

FOR AN  
IMPARTIAL  
COMMISSION!

# NEWS BULLETIN

LET THE  
TRUTH  
BE KNOWN!

## AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF LEON TROTSKY

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*This Committee Exists (1) To Safeguard Trotsky's Right to Asylum and (2) to further the Organization of an Impartial Commission of Inquiry.*

Bulletin No. 5.

MARCH 16, 1937

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One Cent

## Towards An Impartial Commission Of Inquiry For Leon Trotsky!

AN EDITORIAL

**A** NEW political trial is impending in Moscow—the third great trial in less than a year! (There have been scores of identical lesser trials throughout the Soviet Union.) This time the chief defendants are the old Bolsheviks, Nikolai Bukharin, until yesterday editor of *Izvestia*, and Alexei Rykov, Lenin's successor as President of the Council of People's Commissars. It can be predicted with perfect assurance that, as in the former trials, they will confess, and that their confessions will accuse Leon Trotsky of the most horrible crimes.

Trotsky on March 10th declared to the press that "there is only one way of preventing new judicial assassinations": to give him the opportunity of appearing before an impartial Commission of Inquiry into the charges made against him and his son at the Moscow trials. He has repeatedly demanded a hearing before such a Commission. He has staked his life and his honor upon its decisions.

This Commission of Inquiry should be composed of individuals of unassailable authority and integrity in the eyes of liberal and labor opinion. It would have as its task the examination of all the available evidence concerning the charges made against Trotsky and his son. The decisions of this Commission could not but dispel much of the doubt and mystery enveloping the Moscow trials.

There are two kinds of opponents of such a Commission as we advocate. First, the Communist Party and its most open supporters, who demand that everyone accept the Moscow verdicts as final and unimpeachable. So far as these people are concerned, the trials are a closed question.

Since, however, the overwhelming majority of labor and liberal opinion the world over refused to accept the trials at their face value, and the movement for an impartial Commission of Inquiry is gaining more and more adherents, another form of opposition to the formation of the proposed Commission is manifesting itself; projects for specious substitutes, utterly alien and opposed to the task imposed upon us by the trials of establishing the **objective truth** regarding the accusations against Trotsky and his son.

Two such "substitutes" have just come to light: one initiated by Fenner Brockway, Secretary of the British Independent Labor Party, and the other by the editors of the **New Republic**. We deal with them in detail below. Here we simply warn our friends that, the open and direct campaign to smash the Committee and to distort its purposes having

(Continued on Page 2)

## Committee Raps New Substitute Inquiries

Two new projects of opponents of the proposed Commission of Inquiry came to light this week:

1. We learned from an authoritative source that the **New Republic**, which accepts the official Soviet position on the trials and pronounces a Commission of Inquiry as "unlikely to be held or to have any value if it were," now has retained a single attorney to make an examination of the trial proceedings. Acting on this information, Suzanne La Follette communicated with Bruce Bliven, editor of the **New Republic**, and elicited a confirmation. Miss La Follette's subsequent letter to Mr. Bliven illumines the situation thoroughly. We quote the letter in full:

March, 10, 1937.

Dear Mr. Bliven:

I wish to make a record of your statements to me in our telephone conversation today, and to let you have in writing, for publication if you wish, some comments on the **New Republic's** relation to the questions raised by the Moscow trials.

You stated that the **New Republic** has retained an attorney, name not mentioned, to examine the official proceedings of the Zinoviev-Kamenev and the Radek-Piatkov trials. You denied that the **New Republic** is planning a general inquiry into the charges made against Trotsky in these two trials. You stated that the attorney's analysis was being made for the **New Republic's** own use, "perhaps not for publication." You stated that the **New Republic** did not plan, as part of this analysis, to go to Trotsky for his side of the case. You agreed that a one-man analysis of the proceedings would not be comparable in thoroughness or effectiveness to the work of a Commission of Inquiry.

I have a few comments to make on this plan of the **New Republic**:

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## COMMITTEE ASKS OBSERVERS AT NEW MOSCOW TRIAL

The American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky has asked the Soviet Government for the right to send observers to the impending trial of Nikolai Bukharin and Alexis Rykoff in Moscow. The request was embodied in a communication to Alexander Troyanovsky, Soviet Ambassador

The Committee declared that a precedent for its request had been set in the Moscow trials of August, 1936, and of last January, when the Soviet Government "showed sufficient awareness of public opinion abroad to invite foreign observers of the government's own choosing."

"Moreover," the Committee's letter to Mr. Troyanovsky stated, "the Soviet Gov-

ernment, as evidenced by the timely presence of these gentlemen in Moscow, apprised them of the impending trials in ample time."

The Committee therefore asked that it be notified in advance of the date of the trial, and that the Soviet Government guarantee the safety of the observers and grant them the right to be accompanied by stenographers, to use telephonic and telegraphic communications freely, and to interview the prisoners privately.

The letter declared that the Committee, "seriously concerned with the maintenance throughout the civilized world of the rights of political asylum, the right to a fair trial

without public prejudgment, and other civil liberties, came into being as a result of widespread doubt among pro-Soviet circles in America as to the validity and adequacy of the procedure and verdict" in last August's trials.

"These doubts," the communication added, "were moreover increased and deepened as a result of the next case tried before the Military Collegium in January."

"It is clear from the record of this Committee that it is composed of staunch friends of the Soviet Union. In the interests of the U.S.S.R. itself, the Committee seeks to clarify an issue thickly befogged by polemics.

## Committee Raps New Substitute Inquiries

(Continued from Page 1)

1. The New Republic was perhaps the only non-Communist paper of any standing which accepted the official version of the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial (editorial of September 2, 1936), flatly stating, "We see no reason to accept any of these labored hypotheses (against the official version) or to take the trial at other than its face value." Your editorial on the second trial (February 3, 1937), after appearing to weigh pros and cons, again accepts the official version, saying "it seems to us that the weight of the evidence supports Mr. Duranty's views. . . ." Hence the New Republic is clearly on record in support of the prosecution's views.

2. Your editorial of February 3 attempts to denigrate any attempt to arrive at the truth, such as our proposal for an impartial Commission of Inquiry. You say in that editorial: "It is, of course, impossible for anyone sitting in New York to pass a judgment that is worth anything on these Russian trials. It is equally obvious that such an investigation as Trotsky demands is unlikely to be held, or to have any value if it were." You thus sought to repudiate in advance the findings of an authoritative body with facilities for examining the validity of the juridical procedure, the objective evidence available on such crucial links as the Hotel Bristol story, Sedov's supposed trip to Copenhagen, Piatakov's alleged flight to Oslo, Romm's testimony about meeting Trotsky in Paris, the prosecution's purported quotations from the Bulletin of the Opposition—to mention only the most obvious points that can be dealt with conclusively by the proposed Commission.

3. Now, however, by retaining an attorney to re-examine the official proceedings, you are presumably abandoning your assertion of February 3 that "it is of course impossible for anyone sitting in New York to pass a judgment that is worth anything on these Russian trials." You thereby admit the advisability of re-examining the trial proceedings. But the New Republic substitutes a single hand-picked attorney, instead of the authoritative Commission of Inquiry we propose. Your denial that it is a "general inquiry" is irrelevant; you can publish the findings of your attorney in the most "tentative" and "modest" frame-work—but thereby you will convey the appearance of an "impartial" re-examination of the questions at issue. And your re-examination will be specious because it will ignore completely the essence of the task: TO GIVE TROTSKY THE DAY IN COURT WHICH HE HAS ASKED FOR, BY ENABLING HIM TO SUBMIT EVIDENCE AND ARGUMENTS TO A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY. How can you re-examine the case without examining the defense? No defense was made in Moscow, therefore an impartial commission which shall question Trotsky and examine his documents becomes imperative.

In conclusion I have two proposals to make:

1. Now that the New Republic has abandoned its contention that a re-examination is valueless, let it in all honesty acquaint its readers with its new position.

2. Let the New Republic name its attorney or anyone else as its designee for the proposed Commission of Inquiry, and join with us in setting up a Commission. Either that—or let the New Republic honestly fight us in the open.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) SUZANNE LAFOLLETTE

### THE BROCKWAY PLAN

2. When the labor and liberal world was expressing its horror and bewilder-

## TOWARDS AN IMPARTIAL COMMISSION

(Editorial continued from page 1)

failed, we may expect more and more flank attacks against our objectives.

We recognize that there is a section of public opinion which is sympathetic to the idea of a Commission but cannot clearly visualize how it would be organized and how it would function. We are now completing, with the aid of qualified counsel, a Model Plan for a Commission of Inquiry, which will be published in the next issue of this Bulletin. The Model Plan will demonstrate that the Commission can be realized without undue delay and difficulty

and can complete its work promptly.

We call upon all labor and liberal organizations to endorse the idea of a Commission of Inquiry into the charges made against Leon Trotsky and his son at the Moscow Trials. We call upon them, further, to join with us in bringing into being a Commission which will command the respect of progressive public opinion everywhere.

There is no time to lose! The honor of the labor movement and the very hope of human progress are at stake! Forward to the Commission of Inquiry!

### Reasons For Doubt

## Hotel Bristol and Bristol Cafe

In the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial, August 19-24, 1936, Holtzman testified: "I arranged with Sedov (Trotsky's son) to be in Copenhagen within two or three days, to put up at the Hotel Bristol and meet him there. I went to the hotel straight from the station and in the lounge met Sedov." This Hotel Bristol meeting was supposed to have taken place in 1932.

When this item of the trial testimony was published, the Copenhagen Social-Demokraten informed the rest of the world of one simple fact: The Hotel Bristol is given first place among the Copenhagen hotels in a pre-war edition of Baedeker's "Denmark." But it is not to be found in the post-war guide books, because it was pulled down in 1917 and has not been rebuilt.

Furthermore, Sedov has presented evidence that he was never in Copenhagen in his life.

When these facts became widely publicized, a new edition of the "Report of Court Proceedings" was published in England, with an introduction by the attorney D. N. Pritt. In this edition, the passage from Holtzman's confession referring to the Hotel Bristol is simply omitted. Friedrich Adler, secretary of the Labor and Socialist International, has challenged Pritt to explain this peculiar omission, but Pritt has not seen fit to explain it. (Page 49 of

Pritt's edition is the page from which it is deleted).

Some six months after the trial, however, the Communist press has at last come forward with a story to the effect that "there is a 'Bristol Cafe' situated directly next to the Grand Hotel Kobenhavn (Copenhagen) and that the name 'Bristol' is and was in 1932 blazoned in Neon lights right near the hotel. The 'Bristol Cafe' is notoriously known in Denmark as a hang-out of Danish and other Trotskyites. Furthermore, there is a common entrance to both the Bristol Cafe and the Grand Hotel Kobenhavn. Hence to anyone searching for the truth there would be no difficulty in seeing the fact that Holtzman, who conspired with Trotsky's son and met him at the Bristol Cafe, made the mistake of thinking that the hotel and cafe were one." (Daily Worker, February 12, 1937).

This is very interesting, but the following questions come to the fore:

1. Why did it take six months for the Communist International, with its excellent information service, to discover the "notoriously known" cafe?

2. Why was the reference to the Bristol deleted from the English edition prefaced by Pritt?

3. Is there any evidence to refute Sedov's proof that he was never in Copenhagen in his life?

ment at the trial procedure, in the first days after the Kamenev-Zinoviev trial, the Independent Labor Party's New Leader editorially supported our proposal for a Commission of Inquiry into the charges against Trotsky: "We think it is the duty of the International Working-class Movement to appoint a Commission of Investigation. It should visit Trotsky in Norway, and also ask permission to visit Moscow and examine the evidence given in the trial." (New Leader, August 28, 1936)

But then came the world-wide Communist campaign and pressure against a Commission of Inquiry; the I.L.P. weakened. The proposal for an investigation of the trials and a hearing for Trotsky on the charges disappeared from the New Leader. The I.L.P. refused to join our sister committee in England, though that Committee is constituted by H. N. Brailsford, J. F. Horrabin, Bertrand Russell and other labor and liberal leaders. And now, to crown this attitude, the I.L.P. leader, Fenner Brockway, writes in a letter to an American Socialist that, "I think it would be wrong to suggest that the examination should be of the Moscow trials. This will merely arouse prejudice in Russia and in Communist circles." Brockway thus makes the objections of the Russian and Communist circles sufficient criterion for rejecting a Commission of Inquiry into the charges made against Trotsky!

But since there exists a widespread movement for such a Commission, Brockway does not simply reject the Commission, but therefore proposes a substitute which certainly would not arouse prejudice in Communist circles. For his "substitute" is nothing more nor less than an examination of "the role of Trotskyism in the work-

ing-class movement."

In other words: Trotsky, and with him large sections of world labor and liberal opinion, ask for a juridical determination whether Trotsky is guilty or innocent of the charges in the trials—and Brockway plans a political estimate of the role in the world labor movement of all those who share Trotsky's political theories! In other words: instead of establishing the objective truth regarding the criminal accusations, Brockway proposes a partisan political trial against his political adversaries!

This shift of Brockway's from a question of objective truth to one of a political estimate of Trotskyism will certainly be accepted by the Communists in preference to our proposal for a Commission. First, because it will shift attention away from the trials and, second, because Brockway has already indicated what conclusions he (and he proposes himself, the Austrian Otto Bauer, and Branting of Sweden, as three of the four or five who would constitute his commission) will draw: in an article in the New Leader of December 4, Brockway says, "the Trotskyites are everywhere a source of mischief," are "conspiratorial cliques," etc.

The introduction of partisan political considerations into the question of Trotsky's innocence or guilt, can only be construed as attempts to prejudice and to obstruct the work of a Commission.

To sum up: we are in for a period of specious substitutes for the necessary Commission of Inquiry. But this very fact is the best demonstration that our proposal for an impartial investigation of the trial charges is so self-evidently just, so equitable, that it cannot be withstood!

## JOHN DEWEY URGES IMPARTIAL INQUIRY COMMISSION

We print below the complete text of the speech of Professor John Dewey at the membership meeting of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky on March 1st at the New School for Social Research. Among those who attended were Professor Paul F. Brissenden, James Casey, Maurice F. English, James T. Farrell, Aaron Glanz, Martha Gruening, Charles Yale Harrison, Sidney Hook, Sidney Howard, Suzanne La Follette, Mary McCarthy, Ernest L. Meyer, Max Nomad, James Rorty, Meyer Schapiro, Benjamin Stolberg, Lionel Trilling, Adelaide Walker, Charles Rumford Walker, and Richard Babb Whitten. At this meeting a report was presented by Herbert Solow on the steps taken by the Executive Committee towards the creation of an impartial commission of inquiry. The most important was the drafting of a plan of procedure for such a commission. The Executive Board felt that the publication of a simple and practical procedure would give impetus to the movement for the commission and provide a concrete basis for public discussion and action. After discussion the membership voted unanimously to instruct the Executive Board to proceed with the preparation of such a plan.

\* \* \*

As one of the Committee members who has not been active I want to express my respect and admiration to the members of our Executive Committee who are carrying out this great work, and to the many anonymous volunteers who have helped make our work so successful.

I heartily agree with Mr. Novack in thinking that the issues involved in the present case will take rank with the historic issues in the cases of Dreyfuss and Sacco and Vanzetti.

I do not need to say much about the background of this Declaration of Purposes. Various statements have been issued from time to time by members of the Committee and some of them have received the endorsement of the Committee before they were sent out. But so far as I know, the Committee has never made an official statement. There are two reasons for making such a statement, beside the obvious one that the Committee should be on record before the public.

One of them Mr. Novack has already referred to—the campaign that has been waged against members of the Committee; but as that comes from sources that are pre-committed, it is unfortunate, but not very serious. Their misrepresentations are the sort of thing to be expected

### A Declaration of Principles

The American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky holds that social advance, the very possibility of human progress, is inseparable from the establishment and dissemination of social truths; to let the truth be known is all the more essential when it is obscure and contested. We hold, also, despite our diverse political opinions, that the immemorial right of asylum for political refugees of all shades of opinion should be universally maintained. We hold, also, that no man accused of crime shall be condemned as a pariah on the face of the earth who has not been given a full and fair opportunity to present his answer to his accusers and to argue his innocence.

We, who today affirm these principles, have in the past actively defended them more than once, aiding the fight on behalf of the politically persecuted of many viewpoints. The charge that we were the tools of political movements with which we disagreed, the charge that we were obstructing merited punishment, did not stop us from defending Sacco and Vanzetti, do not stop us now from calling for the freedom of Tom Mooney or the political prisoners of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

This Committee as such is indifferent to the political program of Trotsky; the overwhelming majority of our members are not Trotskyites. But that tradition which we have in the past made our own would, even if Trotsky were not known to us as one who for four decades

has opposed the very tendencies whose agent he is now charged with being, require today that we intervene between him and all who would, in advance of any clear verdict against him, convict him, punish him and abandon him to the contempt of history.

This Committee does not affirm Trotsky's innocence or guilt. It does affirm that he has not been convicted or even tried, and that, moreover, wide sections of the liberal and labor world are increasingly skeptical of the charges made against him.

In view of these considerations, we shall do all in our power to safeguard, maintain and extend the right of asylum for Trotsky. Moreover, in view of the fact that he has voluntarily offered to submit his honor and his life to the judgment of an Impartial Commission of Inquiry into the charges made against him, and in view of the fact that such a Commission is a practical way of settling a controversy which threatens the unity of the forces opposed to threatening political and social reaction, we shall do all in our power to bring such a Commission into being.

We now call upon all liberal and labor organizations to give expression to the views of their members on this question, and to cooperate with us in crystallizing existing opinion so that a Commission may shortly come into being and complete the great historic task which the situation calls for.

from them. They could not do anything else, because of what they are officially committed to.

A more serious matter was the considerable number of people who, I feel, were not committed to any party, and who raised some questions about our objectives. I feel many of them certainly ought to be with us, and would be, if they had an understanding of the situation and of what the Committee actually stands for. Some kind of official Declaration of Purposes, I think, ought to help us very much with this element, and with that other, much larger, element of responsible people who are confused, who want to make up their minds, and some of whom are inclined to say: "A plague on both your houses."

Another and more important reason will appear in what Mr. Solow will bring before you. If the Committee means anything positive, its activities must reach their goal in the effort to form a Commission of Inquiry. Preparatory to that formation it is certainly not only important, but necessary, that we first get the support of public opinion in behalf of the Commission and convince the type of person who should be members of that Commission of our sincerity of purpose and of the honesty and integrity of the plans of procedure suggested to the Commission, so that it may effectively accomplish its task.

For all these reasons, it seems to me that some Declaration of Purposes is important.

### "Novy Mir" And The Inquiring Mind

The New York Russian Communist daily newspaper, *Novy Mir*, of Friday, February 26, contains an announcement of the expulsion from its editorial board of Alexander Brailovsky. We quote: "The above decision was motivated by Alexander Brailovsky's refusal to go on record, both orally and in print, as supporting the resolution of the Russian Central Bureau of the Central Committee on those enemies of the people, the Trotskyists." Brailovsky, the announcement states, had explained that he had "not yet formed a definite opinion on this issue."

The pro-Soviet Russians of the United States and Canada know Alexander Brailovsky as a public figure of character and mature convictions, as a brilliant writer and lecturer, as a foremost defender of the Soviet Union. He joined the staff of the *Novy Mir* in 1917, upon his arrival in the United States. At the very first meeting organized in New York to hail the triumph

of the Russian Revolution, Mr. Brailovsky was among the speakers. He was arrested in 1920, during the Palmer anti-red raids.

### Our Error

Emanuel Eisenberg, whose letter in our columns of February 19 expressed his "horror, incredulity and nausea" at being on the mailing list of our committee, was listed by us as press agent of the Theatre Union. Protests have been received that Mr. Eisenberg was with the Theatre Union for only a few weeks and that there is no basis now for identifying him with that body. Several members of the Executive and Advisory Board of the Theatre Union, namely Adelaide Walker, Charles R. Walker, John Dos Passos, and Sidney Howard, are members of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky.

### Pravda's Error

The February 6 issue of *Pravda*, official organ of the Communist Party of the Soviet

Union, states that two members of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, Louis Adamic and John Chamberlain, have resigned. *Pravda* (Truth) to the contrary notwithstanding, we wish to record the fact that Mr. Adamic and Mr. Chamberlain remain loyal members of the committee.

### The Committee Grows!

Bertrand Russell, the philosopher, has just joined our sister committee in England.

Among the members who have joined us since our last News Bulletin are: Ernest Sutherland Bates, author; John Sloan, the painter; Professors M. C. Otto and Selig Perlman of the University of Wisconsin; Alexander Goldenweiser, the anthropologist; Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr of Union Theological Seminary; Abraham Epstein, head of the American Association for Social Security; Layle Lane, Secretary of the Teachers Union of New York; Lillian Symes and Travers Clements, authors.

## WORLD VOICES

### Friedrich Adler

*In a communication issued by the Labour and Socialist International, Feb. 3, 1937.*

Those who know the Moscow trials have an extremely simple guide through this confusion. Everything which happened before the court in Moscow during the last week in January, had already taken place in Moscow six years ago in exactly the same manner, with the very same accusations, and with the parts cast in precisely the same way. The only difference is in a few names. That with which "Trotskyism" is charged to-day is supposed to have been committed at that time by "Menshevism." Anybody who reads again to-day the indictment, the court proceedings and the verdict of 1931 will see with growing astonishment that everything which amazes the world in the present trial against Trotsky was already forthcoming then. There is a great temptation to set quotations from the two trials side by side and thus to furnish the proof in every detail. For reasons of space we must refrain from this and content ourselves with quoting the summary of the indictment of that time which appeared in the Pravda on February 27th, 1931:

The statements of the defendants, Scher, Ikoff, Ginsberg, and other leading, long-standing members of the Menshevik Party, prove that in its struggle against the working class the Menshevik Party had transformed itself into a paid agent of French Imperialism and into a direct ally of the fugitive manufacturers, speculators, kulaks and White-Guardists. These statements establish the interventionist and sabotage activity of the Mensheviks in the Soviet Union with the support of the Second International and primarily of the German Social-Democratic Party. The aim of the Mensheviks, and of the Second International which stands behind them, was the forcible overthrow of the proletarian revolution in the Soviet Union which is completing the foundations of the Socialist economic

system. Their aim was the occupation of the Soviet Union, its partition among the international brigands, the return of the capitalists and landowners, decades of White terror against the workers in the Soviet Union, and torture and murder for the Communists and pioneers of the working class. . . .

Every detail of 1931 has been repeated in 1937. On the first occasion the Moscow "All-Union Bureau" is alleged to have received a "letter of instructions" from Abramovitch demanding sabotage activity and intervention. This time Radek confessed to having received a "letter of instructions" from Trotsky. In 1931 the court naturally did not see the letter of instructions, which could not be found, just as Radek had "burnt" his two years ago. But today, as then, the defendants were able to communicate the contents, and Radek was even able to give a word-perfect recitation of whole pages from the letter which was destroyed two years ago. The "letter" of 1931 never existed, and it is highly probable that Trotsky, as he himself has stated, has not written to Radek. Today, as then, an "amalgam" was compounded of defendants who have no connection with each other. To-day, as then, the chief interest is in misrepresenting and discrediting people who are absent. In 1931 it was the foreign delegation of the Mensheviks in Berlin, and the Labour and Socialist International, and to-day it is Leon Trotsky in his refuge in Mexico.

### Strained Credibility

The Foreign Policy Association's Bulletin of February 19, in a signed article by its editor, Vera Micheles Dean, declares: "Where credibility is sadly strained is in the attempt to establish a connection between Trotsky, fervent advocate of world revolution, and Hitler's anti-Semitic regime, which has taken the lead in a crusade against communism. Nor is it possible, in

the absence from the Moscow trial of Trotsky, the chief person accused, to accept at face value the confessions of his alleged fellow-conspirators."

### A Slight Disagreement

*"The Manchester Guardian is regarded as one of the best liberal newspapers, not only in England, but in the world; its opinions are always carefully weighted."*

—New Republic, March 3, 1937

"The Manchester Guardian is bitterly attacked by Pravda, the official party newspaper, in a message from its London correspondent in which he describes the opinions of the British press on the Moscow trial.

The correspondent refers to the article written by L. Sedoff, son of Leon Trotsky, which was published recently in the Manchester-Guardian. He says that the article was 'certainly conceived in the crib of the German Secret Police and shows that the paper's pages are open to the Gestapo for the glorification of its hired murderers, wreckers, and Trotskyist spies.' Several members of the Manchester Guardian staff are alleged to be closely linked with the Trotskyists, and the paper adds: 'It is obvious that these fellows have easily converted a "solid" Liberal organ into a Fascist speaking trumpet.'

(The Gestapo is certainly interested in the Manchester Guardian but only, so far as we are aware, to the extent of securing its prohibition—both daily and weekly editions—throughout Germany.)—Manchester Guardian Weekly, Feb. 5, 1937.

### Villard On the Trials

In his column "The Week" in LaFollette's Progressive of February 20, Oswald Garrison Villard, editorial associate of The Nation, sharply condemns the Moscow trials as "judicial murders." "The conviction of Radek," he says, "is, of course, infamous. . . . That such a man could have plotted to betray the Soviets is as unthinkable as would be J. P. Morgan's coming out for Communism or Franklin Roosevelt's hoisting the red flag over the white house with his own hands."

## FROM OUR MAIL BAG

### William Ellery Leonard

If any rumor drifts into your office that I have resigned from the Committee, disregard it energetically. There is such a rumor on this Campus . . . started, I have reason to believe, by the "Young Communist League," who in their mimeograph newspaper and in the column accorded them in the college paper, The Cardinal, have grieved over my "Fascism" and tried to pardon me for my complaisance in allowing myself to become a tool of "Trotskyism." Their inconsistency in making me both a Trotskyite and a Resigner may be set down to "tactics." I am neither.

Fanaticism (see Krutch in last Nation) is presenting itself with a Twentieth Century Face, but for all that a mediaeval Personality. I asked Hallgren for proofs: Who and when and where diabolical Trotsky manipulators had been fooling John Dewey et al. into becoming protagonists of the Devil, and I've received no answer. The Communists seem to me to be, in attacking this Committee, using the same unproved charges that Moscow used against the condemned—tho', to be sure, the Committee has presented no "confessions."

If a Commission could do nothing more than check up on the charges in the "Confessions" with reference to persons, places, dates, outside of Russia, and report that Stalin refused to divulge the Russian dossiers of date of the preliminary investigation, its work would be of momentous importance. The elemental fact is that the thinking part of the world has studied and defended Soviet Russia and won't see Soviet

Russia corrupted, without full knowledge and full opportunity to come to her defense. The Communists, American, European and Russian, can help us to the truth if they will. Calling us "defenders of assassins" will get them nowhere—or rather accumulate discredit and grief and indignation.

### Alvin Johnson

I agree entirely with your general statement of principles. While I wish to see Russia left free to work out her own destiny, I regard her as responsible before the public opinion of the world for conducting herself with justice and good sense. I am astonished to find that people who are filled with horror by the German censorship that deprives German citizens of the right to criticize the action of their government should wish to apply a censorship to American citizens who might criticize the action of the Russian government and who demand a clearer view than has yet been offered of a complicated situation in which the rights and wrongs are not to be established by accusation.

### Sinclair Lewis

If for nothing else than because it might clarify the chief mystery regarding one of the most important nations in the world today, it seems to me not merely desirable but necessary that Trotsky should have a public hearing before a distinguished international jury in regard to every detail of the charges made against him in the Mos-

cow trials.

### Lewis Browne

I should like to make public the fact that, despite rumors to the contrary, I have no present intention of resigning from the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky. I had begun to prepare a statement detailing my reasons, but after seeing Prof. Paul F. Brissenden's letter, I realized there was no need to go on. He has said succinctly and cogently just what I had in mind.

### Morris R. Cohen

I have read the statement by Professors Dewey and Kallen endorsed by Professors Boas, Kilpatrick and Salvemini, and find myself in thorough agreement with its point of view.

[The statement referred to reaffirms the need for an impartial commission of inquiry.—Ed.]

*Labor, Liberal Press on Moscow Trials*

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