February 1938, p. 57)

Zinoviev and Kamenev were thus caught in a trap of their own making. Their contradiction was that of hundreds and thousands of the careerists who entered the service of Stalin only to be double-crossed and wiped out at the appropriate moment in the centralization process. This eminent pair of plotters tried to wheedle their way out of the mess. They got together with Trotsky in a scheme to set matters aright. A little maneuver had to be resorted to — little for hardened factional horse-traders, but of vast importance for the destiny of the workers. Zinoviev and Kamenev "merely" proposed that Trotsky publicly repudiate his theory of the Permanent Revolution. Trotsky agreed to conclude an alliance with these crooks. The repudiation concretely took the form of Trotsky's declaring that Lenin — who had actually been wrong — had been right! Trotsky made this lying statement publicly to the whole "Comintern." This repudiation of the Permanent Revolution was incorporated by Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev in their Platform of the Opposition of 1927, the "theoretical" cover for their factional horse-deal, and reads as follows:

"Trotsky has stated to the International that in all those questions of principle upon which he disputed with Lenin, Lenin was right — and particularly upon the question of the permanent revolution and the peasantry." (Platform of the Opposition, printed in English under the title, "The Real Situation in Russia," p. 180. Our emphasis)

Was this maneuver anything more than a

crooked factional deal, an unqualifiedly unprincipled act? Listen to Trotsky's own description of the real source of his repudiation of the Permanent Revolution:

"With my acknowledgement of Lenin's correctness, Zinoviev sought, if only partially, to throw a veil over the previous criminal 'ideological' work of his own faction against me." (The New International, February 1938, p. 57)

A deal to satisfy the needs of a criminal, degenerated bureaucrat — here we have another sample of Trotsky's "public activity" — this time after his base attack upon Eastman.

In so far as Trotsky's line on the Chinese Revolution was concerned, it was based on a repudiation of the Permanent Revolution. It grew, as we have said, out of his renegade bloc with Zinoviev and Kamenev — and out of the whole logic of his policy of peacemaking and conciliation with Stalin in the division of the bureaucratic power in the Soviet Union. At a later time when Zinoviev and Kamenev in turn double-crossed Trotsky, the latter placed the guilt for the whole opportunist mess on Zinoviev. Referring to the Platform of the Opposition signed by Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev, Trotsky wrote:

"In the Platform, the question of the Chinese revolution is dealt with very insufficiently, incompletely, and in part positively falsely by Zinoviev." ("The Third International After Lenin, L. Trotsky, p. 128)

Obviously, in "diplomatically" trying to place the onus for the opportunist line on the Chinese Revolution upon the shoulders of Zinoviev, Trotsky tried to conceal his own responsibility for this piece of deliberate criminality whose essence was the selling of the principle of the Permanent Revolution down the river for the sake of a self-protective clique alliance with a pair of utterly corrupted swindlers and renegades. Such was the kind of "diplomat" Trotsky had become in the

epoch of Stalinism — a far cry from Trotsky the Bolshèvik diplomat of 1918.

Naturally, such a line of "public activity" on the part of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev could never succeed in the effort to hang on somehow to their high positions in the bureaucracy. Stalin, faced by a sham opposition, rapidly advanced to supreme power. Fundamentally, he was aided in his rise to bureaucratic supremacy by the "opposition." The latter gave political support to Stalin's line, concealed the real essence of the usurpation of power that was occurring in the top leadership and opened the path for the complete crushing of the Soviet toilers under the bloody heel of Stalinism, and the delivery of the masses throughout the world, through the Stalinist counter-revolution, to the assaults of the bourgeois.

Trotsky in his alibi tried to convey the impression that he attacked Eastman because the latter foolishly jumped the gun, so to speak, i.e. he did not wait for the full development of the Trotskyist (alleged) fight against Stalinism. The essence of the fakery of this alibi is that Trotsky did not fight Stalinism, that his line was peacemaking and conciliation with the bureaucratic degeneration through supporting its reactionary policies. It was Stalin who did the fighting — to wipe out the other big figures and centralize all power in his own hands. He was entirely successful because the "opposition" was a fraud, a political branch of the Stalinist system itself, a prop to the basic bureaucratic degeneration masking itself under "opposition" colors. Out of this loyal "opposition" line grew Trotsky's treacherous 1925 attack on Eastman.

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