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TWOPENCE

COMRADE TROTSKY'S LIFE IS MENACED

MURDER PLOT EXPOSED

by Max Shachtman

An international assassin is en route to Mexico. He sailed early this week from the port of Galveston, Texas, for the port of Vera Cruz, Mexico, to carry out the mission assigned to him by his gangster overlords: TO ORGANIZE THE MURDER OF LEON TROTSKY.

In this country he is known to certain circles by the name of George Mink—known to the Philadelphia police as a petty larceny crook—subsequently known to the workers on New York's water-front as the fanically well-heeled boss of the late "Marine Workers Industrial Union" organized nine years ago by the Communist Party.

WORRIED IN MOSCOW

In Moscow, after the inevitable collapse of his "Union," he was known as an associate of Juliet Stuart Poyntz in the Red International of Labor Unions (the "profintern"), where he worked in reality as an agent of the G.P.U., especially charged

with surveillance over American communists and other visitors to Moscow's hotels. He is a relative by marriage of the Stalinist chief, Arnold Lozovsky, head of the Red International of Labor Unions prior to its dissolution.

In 1935, the *New York Times* reported in a dispatch dated from Copenhagen, Denmark, July 30, that "two Americans, George Mink and Nicholas Sherman, arrested two months ago, were condemned today to eighteen months in prison under the accusation of espionage." The two had been apprehended in Denmark for their espionage activities in behalf of the G. P. U.

More recently, we learn from the charges made by Carlo Tresca, editor of the anarchist weekly "Il Martello", who bases himself upon the secret investigations of the anarcho-syndicalists in Spain, Mink was engaged for more than a year in working as head of the murderous G. P. U. in Barcelona, where under the name of Alfred Herz, he and his

agents were instrumental in organizing the arrest and assassination of literally hundreds of militant anarchists, members of the P. O. U. M. and of the Fourth International.

HE KILLED BERNERI

It was "Herz" and his assistant, "Herman" (Nicholas Sherman?), who organized the foul assassination of the noble Italian anarchist leader in Barcelona, Camillo Berneri and his comrade Barbieri.

It was Mink, whose description tallies fully in every detail with that of "Herz," who told the wounded English militiaman, Parker, on April 31, 1937—the very eve of the famous May events in Barcelona—that "in a few days we're going to get Moulin and all the other goddamned Trotskyists." Shortly thereafter, our comrade Moulin, leader of the Fourth Internationalists in Catalonia, disappeared and has not been heard of since.

It was Mink who was known throughout Barcelona as the man directly responsible for the arrest of John McNair, representative in Spain of the Independent Labor Party of England.

It was Mink—"Herz" who was responsible for the disappearance and probable kidnapping to Moscow of Marc Rein, son of Rafael Abramovich, Menshevik member of the Bureau of the Second International, and of Erwin Wolf, former secretary to Leon Trotsky.

It was Mink—"Herz" who, under the direction of Soviet Consul-General Antonov-Oveyenko, carried on a reign of terror against all those militants who refused to bow to the totalitarian power of Stalinism in Spain.

PRECEDED BY OTHER AGENTS

Now this murderous thug is on his way to Mexico, and when this appears in print, will probably have arrived in the capital, where Leon Trotsky and his wife have been granted an asylum which has proved to be a bone in the throat of the Kremlin frame-up camarilla.

Mink has been preceded by a number of other Stalinist agents. More than a month ago we made public the fact, transmitted to us from France, that a certain Georges Fournial, member of the notorious Stalinist "International of Educational Workers" and known in Paris as an employee of the G.P.U., had arrived in Mexico on an obscure mission.

Subsequent to his arrival, there came to Mexico a well-known Stalinist spokesman, recently returned from Spain, where he fought the Spanish Civil War from a comfortable hotel room in Barcelona, "Captain" Ralph Bates.

Only a few days ago, finally we learned of the order given by the Communist Party in New York to a prominent fanatical party member who served as Agitational-Propaganda Director for the party in New Jersey and prior to that in Pittsburgh, that she leave immediately for "work" in Mexico.

WHY IS MINK GOING TO MEXICO?

Why this "concentration" on Mexico? Above all, why the dispatch of the international assassin of the G.P.U., George Mink?

He can have but one mission: to murder Leon Trotsky.

It has already been established officially by the Swiss police that one of the escaped murderers of Ignace Reiss, who went under the alias of Rossi, or Rous, but whose real name was Roland Abbiatte, had in his room when it was raided a map of Mexico City and its suburbs and a duplicate of his application for a visa to visit Mexico. The purpose of his visit was unmistakable.

So is the purpose of Mink's visit!

The Stalin regime has cold-bloodedly framed-up and shot down the whole generation of Bolsheviks who made the October Revolution possible. The veriest handful of them are still alive in the Soviet Union and their days are numbered by the Borgias in power. Only Leon Trotsky has thus far been out of Stalin's reach.

Now the long, blood-stained arm of the G.P.U. is stretching out across continent and sea to put an assassin's bullet through the heart of the great survivor of the October generation.

Let Stalin's skulking gunmen bear this in mind:

We know their methods; we know their purpose; we know their names.

And let them—and above all, their chief—bear this in mind, too:

The international proletariat has already fixed the responsibility for any harm that will befall Leon Trotsky. The assassin's are known in advance. They will be judged accordingly.

A Letter to Geneva

by Leon Trotsky

(The following letter was sent on March 21 by comrade Trotsky to the Juridical Section, Secretariat of the League of Nations):

On October 22, 1936, through my Norwegian attorney, the late Michael Puntervold, I had the honor of appealing to you in a letter receipt of which you were kind enough to acknowledge in your reply No. 3A-15105-15085. I am not informed as to the present status of the question of creating a tribunal against terrorists under the League of Nations. I do not know whether it already exists, or whether it is expected to start working in the near future. In any case, I consider it my duty not only to repeat the considerations which I had the honor of bringing to the attention of your section nearly a year and a half ago, but also to supplement them with a new, fully concrete proposal.

It was the Soviet government which initiated the creation of a tribunal against terrorists under the League of Nations. The People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs for the U.S.S.R., Mr. M. Litvinov, displayed at the League of Nations sessions an especially keen and, as might then have appeared, inexplicable interest in this question. However, to informed people the matter was clear even then. Preparing over a number of years the trial against "Trotskyist terrorists," the G.P.U. was fully convinced that the monotonous "confessions" of the accused would persuade the whole world, including the future tribunal of the League of Nations, as to the correctness of the accusations and offer the possibility of obtaining the legal deliverance of myself and my son, Leon Sedov, into the hands of the G.P.U. This was the immediate and direct aim of Moscow's initiative on the question of an international tribunal.

In my letter of October 22, 1936, I expressed the thought that a tribunal dedicated to the defense of governments in various countries from terrorists cannot, on the other hand, refuse defense to private individuals if they, because of purely political motives, are falsely accused of terrorism by an ill-intentioned government. I therefore considered then, and still consider, that I have the right to plead for an examination of my case by the future tribunal under the League of Nations, in spite of the fact that the Soviet government has seemingly definitely

renounced the thought of seeking help in Geneva against my alleged "conspiracies."

The impartial International Commission headed by the well known American philosopher and educator, John Dewey, after almost nine months of work came to a final conclusion in regard to the Moscow trials, declaring them deliberate frame-ups. Armed with numerous and irrefutable proofs which are at the disposal of the above-mentioned Commission, I am ready at any time to appear before the tribunal of the League of Nations in order once more and definitively to convert my accusers into accused.

But I make bold to think that by this time it is already impossible to stop merely at the first step. During the last half year, the world has been witness to a series of actual terrorist acts committed in various countries according to a general plan and with undoubted singleness of purpose. I have in mind not the legal and extra-legal murders in the U.S.S.R., where the question, thus or otherwise, concerns the legalized actions of the state apparatus, but acts of downright banditry on the international arena.

The murder of Ignace Reiss, former agent of the G.P.U., on September 4, 1937, near Lausanne, Switzerland, can in no sense be viewed as a legalized act. The Swiss and French authorities have complete, exhaustive data unmasking the real organizer of this murder: the G.P.U., the secret police of the U.S.S.R.

During the judicial investigation of the murder of Ignace Reiss it was disclosed in passing that this same gang, in conducting systematic espionage upon my son, Leon Sedov, attempted to kill him at Mulhausen in January, 1937. What relationship the G.P.U. had to the sudden death of my son on the 16th of February of this year is still subject to general investigation.

Among the documents of the chief murderer of Ignace Reiss, a so-called Rossi who succeeded in fleeing in time, proofs were found of his attempts to enter Mexico for purposes not difficult to determine on the basis of the aforementioned circumstances. The actual name of this professional murderer in the service of the G.P.U. is Roland Abbatte.

Witnesses of unimpeachable authority can relate before the tribunal the preparation by G.P.U. agents of terroristic acts against me during my sojourn in

Europe and in Mexico. I can further cite the kidnapping in Spain of my former collaborator, Erwin Wolf, a Czechoslovakian citizen who has disappeared without a trace. The terrorist acts in Spain against the Catalonian revolutionist, Andres Nin; the Austrian emigre, Kurt Landau; the son of a Russian emigree, Mark Rein, and a number of other individuals have received world-wide publicity. Even that part of the legal and extra-legal investigation which has been accessible to public opinion to date is completely sufficient to warrant the interferences of an international tribunal against a centralized Mafia of terrorists working on the territory of several states, other than their own.

With the help of documents, testimony of witnesses and irrefutable political considerations I take it upon myself to prove what public opinion has been in no doubt of for some time; that is, that the

head of this criminal band is Joseph Stalin, General Secretary of the All-Union Communist Party of the U.S.S.R.

Inasmuch as the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., Mr. Litvinov, has very eloquently insisted upon the necessity for governments to mutually obligate themselves to extradite terrorists, he, we can hope, will not refuse to employ his influence to place the above-mentioned Joseph Stalin, as head of the international terrorist band, at the disposal of the tribunal under the League of Nations.

For my part, I am ready to place all my energy, information, documents and personal connections at the disposal of the tribunal in order that the truth may be fully disclosed.

Coyoacan, D.F.

March 21, 1938.

'Riots' in Tunis

Eleven were killed and forty wounded when the police fired on demonstrators in Tunis on April 9th. Once again rapacious French Imperialism has tried to drown in blood the rising revolt of the colonial workers and peasants of North Africa, goaded beyond the limits of human endurance by the unendurable conditions of their existence.

The Arab peasants who have been plundered of all but meagre strips of barren soil have seen their labour disappear through the failure of harvests due to the drought; they have seen the irrigation water which might have saved them diverted to the more fertile lands of the French colonists; driven from the land by famine, they enter the towns and depress the already intolerable conditions of the Arab workers, who toil from twelve to sixteen hours a day to earn a few coppers. Coming on top of famine, the increased burden of taxes which the Government has laid on the colonies to pay for its arms programme has increased the price of the necessities of life. Short time, unemployment, high food prices, these are the conditions that generate the wave of revolt in the North African slaves of French Imperialism. They have summed up their demands for work and irrigation aid in the slogan "Bread and water." The Popular Front Government and its successors gives them bullets.

The insurrectionary movement of the Arab slaves has lined itself up behind the parties of Arab nationalism. In Tunis, the Neo Destour Party, led by "constitutional" nationalists has remonstrated with imperialism in vain. They called attention to the

grave results in the weakening of France's strategic position in the Mediterranean that would result from the failure to give relief to the population, and they were met with the grim contempt of the authorities and an increase in the burdens laid on them. Their path barred by the uncompromising attitude of French imperialism, the pressure of the exasperated Arab masses has compelled them to adopt a radical policy, and they have called upon the population to refuse to pay taxes.

The reply of the authorities was to arrest the secretary of the Neo Destour in Souk-el-Arba and other nationalist leaders, under charges of "Criminal propaganda." The campaign of calumny against the Neo Destour has been intensified and the leaders are again accused of being paid agents of Italian fascism. Last October Moroccan nationalist leaders, El Fassi and others, were arrested on monstrously false charges of plotting with German-Italian fascism against the French Popular Front Government, following the shooting down of strikers and demonstrators at Metlaoui and Meknes. French "democracy" seeks to justify its bloody deeds by linking its victims with fascism.

The arrest of the Neo Destour leaders on false charges was followed by a demonstration in Tunis demanding the release of the prisoners. The authorities insinuated that the demonstration had been organised by agents from the Italian consulate, and was a fascist manoeuvre. When the paper *Elamal* called for a general strike to force the release of the nationalist leaders, it was confiscated by the police.

The infuriated population came out on a general strike in Tunis and other towns. Martial law was declared. Demonstrators assembled outside the Governor's palace and demanded a parliament. Ali Delahouane, a Neo Destour leader was arrested, although the demonstration was an orderly one. Systematically the authorities answered each protest with a fresh provocation. The arrest of Delahouane added fuel to the flames and 2,000 demonstrators paraded past the law courts demanding his release.

The authorities chose this moment to administer the blow which they were preparing. A ferocious police attack was launched against the demonstrators, who were fired upon, eleven being killed and forty wounded.

The streets were occupied by troops, armoured cars patrolled the town, civilians were searched for arms. Under the martial law regulations, all meetings were forbidden, the organ of the Neo Destour, *L'Action Tunisienne*, suspended, and seventy three arrests made for trial before the military tribunals. To the population thus gripped in the vice of military repression, the Resident Governor reiterates yet again his promises to examine "the legitimate complaints of the Tunisian people."

Just as in the previous massacres of oppressed Arab slaves the "communist" press supported its capitalist partners in the Popular Front in their bloody repressions, so also in this case *L'Humanite* and *Ce Soir*, "Communist" Party papers, hasten to justify the crimes of French Imperialism. They repeat the allegations that the Italian secret police

is behind the uprisings, they congratulate the Governor for his energetic action in quelling the disturbances, they demand a stern inquiry into the sources whence the "riots" were provoked.

The Popular Front Government in Spain, serving the needs of its imperialist masters, was just as brutal a jailor in the prison of Spanish Morocco as its predecessors. The Moors, who found the chains of Republican Spain no lighter than those of the Monarchy, became the dupes of Franco who used them to kill their fellow slaves in Spain. The Spanish workers paid literally in blood for their support of Popular Front treachery. So also from French North Africa the Arabs will be brought to crush the French workers. The funds allotted to the alleviation of starvation in the French colonies are administered by the colonists, who are predominantly fascist, as a political weapon to strengthen themselves, and Fascism recruits a second army of Moors.

In Britain too, where the Popular Front has entered the realm of discussion, the workers must be conscious that the British Popular Front if it ever comes into being, will continue the murderous work of its Tory predecessor, will add more victims to the list of massacred Indian and colonial slaves and will thereby generate the troops for a British Franco. The experience of the Popular Front in Spain and France must engrave on workers' consciousness the lesson that only by revolutionary class struggle, only by linking their struggles with those of the colonial oppressed, will the workers be liberated from the slavery and misery of capitalism in decay.

Imperial Prelude to War

The memory of the national tightening of belts in the civil populations of the belligerent countries in the Great War causes the rulers today, in an atmosphere of spy-scares, air-raid precautions and frenzied arms speed-up, to turn their attention more closely than ever to the problem of securing war-time supplies of food and raw materials. Britain, with a negligible home peasantry, is compelled to import more than two-thirds of her food from abroad, a circumstance that deeply influences British policy at home and in the colonies and dominions.

In Britain, secret plans are mentioned by the Minister of Agriculture for a high speed food-producing campaign "in case of national emergency," while the Government hints at huge wheat storage schemes, hints which were preceded by exceptional activity in the London Wheat Market following large wheat cargo purchases by the big

milling concerns. Side by side with the arms speed-up marches the food "speed up," a four year plan for agriculture is launched, an Empire food supply plan comes under discussion, the Board of Trade draws up its "shadow plan." The machinery of the Marketing Boards facilitates pig plans and herring plans, while the Food Defence Committee organises local boards to control the transport and storage of food "in an emergency." The emergency might just as easily be a general strike as a war, and the machinery set up serves the ruling class equally well in national war and in class war. But at this moment it is the war needs of British Imperialism that are kept in the foreground. The cattle population is increased in Britain and Ireland by the increased importation of Canadian store cattle, bringing the meat supply to a higher level in anticipation of sudden blockade.

The burden of the expense of these measures has been pushed onto the working population, and the effects are seen in the rise in the cost of living which has been followed by the workers' campaign for higher wages. The movement of prices, the increase in strikes, the manoeuvres in the commodity markets—all are explicable only in terms of the war preparations in the field of food and raw materials.

But the problem extends itself beyond the shores of Britain and into the colonies and dominions, where the military and economic problems of imperial war preparation provide the only key to the understanding of present British imperialist policy with its generous "concessions" to its subject peoples.

The recent trade pact with Eire is heralded in the bourgeois press as the long-sought solution to the Irish problem. Eire becomes a market for British coal, textiles and manufactured goods and finds in Britain a market for her food-stuffs. Britain, which sought to extract the £150,000,000, which she claimed for land annuity payments, by means of traffic, has "generously" surrendered her claims and accepted £10,000,000 in settlement. The trade war now ends and Ireland becomes once more the larder of England to serve her war-time needs. By the concessions to the Irish landowners they are bound more securely to the chariot of British Imperialism and drawn away from those imperialist rivals who plot to utilise Irish nationalism in another rebellion in the next war.

In South Africa, as in Ireland, during the Great War nationalist rebels took up arms against Britain and accepted aid from Germany. The Africander landowners who make use of the republican anti-British sentiments of the Boer population in order to bargain with British Imperialism are, like the Irish republican bourgeoisie, always ready to trade in their "republicanism" in return for concessions, and in South Africa, a valuable source of minerals and farm products in war time, British Imperialism is ready to pay for the "loyalty" of the republicans, to yield up a bigger share of the booty to them in return for a war-alliance. The landowners have thankfully accepted concessions in the shape of farm loans, the abolition of the Cape native vote, and draconic slave laws to repress and exploit the native population: they have for the most part abandoned the very phraseology of republicanism and have accepted the announcement that conscription will be imposed in the coming war. And now they hold out their hands to receive the native protectorates, rich sources of docile labour for their farms. The negotiations for the cession of the protectorates to the Union of South Africa are made in the atmosphere of pre-war "generosity."

To end the quarrel between Arab and Jew, the British Solomon physically divides the infant in two,

and neither claimant is satisfied. The task of the Partition Commission is by no means however, to reconcile Arab with Jew, but to secure to Britain the economic and strategic basis for her Mediterranean operations in the approaching war.

The mechanisation of warfare places oil in the foremost place among materials required in war. Only 5% of the oil consumed by Britain comes from Empire sources. Supplies for the Mediterranean fleet in wartime must depend mainly on production of Iraq which last year supplied nearly 20% of Britain's requirements. The Near East interests of British Imperialism and particularly those in Palestine take on in wartime a close relation with the oil needs of the British navy.

The Anglo-Egyptian Agreement is of a piece with the general British policy; here again the bonds are loosened in order to grapple Egypt all the closer. The counterpart of "Home Rule" is "Imperial Defence", the treaty goes side by side with the military agreement, and Egypt becomes "independent" in order to sit at the table where imperial war plans are discussed.

As in Europe and Africa, so throughout the world possessions of Britain and military and economic needs of impending war have dictated the political terms of the compromises that are being effected.

The imperialist policy of concessions to the nationalist and republican movements in Britain's colonies and dominions is the means by which the national bourgeoisie and the national landowners are bribed into supporting the British bourgeoisie in the impending world slaughter. For the purpose of marshalling of supplies of food and fuel and raw materials, conscription of men, fortification of strategic points, British Imperialism yields various degrees of "autonomy" to the nationalists of the subject countries, but behind the process of apparent disintegration is the welding together of the British Empire to face the coming strains. On the debit side of the books of the British Shylocks must be placed the bigger shares yielded to the nationalists, but on the credit side stands the betrayal of the colonial peoples who are marshalled by their "republican" leaders to feed and to fight for the monster that has loaded them with chains and drains their blood away.

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Hacks of the GPU

On March 25th, the London *Star* reported that Messrs. Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., and Tom Bell, as publishers and author of a short history of the Communist Party, had been ordered to pay £200 damages for a libel contained in this book. The complainant was a former member of the Communist Party, Sam Elsbury who led the Rego strike of girl garment workers. The case throws yet another light on the activities of the hired scribblers of the G.P.U. On the appearance of Tom Bell's book, "History of the British Communist Party", it was given a favourable review by R. Palme Dutt in the *Labour Monthly*. Soon afterwards the book was sharply attacked in the *Labour Monthly* and withdrawn from circulation.

After writing his book Tom Bell had gone to Moscow to be patted on the head for it. He was gone a long time, and in view of the fact that his book had been condemned for its "errors", it was believed that he had been duly patted on the head—with the butt of a rifle, *a la* Stalin. But this was not so. The "errors" of the book were glaring enough. Begun in the "Third Period" it still clung to the left phrases of those years, while the party line had veered through 180 degrees by the time it was published. The Comintern demands of its hacks, above all, a chameleon-like power of adapting themselves to the colour scheme dictated by Moscow, and Tom Bell's book stood out, a lurid red against the bright yellow background of Popular Frontism. Tom Bell was eager to please his masters, but the Comintern has no use for chameleons who are colour blind. The book was withdrawn.

R. Page Arnot, another of the Grub Street-walkers of Stalinism, has recently published a history of the Russian Revolution. It is interesting to compare this work with the monograph on the Russian Revolution by the same writer published in 1925 by the Labour Research Department. In the older history Stalin is not even mentioned, but in the latest work he occupies the centre of the stage. Where the older book attempts to give an objective view of the activities of the Bolshevik leaders, the new book is a polemic against these leaders, which is

now seen as a preparation for the Trial of the 21. Lenin, Stalin and Sverdlov are lined up as against the camp of conspirators into which all the other leaders are lumped. The political role of Maxim Gorki is suppressed and he is depicted only as a great writer. In the older history, the reader is referred to eight books by Trotsky, as well as volumes by Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, etc. In the newer "history", not only are all these books not mentioned, but Arnot goes out of his way to warn readers against Trotsky's "History of the Russian Revolution", as mere "Trotskyist propaganda." The rationale of all these distortions, emissions and lies was revealed when, a short time after the appearance of the book, the indictment in the latest trial was published. Arnot's book is nothing but a preface to that indictment. And when the trial was staged, the G.P.U. historian was called to Moscow to report the proceedings for the British *Daily Worker*.

Amongst other things, he reported Krestinsky's evidence that in 1922 General Seeckt agreed to pay Trotsky 250,000 Reichsmarks a year for acting as a spy. (*Daily Worker*, 7/3/38, page 4). In that year the reichsmark was being inflated and by August the following year it reached 47,000,000 to the £. So a year of spying would have brought Trotsky just under three half pence, more than enough to buy a box of matches, but not enough to buy two boxes of matches.

This example of gross underpayment was quickly pointed out by hostile critics, and J. R. Campbell, another of the journalistic unfortunates, has surreptitiously changed the amount to gold-marks in his column in the *Daily Worker*. J. R. Campbell was once eminent as an exponent of Marxist theory. Today he is reduced to the job of cleaning up the mess that Yezhov makes in his frame-ups, a journalistic charwoman to the G.P.U.

These individuals were once professional revolutionaries. No longer revolutionaries, their "new" profession is the oldest in the world; they have abandoned the red flag of Bolshevism for the red lamp of Stalinism.

The Scapegoats

The Moscow Trials were staged under arc-lamps and before the microphones in order to supply a spectacular and highly dramatised explanation for the Russian masses of the cause of their deep dissatisfaction. Under the Stalinist system of favouritism, nepotism and intrigue, genuine ability is discouraged and the qualifications which all ambitious aspirants must possess to reach the coveted leading positions are hypocrisy, vociferous adulation of Stalin, lickspitting, personal connections. Such a system thrusts into the background all really capable individuals and selects for leadership those who have learned the art of grovelling, and need to know nothing else.

The series of trials, if they have revealed nothing else, have shown up the immense amount of damage that has been inflicted on the Soviet economic system by bureaucratic incompetence. The workers in the factories and on the collective farms have lived in daily contact with the wreckage, have suffered the consequences in the shape of delayed wages, high prices and shortage of necessities, have seen with their own eyes the immense wastage that mocks at their poverty. And they mutter: "Who is to blame for it?"

The ancient savage custom of loading the sins of the commune on a scapegoat before slaughtering it has been revived by Stalinism. The scapegoats appear in public, accept the blame for the sins of the bureaucracy, and are duly slaughtered. The presence of electric lamps and radio equipment lends a false air of modernity to a series of Moscow Trials that are merely Scapegoat Rituals conducted by the Soviet witchdoctor, Vishinsky.

Moreover, the dead leaders of the "bloc-of-Rights-and-Trotskyites" are posthumously loaded with a new burden of sins:

"The enemies of the people also sought to wreck the locomotive and freight car repair plant at Tbilissi. They worsened the working conditions of the workers, disrupted the supply of materials to the plant, sought to arouse dissatisfaction among the workers." (*Pravda*, March 8).

"The gang of bandits also operated in our factory. The bandits and wreckers caused a tie-up of capital investments, bought equipment for hundreds

of thousands of rubles that was absolutely worthless and useless in the plant, hindered the expansion of the plant, sought to liquidate the large nail-works, broke down the boiler-works No. 2, left the factory without fuel and so on." (Resolution of the *Krasnaya Etna* plant at Gorki.)

"The Trotskyite-Bukharinite bandits also operated in the Uglich district. They have caused great injury to our socialist economy. The vile enemies liquidated the collective farms *Svoboda* and *Zuevo*, deprived the collective farmers of land given them in perpetuity, left the cattle in the collectives without feed, ploughed over fields and pasture lands. In 1936 alone they destroyed 5,470 head of horned cattle, 11,616 pigs and sheep, 612 horses. They also wrecked the trade network, disrupted the building of schools in the village of Platunov, Orzine and elsewhere. It is impossible to enumerate the crimes of these scoundrels." (Resolution of a "Meeting of Workers, Collective Farmers, and Employees of the City of Uglich and Uglich District in the Yaroslav

Province.") *Pravda*, March 8th, 1938.

Succeeding issues of *Pravda* continue in the same strain. As the economic chaos mounts, heightened by the wholesale slaughter of department heads, reports continue to appear in the world press of new removals, new arrests, new charges and new trials. *Pravda* devotes space almost daily to attacks on some department or other: the Commissariat of Transport, the People's Commissar for Agriculture in White Russia, the Presidium of the Moscow Soviet, its chairman, H. Sidorov, its secretary, Dedkov, the Commissar for Railways, Bakulin, who was replaced by Kaganovich, etc.

Pravda of March 20th reports the appointment of two new deputy Commissars for Heavy Industry, the third purge in this department in four months. This same issue of *Pravda* records that 132,000 employees in the trade network have been "brought up on charges of alleged embezzlement and dissipation."

The purge reaches ever wider circles. Twenty five Moscow priests are arrested and charged with espionage, wrecking, etc., etc.; seven officials of the Agricultural department of the Tartar Republic are executed; in every sphere of Soviet life the holocaust goes on.

The increasing burden of armaments production deepens the crisis and the bureaucracy seeks by fabricating more and more complex spy-scares, by linking espionage with the wrecking to which the accused confess, to produce a wave of patriotism to counteract the moods of rebellion in the masses. The patriotic upsurge which was produced by Russia's entry into the Great War in August 1914 successfully overwhelmed the rising revolutionary temper of the Russian workers who had already begun in July of that year to erect barricades in the streets of the capital. The spy-scare technique is being utilised by nearly all the powers to-day in the effort to produce the patriotic frame of mind necessary for the arms speed-up, and in Russia, doubly endangered by chaos within and capitalist threats from the outside, the bureaucracy proceeds to ever greater extremities, seeking to exonerate itself, obliterate the revolutionary opposition, and defend its status from rapacious imperialist hands.

If Mussolini sardonically hails Stalin as a brother fascist, crude in his methods but on the right lines, he merely expresses in his own way the truism that the means to which Stalinism has resorted to extricate itself from its difficulties can only aid world

reaction, that is, fascism. The "friends" of the workers have seized upon the trials and the aftermath of proletarian discouragement that inevitably results from the trials, each for his own purpose: the bourgeois, to discredit Socialism; the reformist, to condemn the October Revolution; the petty bourgeois anarchist, to attack Bolshevism. The militant worker is confused and disoriented, and it is in creating this breach in the defences of the world working class that Stalinism has done its greatest damage.

At this moment, when the Soviet Union is ringed around by menacing capitalist enemies who seek to turn the internal convulsions to their own profit, it is at the same time robbed of its main weapon of defence, the unshaken confidence and support of the world proletariat. Because of the very extremities to which the Soviet Union has been brought by an unbridled bureaucracy, it becomes the task of revolutionary socialists, under the blows and slander and abuse of Stalinism, to rally the working class to the defence of the Soviet Union. This task they, alone can carry out, and the only instrument by which the Soviet Union will be defended is the new, Fourth International.

MORE 'SPY' TRIALS IN STORE

The arrest of the Rubens (Robinson) couple in Moscow on charges of espionage led to the recent passport investigation of the U.S. government, which disclosed that American Stalinists were involved in the obtaining of U.S. passports by fraud. During last month two more Stalinists were indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in connection with the Robinson-Rubens passport frauds—Arthur Sharfin and Ossip Garber, charged with assisting Rubens to obtain the false papers. As further links are established between the "spy" Rubens and the American Stalinist organisation it becomes more clear that we have here a prematurely exposed plot designed to link American Trotskyists with an alleged spy-centre in the Soviet Union.

The disclosures in the Robinson-Rubens investigation has focussed public attention on another similar case, the disappearance of Juliet Stuart Poyntz, former prominent Stalinist in the United States, who was last seen in the company of one Shachno Epstein, alias Joseph Berson, one time editor of the Stalinist *Daily Freiheit* and later a G.P.U. agent.

The recent announcement of the forthcoming trial in Moscow of Rose Cohen, member of the British Communist Party, on charges of espionage and conspiracy indicates that the technique of the G.P.U. frame-up is being extended to Britain, justifying our warnings during the past months. Rose Cohen, well

known in King Street circles, has been in close detention since August 1937; other British Stalinists are known to be under arrest, including Morris Richter of the Johannesburg Branch of the South African Communist Party, to which he has been connected for some thirteen years, always as a staunch supporter of Stalinism.

Stalinism, organiser of economic ruin in the Soviet Union, is compelled by its own handiwork to create the G.P.U. regime of frame-up and spy-scares, trials and "confessions" and to extend that system throughout the world. The Soviet Trials are not a Russian affair, but the affair of the British workers and the workers of the world. The cancer of Stalinism must be excised from the body of the revolutionary socialist movement.

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The Priests of Half-Truth

by Leon Trotsky

The portrait here drawn by Leon Trotsky of certain of the American "liberals" may be taken by their British brothers as applying to themselves . . . A. J. Cummings of the "News Chronicle" speaks in the same tongue as the "liberal" scribes in the United States and to a similar audience. The same mirror will serve on both sides of the Atlantic—ED.

The *Nation* and the *New Republic* are now playing the sorriest and most ignoble role in the American press. These journals lay claim to the role of oracles of "liberal" public opinion. They have no ideas of their own. The social crisis that began in 1929 and caught the "liberals" unaware compelled them to cling to the U.S.S.R. like a saving anchor. In popularizing the successes of the planning principle and in the cautious counterpoising of this principle to capitalist anarchy, these gentlemen temporarily found a mission. They had absolutely no independent program of action for the United States; but for that, they were able to cover up their own muddleheadedness with an idealized image of the U.S.S.R.

In fact, the "friendship" with Moscow signified the reconciliation of bourgeois liberalism with the bureaucracy which had strangled the October Revolution. The more extensive the privileges of the new leading stratum became, and the more conservative it grew in the defense of its privileges—the greater became the number of its friends among the bourgeois intellectuals and the liberals, snobs who keep up with the vogue of the day. The inspirers of this state of mind became Walter Duranty and Louis Fischer, downright sycophants of the Soviet oligarchy. Under their guidance, small-minded professors, mediocre poets, lawyers who had not succeeded in attaining prominence, bored widows, and ordinary lonesome ladies, seriously began to take their friendship with the Soviet Embassy in Washington for service in the interests of the October Revolution. Many of them displayed a readiness to defend the Soviet Union to the last

drop of blood . . . not theirs, to be sure, but that of the "Trotskyists."

REED AND . . . DURANTY

In the heroic epoch of the revolution, the representative of American public opinion in Moscow was John Reed. At that time, Walter Duranty was located in Riga, working as professional calumniator of the revolution and of its leaders. In later years, Duranty became the principal link between the Soviet bureaucracy and "liberal" public opinion in the United States. The moral contrast between John Reed and Walter Duranty well reflects the political antagonism between Bolshevism and Stalinism. If the editors of the *Nation* and the *New Republic* tax their ingenuity to avoid an understanding of this antagonism, it is because such petty tradesmen in lies as Duranty and Louis Fischer are incomparably closer to them in spirit than the heroic John Reed.*

Is it surprising that the present bureaucracy of the Kremlin is incomparably more suitable to the democratic oracles than was the revolutionary party of Lenin? Just as in the past they did not understand the laws of the revolution, so today they do not understand the laws of reaction. They hoped that the bureaucracy, not without their benevolent cooperation, would become increasingly respectable and "human." Faith in uninterrupted and automatic progress has not been extirpated, to the present day, from the heads of these people. They have been unable to draw any conclusions at all even from the fact that the democratic petty

*W. Duranty, in spite of his genuine Anglo-Saxon "soul," participates in the Moscow frame-ups in a strictly planful manner, side by side with the judges, the prosecutor, the defendants, and in general with people who have a "Russian soul." However, Duranty was not even confronted with the necessity to choose every day between life and death. His colleague, Mr. Harold Denny, a man who obviously has an American soul, even if not of very large dimensions, has speedily adapted himself to the totalitarian regime. Faced with the need of choosing between lean-stomached truth and fat sandwiches, he unhesitatingly took his stand with the sandwiches and Vyshinsky. It is creatures of his stripe who are the source of inspiration for "liberal" public opinion.

bourgeoisie, whose flesh of the flesh they are, transformed itself in a few years in Germany into an army of fascism. They were even less capable of understanding the malignant evolution of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

LOGIC OF CLASS STRUGGLE

Lamentable indeed is he who, in the great turns of history, confines himself to empirical conjecture instead of penetrating into the imminent logic of the class struggle. In the psychological sense, the defendants were merely instruments in the hands of the G.P.U. Inquisition. In the historical sense, the Inquisitor Stalin, is merely an instrument in the hands of the bureaucracy which has landed in a blind alley. The bureaucracy itself is merely an instrument of the pressure of world imperialism. The Soviet masses hate the bureaucracy. World imperialism regards it as a tool that has outlived its usefulness and makes preparations to overturn it. The bureaucracy seeks to dupe the masses. It seeks to dupe world imperialism. It lies on both fronts. So that the truth shall not filter out past the frontier nor filter into the country from abroad, the bureaucracy allows only "reliable" people to enter or leave the country.

It surrounds the Soviet Union with a border patrol palisade such as the world has never seen and with a countless pack of police dogs.

The period when world imperialism subjected the Soviet land to a blockade is now lost in the past. The blockade of the U.S.S.R. today is organized by the Soviet bureaucracy itself. Of the revolution as it understands it, it has preserved only the cult of police violence. It thinks that with the aid of police dogs the course of history can be altered. It fights for its existence with a conservative fury such as has not been displayed by any ruling class in history. Along this road, it has arrived in a short time at the commission of crimes such as not even fascism has yet perpetrated. Of this dialectic of the Thermidor, the democratic oracles have understood nothing, understand nothing now—let there be no illusions—will not understand anything. Otherwise they would be obliged to shut down immediately the *Nation* and the *New Republic* and thus upset the equilibrium of the solar system!

OPPOSITES IDENTIFIED

Since the Thermidorean reaction came out of the revolution, the *Nation* and the *New Republic* have sought tirelessly to prove that revolution and reaction are one and the same thing. They system-

atically approved or at least kept silent about the work of falsification, of lies, of corruption, which the Stalinist bureaucracy has accomplished throughout the world. They have covered up the repression against the Oppositionists which has been going on now for fifteen years. Yet there has been no lack of warnings. The literature of the Left Opposition is fairly rich, in all languages.

For fifteen years it has showed, step by step, how the methods of the bureaucracy came into increasingly sharp conflict with the requirements of a new society; how the bureaucracy was obliged to screen its own greedy interests, not only by making its own the mechanics of lying of all the ruling classes, but also by investing these mechanics—in view of the acuteness of the situation in a country scarcely emerged from a revolution—with an unprecedentedly poisonous character. With irrefragable facts and documents we showed how a whole school of falsification came out of the Thermidorian reaction—the school of Stalin—which envenomed every domain of social ideology; we explained how and why it was precisely Stalin ("the cook of peppery dishes," according to Lenin's definition as far back as March, 1921) who became head of the avid and conservative caste of usurpers of the revolution; we predicted the Moscow trials ten years before they took place and we explained to the most backward that the judicial frame-ups are only convulsions of the Thermidorean agony.

Finally, in 1937, the International Commission of New York, composed of persons of high moral authority and accustomed to critical judgment, subjected the accusations of Stalin and Vyshinsky to a patient and meticulous analysis. In all the accusations, they found nothing but lies, falsifications, frame-ups. They stated this openly to the entire world. The verdict of the Commission was intended essentially for the "man in the street," the farmer, the small tradesman, the backward worker, in a word, the majority of those whose conditions of existence deprive them of the necessary training and broad horizons.

From the editors of the *Nation* and the *New Republic*, these breveted teachers of the people, one might, it would seem, have demanded a critical sense of their own. They might, for example, have recalled from what they learned under their old school-teachers, that the Thermidorean reaction in France proclaimed the Jacobins to be "Royalists" and "agents of Pitt," in order to justify in the eyes of the masses the sanguinary repression against them. From these professional moralists, one might, it would seem, have expected some sense of morality. Does not the moral degeneration of the Soviet

bureaucracy stink to high heaven? Alas, the moralists have been found to be devoid even of a simple sense of smell.

PANORAMA OF NARROWNESS

The Moscow trials not only took this circle of people unawares but have destroyed the tranquillity of their souls for a long time to come. A collection of all the articles of the *Nation* and the *New Republic*, dealing with the three big trials—what a panorama of narrowness, vanity, hypocrisy and above all of confusion. No, they did not expect them! How could this have happened? Yet, while they lack in perspicacity and a sense of smell, they possess to the highest degree the feeling for self-preservation of the priestly caste. Thenceforth, their whole behaviour was determined by concern with the obliteration of their traces, that is, with seeing to it that the faithful remain unaware of the fact that inside the oracle, all this time, were concealed not very farsighted priests. Theoretically, these Pharisees indignantly reject the principle: "The end justifies the means," failing to understand that a great historical goal automatically discards those means that are unworthy of it. But in order to bolster up traditional petty prejudices and especially their own authority in the eyes of the simpletons, they are always ready to resort to artful dodges, and frame-ups of picayune scope.

At first, they tried openly to fulfill their duty as "friends," that is, attorneys for the G.P.U. But this proved to be too risky. They speedily shifted to the position of philosophical agnosticism and diplomatic non-intervention. They declared the trials to be "puzzling." They refrained from judgment. They warned against premature conclusions. "We cannot decide anything from the outside." "We must not interfere in the affairs of Soviet justice." In a word, they sought evasively to reconcile world public opinion to the abominations that were being concocted in Moscow. These people wanted at all costs to remain on friendly terms with the executioners of the revolution but not to assume direct responsibility for the frame-ups of the G.P.U.

OBLIGED TO VEER AGAIN

However, they were unsuccessful in keeping to this second line for any length of time. Under the blows of the disclosures they sang at a continually lower pitch: of course, the charges are obviously improbable but . . . but there is "something" behind them. "We are not with the Stalinists, but we also do not believe the Trotskyists." Only the soothsayers of the *Nation* and the *New Republic* represent the truth. If, yesterday and the day before,

they were blind, that is all the greater guarantee that to-day their sight is flawless. "There is something behind these charges." Indeed! If the ruling clique is executing all who are left of the Bolshevik party, it has imperious reasons for doing so. However, we must look for these reasons in the objective interests of the bureaucracy and not in the speeches of Vyshinsky, nor in the frame-ups of Yezhov. But we already know: the dialectics of the class struggle remain for these empiricists a book sealed with seven seals. What can you ask or expect from philosophers and publicists who foresaw nothing, see nothing and who were caught completely unawares by the trials? There is nothing left for the bankrupt oracles but to divide the guilt in two: Fifty percent is allowed to the executioner, fifty percent to his victim.

The petty bourgeois always stands in the middle and judges a question by the formula: "on the one hand" and "on the other hand." If the capitalists are unbending, the workers are too exigent. This line of the golden mean, the *Nation* and the *New Republic* merely draw to its logical conclusion when they wear out half of their moral lymph on the G.P.U. and the other half on the real or fancied "Trotskyists." And in the end, the liberal American finds out from his teachers that Zinoviev and Kamenev were only half-terrorists; that Pyatakov sabotaged industry only six months out of twelve; that Bukharin and Rykov are spies for only two and not four countries; and that Stalin is merely a half-falsifier and a half-scoundrel. Cain? Perhaps he is Cain, but not more than fifty percent.

THEIR WORLD

Their philosophy reflects their own world. By their social nature they are intellectual semi-bourgeois. They feed upon half-thoughts and half-feelings. They wish to cure society by half-measures. Regarding the historical process as too unstable a phenomenon, they refuse to engage themselves more than fifty percent. Thus, these people, living by half-truths, that is to say, the worst form of falsehood, have become a genuine brake upon truly progressive, *i.e.*, revolutionary thought.

A *New Masses* is simply a garbage can which puts people on their guard by its own odour. The *Nation* and the *New Republic* are considerably more "decent" and "nice" and less . . . odorous. But they are all the more dangerous. The best part of the new generation of American intellectuals can proceed on the broad historical highway only on the condition of a complete break with the oracles of "democratic" half-truth.

Coyoacan, D.F., March 19, 1938.