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ISSUE No. 3

POLITICAL CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE WORKERS LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

ENGLAND:

THE ROAD TO A MARXIST POLICY

(CORRESPONDENCE WITH J. THOMAS)

—ARTHUR BURKE

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE R.W.L.

—ANN WILCOX

WHO TELLS THE TRUTH ABOUT TROTSKY

—GEORGE MARLEN

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POLITICAL CORRESPONDENCE is designed to serve as a supplementary organ to THE BULLETIN of the WORKERS LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY. POLITICAL CORRESPONDENCE contains discussion articles on important issues, polemics on our position both pro and con, and letters of political interest from groups abroad and in the United States.

The immediate aim of the WORKERS LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY is to arm the revolutionary workers with an understanding of the pseudo-revolutionary organizations now controlling the proletarian vanguard and to organize these workers into a new party. POLITICAL CORRESPONDENCE will endeavor to serve as a vehicle for clarification and discussion toward the solution of this problem.

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ENGLAND: THE ROAD TO A MARXIST POLICY

Correspondence with J. Thomas

Editorial Note:

In the previous issue of this publication we presented some material dealing with the formation of the Socialist Workers League of Great Britain and an analysis by George Marlen. In this issue we publish the reply of J. Thomas, secretary of the S.W.L., and T. Cowan, literature secretary for the same organization and our answer by Arthur Burke.

Dear George Marlen,

October 19, 1946

I was pleased to receive your letter of the 26th September, copy of which you also sent to Tom Cowan. This reply to your letter is a reply on behalf of Tom Cowan and myself, and should not in any way be construed as a considered reply of the organisation of which we are members. In accordance with our usual custom this personal correspondence is being brought to the attention of the whole organisation.

I would point out from the onset that neither T.C., myself, nor the organisation as a whole has yet had an opportunity of giving the fullest consideration to your published material as it deserves. What material we have is in circulation. The only material we have at our disposal at the moment is the following:

"Trotskyist School of Falsification,"
"Pages from Trotsky's Political History,"
"Cannon's 'Struggle for a Proletarian Party,'"
"The Political Essence of the R.W.L.,"
"Marx-on a -Pham War," and an incomplete set of "The Bulletin" from August, 1945.

As is pointed out in our letters of the 20th August, 46, and 19th October, 46, addressed to Arthur Burke, your Corres. Sec'y., we are looking forward to receiving a copy of your basic "Programme" or "Manifesto."

The workers who comprise the membership of the S.W.L. having reached the conclusion that none of the existing parties in the working class movement (in Gt. Britain) serve the interests of the working class, and that the only alternative was the building of a new, independent, marxian organisation, took their first step in marking a line of demarcation separating marxism from opportunism. In doing so it rejected the political line of all the existing "so-called" parties within the working class movement, on the basis of an examination of their programme and their actions. We have rejected the line of the Labor Party, the Communist Party, the Common Wealth Party, the Independent Labour Party, the Socialist Party of Gt. Britain, the Revolutionary Communist Party- and the various anarchist groupings.

We were not so foolish as to assume, which your letter seems to imply, that in making a line of demarcation by breaking with the existing parties, that this act in itself constituted the only step which it was necessary for us to take.

The far more important task-formulation of a programmed and the testing of the line we are developing in the actual day to day class struggle, remains our basic task.

I would point out that in our discussions upon the draft Manifesto, which is now taking place within our organization, our discussions are not taking place in a vacuum. Even if we had wanted to, which we did not, our discussions would not have taken place on a purely theoretical plane. By the very nature of the composition of our organization, we are deeply involved in the class struggle in various industries, having to meet the bitter opposition of the Labour and trade union bureaucracy, the Stalinists and Trotskyists.

"Time and time again our whole-hearted attention to drafting our Manifesto has been side-tracked by the necessity to consider and define our position on many important issues, particularly in relation to trade union questions. In the urgency of our task of formulating a fully-rounded programme, it would have been the easiest thing in the world to have withdrawn from the class struggle taking place about us - isolated ourselves - become sectarians - failed to give a lead when we had an opportunity of doing so - but to have taken this course would have been to negate marxism itself. We are very conscious of the fact that marxism developed in the course of the class struggle. From the time when Marx submitted his draft Communist Manifesto to the Communist League and its first publication in English in George Harney's "Red Republican" in 1850, marxist theory has to be tested in action."

Therefore we would say and agree with you that:

"A Marxist must understand not only the nature of the political forces which mislead and betray the masses but also the present historical period in which the proletariat finds itself. He must grasp the policy of imperialism and Stalinism, otherwise he won't be able to furnish guidance in the class struggle and, despite all the correct information about the past, will only bedound the minds of the workers on questions which have a direct bearing upon the immediate course to pursue."

But we would add to this:

"It is equally necessary for the Marxist to participate in the day to day struggles of the working class, for only in the course of these struggles is it possible to test the correctness or otherwise of the theoretical conclusions arrived at."

With regard to T.C.'s letter of the 25th August, 46, in which he states in reference to the publications of yours which he has read, and upon which he comments:

"...are to my mind good expositions of Trotsky's centrist tendency-line" and your reply:

"We think that this evaluation is politically erroneous and can only confuse the workers with regard to the basic nature of the Trotsky movement" - down to - "Our investigation has led us to the conclusion

that the degenerated Bolshevik leadership, including Trotsky, having usurped power in the Workers State and captured the vanguard of the international proletariat, has been acting as the chief betrayer of the toilers of all countries. We hope that we find this thesis in your Manifesto."

We should like before replying, to have your precise definition of Trotskyism- its form and content- and its precise role within the ranks of the working class movement. Is its line reformist, centrist, revolutionary; if its role is not any of these- what is it? Whose class interests does it serve- subjectively and objectively? What are its economic roots, if it has any? Etc.

With regard to your comment on the first issue of our Workers' News, it is not our intention only to expose the lies, etc., which pour out from the capitalist press. That quite obviously is not sufficient. In presenting a "positive line of action for the working class" we must of necessity expose the role of the Labour Party, Communist Party (Stalinists), Revolutionary Communist Party (Trotskyists) and other parties.

On the question of the international situation, upon which we are only just beginning to formulate our position, we will carefully study your theses published in the June-July, 1946 of The Bulletin, and let you have our considered opinions in due course, together with our replies to your criticism.

Yours fraternally,
T.Cowan and J. Thomas

Editorial Note:

Our answer to this letter appears on the following page.

S E N D F O R Y O U R C O P Y O F T H E S E P A M P H L E T S

Pages from Trotsky's Political History
Cannon's "Struggle For a Proletarian Party"
The Trotsky School of Falsification
 Part I (17 Articles)
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After Sixteen Years of Silence
 (On Trotsky's article- "Did Stalin Poison Lenin?")
Marx On A Sham War

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WORKERS LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

November 25, 1946
Copy to T. Cowan

Dear Thomas:

Thanks for enclosing a copy of your letter of August 20th, 1946, since we never received the original. To facilitate the exchange of views we would suggest that you route your correspondence with us by air mail as we do from this end.

We are very glad to read in your letter of August 20 that you are "happy to receive and study" our material. We have the same attitude here with reference to the material we receive from your group and circulate the latter to our comrades here for study and analysis. Today, Stalinism has made such inroads even in the minds of the revolutionary anti-Stalinist workers that we find a good many of the Trotskyite workers turning a deaf ear to opponent political material and refusing to read documents from revolutionary opponents of their tendency. Your expressed policy of analyzing and examining our material we regard as a healthy attitude and we hope that you will maintain this attitude irrespective of the fundamental political differences between us.

In your letter of October 19th you make the point that theory is tested in practice and hold that participation in the day to day class struggle is the concrete testing ground of theory.

We do not counterpose theory to practice but rather see a mutual and inseparable relation. Practice we understand as an organic outgrowth of theory and theory merely a generalization of practice. We do not abstract participation in class struggle from theory; the fact is that in class society everyone participates in class struggle in one form or another whether aware of the fact or not. Individuals who wish to retreat to an "ivory tower" and to avoid the class struggle merely throw their weight behind the ruling class since class struggle like reality is a constant everpresent objective fact. Indifference always serves the class in power since only revolutionary action can lead the proletariat to the position of power.

In class society there is not and can not be an objective line of non-participation in the class struggle. There may be a wish for such a line on the part of desertors or "tired radicals" but this wish does not and can not alter the fact. Thus every individual and every tendency participates in some manner in the class struggle. We do not comprehend your emphasis on the necessity for such participation for it implies that there can be a line of non-participation in the class struggle. We rather see the problem in this light: How to participate in a revolutionary manner.

Let us set the problem of the proletariat in the present epoch and see what revolutionary activity in the class struggle means today.

The basic problem is to destroy and overthrow the capitalist system of wage slavery and to establish the social system of society based on free,

democratic workers rule. For such a gigantic task as the transformation of society the proletariat needs an instrument to generalize the experiences of the struggle and to furnish guidance and leadership to all the oppressed masses; that weapon can only be the revolutionary proletarian party. But as we look about us we already see the revolutionary sections of the toilers organized in certain parties which claim to be for the abolition of capitalism and the institution of Socialism. Time and again the proletariat has risen up in revolutionary struggle only to be misled and treacherously betrayed by these parties. Thus the first step is to clear the field for our tendency so that we can implant the revolutionary ideas to the proletariat. But there is the above mentioned obstacle, a concrete stumbling block which prevents the forward movement of the proletariat and deafens it to the true revolutionary message. This stumbling block is the powerful opportunist forces at the head of the proletariat, primarily Social Democracy and Stalinism with the latter generally playing the chief role among the revolutionary sections of the workers due to the prestige of the Russian Revolution. The Stalinist tendency has many branches such as the Trotsky branch which captures the most revolutionary workers in our epoch and ties them back again to Stalinism.

Now, how shall we solve the problem facing the revolutionary proletariat? Can it be done by concentrating our energies in local strikes for higher wages? There are some workers who believe that this is the *sine qua non* of revolutionary class struggle policy. This is what is generally called "day to day participation in the class struggle."

The workers who have developed trade union consciousness must be politicized and we find that when they do become politicized they fall into the camp of the opportunist forces leading the proletariat. Let us take the case of Stalinism. History has shown Stalinism, particularly in its leftist periods, pushing all sorts of strikes and in many cases succeeding in winning many economic gains for the workers. All sorts of adventuristic struggles were led by Stalinism against the repressive forms of capitalist rule (police, etc.) giving the impression of revolutionary struggle. Could participation in such strikes by a handful of revolutionary workers on the issue of immediate economic demands in and of itself expose Stalinism? Quite the contrary, this line is an attempt to escape ahead-on conflict with Stalinism and represents a veiled capitulation to it. Stalinism can be fought only by a thoroughgoing political exposure and not by strikes at a trade union level; the same is even more true for the left appearing branches of the Stalinist and Social Democratic political systems.

To mention but one example: Did the squatters in England or the workers sympathizing with them in that country and throughout the world learn anything about the conscious counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism through its action in that particular event. Stalinism is a huge international force firmly entrenched among the vanguard workers. More, Stalinism is militantly jealous of its power and thus does not stand still but is ever watchful to destroy any and all revolutionary minded opponents. It is really childish to think that a handful of revolutionary workers can sneak behind the Stalinist obstacle, bury their heads in the unions, and build a party on the basis of "furnishing leadership" in some strikes. This is a "get rich quick scheme" designed to avert the opportunist blockade of revolutionary ideas; hundreds of left-Trotskyite groups have tried it all over the world

The end result can be predicted with scientific precision; demoralization and capitulation to one or another form of reaction.

That is the specific form of our participation in the class struggle? We take up the living organizations, composed of living human beings, and expose the counter-revolutionary line of the leadership by irrefutable documentary evidence in terms of actual deeds in concrete situations. Where we have a member in a union, the comrade orients himself to the most advanced workers in that local as we do on the outside. To the extent of our forces we are for a direct clash with all the opportunists, and direct our efforts as the necessary first step to the most politically advanced of the revolutionary workers. Today these most advanced workers are those organized in the Fourth International tendencies; this body of workers not only accepts the idea of proletarian revolution but has advanced to the point of breaking subjectively with Stalinism and Social Democracy. These workers are the historical nucleus for the new revolutionary proletarian party; thus our material is overwhelmingly directed to this section of the proletariat. As you can see we uncompromisingly expose the misleaders of these workers who tie them back again to Stalinism and Social Democracy and our exposure ranges from their work in the trade unions, the hidden history of their leadership, to their policy on all current issues. We accept the Marxist idea that the revolutionary party can be built only in the course of the systematic destruction of the influence of the opportunists; that is the indelible lesson of the October Revolution. We therefore believe that it would be a desertion of our struggle to keep mum about the counter-revolutionary political leadership of the workers and set their minds exclusively on pure economic and immediate issues such as higher wages and try to capture leadership of local struggles on this basis.

The specific form of our struggle today is determined by the extent of our forces. Thus today our main emphasis is on political clarification directed to the revolutionary workers who have already advanced to the point of breaking subjectively with the Stalin gang. To these workers we attempt to implant a scientific understanding of the present epoch and of the present leadership hampering the proletariat. The initial phase must necessarily be such scientific understanding and the self clarification of individuals. The next step is to spread this Marxist theoretical capital to the advanced workers. On this basis only can a genuine Marxist group be crystallized. This group will then approach the vanguard workers dominated by the opportunist forces and through the medium of forums, educational meetings, debates, distribution of literature where these workers are known to congregate, spread the revolutionary line. Gradually as the group expands its activities it expands (in unions, etc.) but the expansion of these activities is predicated on the process of destroying the hold of the opportunists. To attempt to approach the backward workers directly and to concentrate on them while the revolutionary section of the workers remains bound to opportunism is itself only a form of opportunism and a renunciation of a struggle against the opportunist betrayers.

We heartily approve of your sentiments when you speak of the necessity to expose the role of the Labour Party, Communist Party (Stalinists), Revolutionary Communist Party (Trotskyists) and other parties.

However, political exposure presupposes a scientific understanding. Yet you characterize Stalinism as "reformism!" (Workers News, September 1946, pp 2,4,6.) Unfortunately this is an erroneous viewpoint. Reformism originated as a political tendency on the soil of imperialist states. Its class basis was the aristocracy of labor which lived off the crumbs from the table of imperialism. Its expressed aim was the gradual reform of capitalism through the use of capitalist institutions. Its line in action was the subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie and its reformist political policy moved always in a continual rightist direction until it openly united with the imperialist bourgeoisie in the World War of 1914-18. In the post-war period the erstwhile reformists acted as the capitalist labor cops to stave off proletarian revolution.

In contrast to Social Democracy, Stalinism arose on the basis of a state created through the successful overthrow of the Russian capitalists and landlords. The class basis of Stalinism is the socialized property in the Soviet Union from which the Stalinist bureaucracy derives its power and revenue. Since Stalinism aims to preserve its usurpation of power in Russia it must prevent any tendency on the part of the proletariat toward revolutionary development in Russia and elsewhere. Whereas Social Democracy functions as a direct agency of imperialism, the Comintern parties function in the interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia. Even the historic tradition is different in relation to the pioneers of scientific socialism. Social Democracy wears the mantle of the Menshevik fraction of the Russian Social Democratic Party, whereas Stalinism claims the Bolshevik tendency as its own. Social Democracy claims Karl Kautsky while Stalinism clothes itself in the mantle of Lenin from the very origin of the latter's political tendency.

Basing itself on the historic experiences of the proletariat Stalinism has devised a unique zigzag system, flinging the workers back and forth between ultra-leftism and ultra-rightism to prevent a genuine revolutionary development. Reformism in contrast, never pursued its policies through this or a similar zigzag system; in fact reformism never pursued a policy of ultra-leftism at any point in its political history as a tendency.

Stalinism and reformism, then, are two entirely different social forces, with opposite social origins and different methods of operation. We cannot see an identification of Stalinism and reformism as being the basis of an exposure of either of these forces since this identification objectively distorts the meaning and nature of both.

We might add while we are on the subject, that technically speaking we do not regard the Labour Party as reformist. In fact, reformism historically no longer exists as a confused political tendency within the proletariat. What we really have today is an international tendency (Social Democracy) which wears the mask of reformism. Attlee, Bevin and their ilk have no naive illusions about "reforming" capitalism and leading the workers to socialism through the use of bourgeois parliamentarism. Workers who repeat the old standard definitions by rote do not take into account the fundamental changes in the imperialist world since the World War of 1914-18. Capitalism is in its decay stage, staggering along from crisis to crisis and unable to furnish any substance to the illusion spread by the old time reformists prior to the outbreak of the World War of 1914-18. Attlee, Bevin, Blum and the other

social-democratic leaders pretend to see a possibility of reforming capitalist; in reality their line is to use this demagoguery to retain leadership of the anti-capitalist minded workers and the better to safeguard the rule of imperialists. The traditional distinction between reformism and revolutionary Marxism is that the former aspired to Socialism by "peaceful" means. The true relation today is that the so-called reformists do not aspire to Socialism at all but only pretend to do so.

In the epoch of Marx and Engels the two pioneers of Scientific Socialism were confronted by the problem of combating confusion within the ranks of the proletariat. No one could accuse the putschist Blanqui or the Utopian Socialist Owen, for example, of conscious dishonesty. When reformism developed initially in the ranks of the leadership of the Second International there was at least the expansion of the capitalist productive mechanism and the house period of imperialist expansion into backward areas. Surface appearances seemed to give some support to the reformist theses. But in the present period of history there isn't even a shadow of evidence to prop up any such illusions. We face not confusion but deliberate deception from Social Democracy as well as from Stalinism.

Observe the significant changes within the Social Democratic leadership itself. In 1899 the "Socialist" Millerand joined the French bourgeois cabinet and sat cheek by jowl with the butchers of the Paris Commune, Millerand's action was condemned by all the influential leaders of the Second International including Karl Kautsky. Millerandism became the synonym for the policy of class collaboration. But today... the leaders of the Second International not only occupy cabinet posts but even assume the premiership to keep the bourgeois government mechanism running. All the sordid secrets of imperialist diplomacy become opened to these fake Socialists who carry out the imperialist policy with an iron hand. Do you think that these leaders are simply "naive" and seriously believe any more in Socialism? These are not reformists in any sense but simply a part of the capitalist labor machine which operates within the proletariat.

It is interesting to note that even when Bernstein openly came out with his revisionist ideas in a series of articles in 1899 he was also repudiated by all the leading sections of the Second International. For example, the German Social Democratic Party at its Congress in Hanover in October 1899 passed the following resolution regarding Bernstein's revisionism:

"The party sees no reason for changing its main demands, its fundamental views, its tactics and its very name, i.e., for turning the Social-Democratic Party into a democratic-socialist party of reform; the party emphatically rejects any attempt to obscure or change its attitude towards the existing political and social order and towards the bourgeois parties."

In 1914 when the leaders of the Second International reneged on all their pledges and went over the the "defense of the fatherland" this marked the emergence of conscious treachery as the established policy of the Social Democratic leaders. Social Democracy today is the established capitalist labor agency within the ranks of the proletariat recruiting its duped followers with a false face of Socialist reformism.

We can not see how you can expose the Trotsky movement either since you label this tendency as "Centrism" Centrism is a form of Social Democracy which arises like its political parent in the soil of the imperialist states. Centrism functions as the left fig leaf for Social Democracy and gives an appearance of demarcation because of its organizational separation from the latter. Leftward moving workers from the official Social Democratic parties are captured by the Centrists who attach these workers politically to the parent body. Centrism "criticizes" the official Social Democratic policies but supports these policies in deeds. It is therefore a wing of Social Democracy.

Trotskyism, like Stalinism, (and unlike "Centrism") originated from the bureaucratic degeneration of the Workers State. Trotskyism is a branch of Stalinism as Centrism is a wing of Social Democracy. The Trotsky line is neither "reformist", centrist or revolutionary." Its line is Stalinist-that is, the line of its leadership is conscious attachment to the bureaucratic centralization of the Workers State. These are its economic roots. Through this organic attachment to Stalinism it politically operates to betray the workers by turning them over to Stalinism (Germany 1923, China 1923-27, England 1926, Spain 1936-39 the present line of SP-CP governments for Europe, etc.) Through support of Stalinists counter-revolution (with "criticism", to be sure) it thus props up imperialism since Stalinism in frustrating any revolutionary developments thus serves the class interest of the bourgeoisie.

Thus we see no exposure whatsoever of the main enemies operating within the proletariat. As a matter of fact we were surprised to see that your paper does not even educate the workers on the role of bourgeois liberals. For instance, there is the article rendering tribute to H.G. Wells, a bourgeois liberal philistine and an uncompromising opponent of the theory and practice of scientific socialism. In the Editor's note to the article we read in your second number of Workers News:

"Nevertheless, his (H.G. Wells-As) general progressive outlook has influenced many thousands of people in the right direction. For that we are grateful." (p3)

And in the article itself we rub our eyes with astonishment and read:

"The common man has lost a great friend and champion." (Ibid)

Is it possible that the Editor of the Workers News believes that this article will heighten the class consciousness of the workers whom the paper addresses? The essence of revolutionary class consciousness is the realization of the role of all the variegated servitors of the bourgeoisie and the sharp and uncompromising division between revolutionary Marxism and all the direct and indirect defenders of wage slavery. By painting H.G. Wells as a "great friend and champion" of the "common man", the Workers News here functions to deaden the class consciousness of the workers and gets them to look approvingly at a defender of imperialism. The point that H.G. Wells showed up some of the more obvious crimes of capitalism no more converts him into a friend of the proletariat than the Attlees, Bevins and Kautskys, etc, who wrote prolifically on the evils of capitalism and the glories of Socialism. As a matter of fact, it is precisely this progressive looking front that cap-

tures a lot of uninformed workers who are therefore the more effectively betrayed to the class enemy. The eulogy to Wells is something that we expect to see in the Social Democratic press—we never imagined that this kind of stuff would find its way into your paper.

Furthermore we might note that even the terminology in the article is anti-Marxist. Marxism speaks of classes and class relations—not an all encompassing "common man."

Since you do not present a correct picture of the present-day opportunist forces, your organ does not and can not present a correct line for the revolutionary workers to follow. In the article "Workers in Action" your paper describes some aspects of the situation facing the British workers in the Gas, Milk and Meat industries. But description of the abuses of capitalism and the terrible plight of the workers is not sufficient at the present time. One can find much more elaborate presentations in the Trotsky press and in the Daily Worker. The opportunist leaders are past masters in castigating the horrors of capitalism. What is the political line that you present that would distinguish your tendency from the opportunists? Here is the line of policy your paper advocates:

"We need unity in action against the bosses, not inter-union squabbles for the benefit of the union bureaucrats. We need a new tank and file movement in all industries, such as the dockers have set up. Lets get cracking!" (Ibid. p.7)

How can there be revolutionary unity in action while the opportunist forces of Social Democracy, Stalinism and Trotskyism dominate the advanced workers in Britain? Unity in action in such a political context can only mean unity under capitalism. Instead of a clarion call to unmask and cast out the counter-revolutionary forces dominating the organized workers in Britain we get some phrases about "unity in action" or "tank and file movement such as the dockers have set up." Without an explanation that revolutionary unity in action is impossible without a destruction of the influence of the counter-revolutionary political forces now dominating the workers a simple call for "unity in action" fosters illusions and objectively diverts attention from the initial task which faces the handful of revolutionary workers today who are seeking to recreate a new Marxist movement.

In your article on India you correctly speak of the present Constituent Assembly as a fraud. However, you do not make clear your position on the entire Constituent Assembly issue (whether you would support it if it were based on universal suffrage, etc.) Further, you speak of "revolutionary political groups" in that tortured country. What groups do you have in mind? We know of many revolutionary minded workers but of no revolutionary groups from a Marxist point of view. The political nature of a grouping is determined by the line and policy of its leadership. From this angle we know of no revolutionary political groupings in India. Also we not only oppose the present "Constituent Assembly" but any other kind, whatever the form of suffrage, as an organ of bourgeois dictatorship. We do not see the Indian bourgeoisie as conducting any sort of fight against imperialism; we repudiate, therefore, support in any way including the line of "march separately and strike together" which implies that the colonial bourgeoisie does strike in some manner against imperialism. We hope that you will make your position clear on these issues.

Taking your organ as a whole we see an incorrect relation between propaganda and agitation. The tasks imposed by history on a relatively small grouping such as yours is the necessity for propaganda which means the distillation of many complex political ideas to advanced workers. On the other hand, your paper gives every appearance of having a "mass orientation" attempting to address the British masses directly. The S.W.L. leadership apparently forgets the fact that it first has to clear the field of the gigantic political forces which already have the ear of the masses. The key to the masses is the advanced workers as the Marxist leaders always explained. Since the advanced workers today are under the sway of the opportunist forces the winning of these workers to a correct Marxian program must necessarily take the form of a direct polemic against the present concrete leadership of these workers. As Lenin pointed out:

"One of the essential conditions for preparing the proletariat for victory is a prolonged, persistent and ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism and similar bourgeois influences and tendencies, which are inevitable as long as the proletariat acts under capitalist conditions. Unless such a struggle is fought, and unless a complete victory over opportunism is PRELIMINARILY GAINED, there can be no hope for the dictatorship of the proletariat." (Selected Works, Vol. VI, pp 484-485. My emphasis and capitals-AB)

This was dated December 29, 1919, that is, after the Bolsheviks were already the major force in Russia and addressing the masses directly in the capitalist countries through the Third International. What shall we say today when Marxism is espoused only by a handful of revolutionists and when Stalinism is identified with the October Revolution and passes as the genuine article with the huge bulk of the anti-capitalist minded workers? We are by no means fetishists of Lenin but it is an indubitable fact that the death knell of the bourgeoisie in Russia sounded in the period when the workers in the Soviets passed from support of the Mensheviks and SR's to support of the Bolsheviks in Sept.- Oct. 1917. The struggle to expose the influence of the Mensheviks and SR's from 1903 to 1917 was the concrete form of the struggle to overthrow capitalism.

On your request for our program. The first programmatic document of our group was the book "Stalin, Trotsky or Lenin" by George Marlen, which gave our position on most of the vital questions in terms of a polemic against Stalinism. However, this book presented an incorrect view on the role and line of Trotsky and was therefore incorrect in this major respect. Further investigation scientifically established the role of Trotsky and was published by us as we unearthed the facts. By April 1939, we were able to present a revised programmatic outline which we presented in our organ then called "In Defense of Bolshevism" Meanwhile, we kept putting forth our positions on all the basic questions in the form of a polemic against the Trotskyites, left-Trotskyites and semi-Trotskyites. Unfortunately this material is scattered over many Bulletins and is not yet collected in one encompassing document although a comrade is working on a Programmatic Draft now so as to put all of our positions in one readily accessible document. We have sent you a fairly complete file of our material so as to acquaint you with our major positions.

However, there is one basic point which we have developed recently in

our internal discussions but not as yet presented publicly. In a comprehensive investigation of the roots of the Stalinist degeneration we came back inescapably to the policies pursued by the Bolshevik party after the October Revolution and prior to the inception of the Stalinist conspiracy. The course of this investigation revealed many surprising things and forced us to re-evaluate our view on the line which the Lenin-Trotsky leadership pursued after the October Revolution. Comrade Marxien has amassed most of this material from original Russian sources and we intend to present the entire story in a forthcoming book which he is preparing. Briefly, we found the seed of bureaucratism planted in the Workers State from its very inception by the Bolshevik leadership. The tiny seed at first was the system of appointment from above instead of election from the workers below. Gradually the cleavage which developed from the Marxist principles of organizing the Workers State as advocated by Marx and Engels and by Lenin in 1917 took place with a break on the following points:

- 1- The administrative apparatus to be composed of elected officials.
- 2- Absolute guarantee of recall of corrupt officials by the worker electors at any time.
- 3- Elimination of bureaucracy, police and standing army which is separated from the workers.
- 4- The arming of the masses and formation of workers' militia.
- 5- A safeguard against the establishment of a privileged officialdom through the reduction of pay of all functionaries to the level of a competent worker's wage.
- 6- Workers' control over production.
- 7- A revolutionary Communist foreign policy based on renunciation of imperialist diplomacy and founded on the standpoint of permanent revolution.

The system of appointments from above, appointing officials for life (since no stipulation was ever made for time or office) the system of individual dictators over factories, the bribery of bourgeois specialists, the placing of the political leaders in the top summits, including administrative functions, high pay for state functionaries, recall exercised only from above, all paved the ground for the bureaucratic centralization of the Workers State. At the 11th Congress of the R.C.P., Lenin himself, in a parenthetical remark, admitted the bureaucratization of the Bolshevik leadership. (Selected Works, Vol. IX p.386) Thus five years after the revolution Lenin recognized that the Bolshevik leaders had become bureaucrats and moreover, he admitted in 1923 that the state apparatus was largely the same as that wielded by Tsarism. (Ibid. p. 382.)

With this addition you will find the rest of our positions mainly presented in our Bulletins and monographs. For your convenience we will briefly indicate here our line on most of the basic questions today.

Our views on orientation, our analysis of the present day opportunist forces has already been indicated above and our views on the present line of imperialism is also known to you. On specific questions:

1- We are against the building, creation or support to any non-revolutionary party-Labour Parties, Farmer Labour Parties, etc., this latter being the position of the Trotskyites, Social Democrats and, depending on the particular

zigzag, by Stalinism at various times.

We are for the building of a revolutionary Marxist party which is the only genuine weapon for the overthrow of capitalism.

2- We are against "Workers Governments" or "Workers and Farmers Governments" when they mean a government composed by a coalition of opportunist parties on a capitalist basis. (This was the type of government set up by the Stalinists and Social Democrats in Germany in 1923 which betrayed the revolution. Support to this trap was prepared by the Fourth Congress of the C.I. in 1922. At present this fraud is supported by Social Democracy, Stalinism and Trotskyism. The Oehlerites also stand on this position since they hold the Fourth Congress of the C.I. to be Marxist and since they hold that Trotsky pursued a Marxist line when he helped Stalin put over the Workers Government trap on the German workers.)

We are for a Workers Government on the basis of proletarian dictatorship led by the revolutionary Marxist party and based on free and democratic rule by the workers.

3- We are against a Constituent Assembly at any and all times as an organ of bourgeois rule. (This position for a Constituent Assembly is supported by the bourgeois Social Democracy, Stalinism and Trotskyism. The Oehlerites are for support to the slogan under certain conditions.)

We are for Revolutionary Soviets as the organs of proletarian political power.

4- We are against any support to colonial bourgeoisie or any concession to the idea that colonial bourgeoisies can fight imperialism. (Colonial bourgeoisies are supported by imperialism, Social Democracy, Stalinism, and Trotskyism in the form of "critical support." From 1937 to 1945 the Trotskyites were for "critical support" to Chiang Kai shek. The Oehlerite line on the latter was march separately and strike together, implying that the colonial puppets strike against imperialism in some form or other.)

We are for the line of permanent revolution in colonial and semi-colonial areas. Only dictatorship of the proletariat can solve the tasks of colonial revolution and free the masses from imperialism.

5- We are against any support to opportunist organizations or individuals in elections. (Trotskyism, depending upon which country it is in, calls for electoral support to Social Democracy, Stalinism, trade union fakery. In England most opportunist forces lined up behind the Labour Party in the General Election of 1945.)

We are for exposure of opportunists and destruction of their influence. For an uncompromising fight against opportunism in all forms at all times with no moratoriums during election periods. The only government we will ever support is proletarian dictatorship.

6- We are against the slogan of Workers Control of Production under capitalism as pure demagoguery. (This slogan was instituted by Social Democracy, is now supported at one or another period by Stalinism and Trotskyism.)

We are for workers control of production under the only conditions under which it is possible: Proletarian State Power.

7- We are against confining National and minority questions to attempted solutions in the context of imperialist class relations. (National home for the Jews in Palestine, self determination for the Negro black belt in the American south, etc.)

We are for abolition of all national and racial repression and persecution. This can not be separated from revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

8- We are against Trade Union Control of Military Training. (This is a Trotsky slogan advanced for the capitalist army.)

We are for exposure and unmasking of all labor rakers leading trade unions and other workers organizations; for total destruction of the capitalist military machine and its replacement by a workers militia. This latter is possible only under revolutionary dictatorship of the working class.

On Transitional Demands raised by the Trotsky movement. We have already indicated our position on the main ones such as the Labour Party, Workers Control of Production and the Workers and Farmers Government. Other demands as applied to the U.S. were:

The Right to Work: This presumably was a struggle against unemployment. Actually, this slogan is an old favorite with bourgeois liberals who wanted to educate workers to adapt themselves to the condition of wage slavery. During periods of strikes this slogan is used by the top bourgeois leaders to justify scabbing.

Sliding scale of wages and sliding scale of hours. This is supposed to be the alpha and omega of trade union strategy. Actually its basic theoretical presupposition is the continued existence of wage slavery.

The Transitional Demands were formulated by Trotsky in 1938. The explanation was that this was a pre-revolutionary situation and that these slogans, in contrast to the old "minimum" and "maximum" program of Social Democracy would lead the toilers in class battles against the bourgeoisie and hence to victory. Since the presentation of the Transitional Slogans we still see the Trotskyites trying the workers to Stalinism and the talk about leading the workers in class battles was so much dust in the eyes of the honest but misled Trotsky workers. There some of the transitional slogans have actually been applied-Labour Party-we see the Trotskyites stringing the workers behind the old line labor rakers. The slogan of Workers and Farmers Government has been concretized in the slogan for an SP-CP Government in Italy, France, Belgium, etc.

Do we call for any immediate demands? We are all for improving the immediate economic conditions of the workers but the presentation of immediate demands would mean that we think and pretend to be a party. The presentation of immediate demands presupposes a mass party that can speak directly to the workers and other oppressed masses. Our task is to first build the revolutionary party which does not now exist. We are a propaganda group with an advanced workers orientation and do not play make believe which is that the Left-Trotskyite Grouplets do when they effect an air of being a party. The

presentation of immediate demands is a task which we have to regretfully leave to the future when our propaganda group has emerged as a party. Where we are involved in a union or shop we advocate improving the immediate demands of the workers but with a concentration of emphasis on the exposure of the counter-revolutionary leadership of the proletarian vanguard.

*** *** *** *** *** ***

We hope that this schematic summary helps answer your questions. We would be glad to elaborate on any of the above points or on any other you might question.

Arthur Burke
Corres. Sec'y
For the W.L.R.P.

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At a scheduled meeting of our group in September 1946 several members simply failed to appear and the League has officially never heard from them since. From informal sources we learned that these people have decided to give up politics completely. Since no document or communication was ever presented to us, and since these people have not appeared before the workers with any sort of explanation, we are forced to resort to conjecture. In any case, this is obviously no "split" but a desertion. Okun is falsifying the facts when he elevates this desertion to the level

of intense capitalist reaction. What was the character of the incident organizations operating within the labor movement, particularly in periods Marxists brand as desertion, and it is a common phenomena to all political experience of individuals leaving the movement entirely. This latter move organization. On the other hand, all political organizations have the political line, with documents explaining the separation from the parent split presupposes a distinct regroupment of forces on a difference in first, the facts on the alleged split. In Marxian terminology, a

up these allegations in order. Three points are involved in Okun's statement. One, that there was a split in our group. Two, that the split was on the question of the sham war. Third, that a document by Hunter was suppressed. We will take

"Marlen is anxious to publicize everybody's splits but his own. He has recently had a split in his own ranks, when Hunter and five other comrades split off from him, on the question of the 'sham war'...48% of his group. In fact, I'm going to write a letter to Marlen about this. Why didn't he publish Hunter's document?"

the nature of Okun's remarks on the question of the W.L.R.P.: analyze Okun's remarks on the subject in question. Now let us consider getting a hearing at that meeting. The reasons for this anxiety to prevent such discussion will readily become apparent to the reader as we

Through this maneuver, the R.W.L. leadership prevented our views from getting a hearing at that meeting. The reasons for this anxiety to prevent such discussion will readily become apparent to the reader as we analyze Okun's remarks on the subject in question. Now let us consider the nature of Okun's remarks on the question of the W.L.R.P.: On January 25, 1947, the Revolutionary Workers League held a Lenin, Liebrecht and Luxembourg "Memorial Meeting" in the city of Chicago, at which Sid Okun, acting national secretary of the R.W.L., was the speaker. Towards the end of his talk, Okun raised the question of what he referred to as a recent "split" in the ranks of the Workers League for a Revolution-ary Party. By injecting this and other controversial subjects, Okun departed from the scope of a Memorial meeting and channeled the supposed Memorial lecture into the field of political polemics against the W.L.R.P. Since Okun diverted the meeting into polemical attacks against an opponent group, it was incumbent upon the R.W.L. leadership to open the floor to a free democratic discussion. Naturally our comrade present, in line with this accepted procedure, took notes and was prepared to discuss the veracity of Okun's statements. However, at the close of Okun's talk, the chairman announced that "Since this is a memorial meeting, there will be no discussion."

February 2, 1947 Dear Comrades,

* AN OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS AND SYMPATHIZERS *
* OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS LEAGUE *

of a political split.

The second point raised by Okun, that these departed members left on the basis of a disagreement on the question of the sham war is a complete distortion. We obviously are not defending the position of the deserters from our ranks whom we regard as capitulators to the class enemy. But we will say in the interests of the truth that these people never at any time voiced disagreement on the sham war. We are not interested in imputing to people positions which they do not hold, whether these concern our political enemies or friends.

Now for the last point; that we have suppressed a document by Hunter, one of the departed members.

At no time in the history of our group was any document ever suppressed. Any document ever presented for discussion by a member of the League was always and is to this day, dealt with in full accordance with the wishes of the author. Any and all documents on controversial questions which the authors presented for publication in our official organ were published. If Okun knows of any document which a member of our group presented for publication and which was not published, we challenge him to produce it. We can freely predict that no such document will be produced because no such suppressed document exists.

Okun actually claims to have had possession of such a document. On this point, he stated at the meeting in question:

"I had a copy of this document, but unfortunately I mailed it to Comrade Wilcox, and have not been able to get another copy."

A worker trusting Okun might believe that the latter really had obtained such a "suppressed" document. The facts will show whether or not this Okun story has the ring of truth.

Early in December 1946, Okun contacted Comrade Wilcox by telephone, and inquired whether she had seen the document, which he claimed to have. He stated that he wished to discuss it with her, and since she knew of no such document, offered to lend her a copy. Significantly, despite all efforts to borrow or even get a glimpse of the supposed document and despite Okun's repeated promises, Comrade Wilcox never received it. Wilcox and Harden (both of the W.L.R.P.) made several efforts to borrow it from Okun when Harden was in Chicago but again efforts were unavailing. They also put Okun to the test by offering to have a public debate or forum, using the supposed document as a basis of discussion, provided, of course, that they could only learn what they were supposed to discuss. THIS OKUN FLATLY REFUSED TO DO. Okun finally said that he had given the document to another member of his group who had read it and subsequently mailed it to Wilcox. When it was not received after a reasonable length of time (allowing for every conceivable delay in the mails) Wilcox wrote to the alleged author of the document (J.C.Hunter) requesting a copy. She received the following reply:

"Dear Ann: To my knowledge no document such as you mention has been distributed to anyone. Maybe somebody's just pulling your leg to lead you into a poppow. Seems to me you ought to demand to see the document in question."

Peculiarly, neither the members of the W.L.R.P. nor the supposed

author knows of the existence of such a "suppressed" document. Let Okun either produce this "suppressed" document or let the workers see that his statements concerning it were untruths.

We now wish to take up Okun's "threat" to write a letter to our group on this question of the "suppressed" document. We might point out here that for a period of close to ten years our group has consistently challenged the R.W.L. to a political debate or written polemic on the various principled questions. The R.W.L. has consistently avoided a defense of its position and simply ignored our repeated challenges. Recently, on November 27, 1946 the W.L.H.P. sent the following letter to the R.W.L.:

"For a number of years our group has been publishing polemical material against the positions of your tendency on all the principled issues facing the revolutionary workers in this epoch. We wish at this time to reiterate our desire for a public debate with an authorized representative of your organization on any or all of the disputed questions. As tentative topics we would suggest:

- 1.) The Nature of Stalinism
- 2.) The Nature of Trotskyism
- 3.) The Path to a New Revolutionary Movement
- 4.) The Present Relationship of the World Imperialists to each other and to the Soviet Union.

"If these topics are not suitable we would like to hear of any suggestion you might have for alternate subjects as a basis for a political debate.

"We are in a position to furnish a meeting room for the debate and can meet at any time which might be convenient to you."

Sometimes later, we received an undated letter from Okun who "referred" the matter to the New York unit of the R.W.L. where it subsequently died. In light of Okun's remarks, we take this occasion to repeat our challenge. And as for Okun's "threatened" letter, we will be very glad to publish it in POLITICAL CORRESPONDENCE, together with our reply. To date no such letter has been received.

What are the reasons for Okun's repeated slanders against our group and against individuals adhering to, or even giving a respectful hearing to our line?

Within less than two years, there have been four definite splits in the ranks of the R.W.L. This does not include a number of members who simply left the movement entirely and therefore can not be classified under the category of splits. We also are omitting from consideration here those who, having left the R.W.L., have not yet found a political group with which they are in agreement. We are restricting ourselves only to those who split, giving political reasons and either joining opponent groups or forming new groups of their own.

1. In January, 1945, Comrade Tom Harden was illegally suspended from the R.W.L. by the seventeenth plenum of that group. Between that time and the convention held the following September, at which the Harden case was to be taken up, numerous documents were presented by Harden and Wilcox on the political questions involved. These documents were not published in the

R.W.L. Internal Bulletin until AFTER the convention. Some of these suppressed documents were later published in The Bulletin of the W.L.R.P. Nothing whatever was published by the International News at any time, and the brief statement in the Fighting Worker, under the scurrilous headline "Capitulation to Safety" which subsequent events have shown to be a political slander, was the only statement ever brought out publicly by the R.W.L. on the split. This was a split in every sense of the word; documents on political positions were presented, and the comrades later joined another political organization. Harden was organizational secretary, a member of the Political Committee, and Wilcox was an alternate to the Central Committee at the time of the split.

2. In March, 1945, the entire Detroit unit, including two members of the Central Committee, left the R.W.L., giving reasons for their action in at least two letters-- the first demanding a special convention, the second announcing a definite resignation from the group. This group then formed the Workers Educational Society of Detroit, a political group in distinct opposition to the R.W.L. But the latter remained silent.

We are by no means in political agreement with the Detroit group, nor with the other two groups which have since split from the R.W.L. We are merely pointing out that these were all genuine splits and that the R.W.L. has attempted to conceal them.

3. Later, in the summer of last year, Joe Danly left the R.W.L.... and though this involved only one comrade, it was a split, in that Danly presented documents giving his reasons, and, on leaving, joined another political group... the Group of Revolutionary Marxists. Further, he was a member of the Central Committee at that time and for some years previously.

4. The most disastrous split for the R.W.L. in the numerical sense, was, of course, the split of the Labor Views group, which took place last September, when more than half of the Chicago unit (at that time the only functioning unit of the R.W.L.) left. This group first functioned under the name of the R.W.L., later dropping that name in favor of the present one. We are by no means in sympathy with the political line or methods of this group, which represents a definitely economist tendency. Again, as above, we are only presenting the facts.

Documents on this split were presented by both sides. They have not been published by the R.W.L., nor has any mention of that split been made by either of the latter's official publications. The documents were published by the Labor Views group from whom we presume they can be obtained by those interested.

A still more flagrant case of concealment of truth is shown by the fact that the International News (organ of the International Contact Commission, of which the R.W.L. calls itself an affiliate) lists as an affiliate of the I.C.C., the Revolutionary Workers Association of Great Britain. This organization was disbanded as long ago as May 1946 and in its stead the Socialist Workers League was organized by former members of the R.W.A. and a few others. The S.W.L. has no formal connection with the I.C.C. These facts are certainly known to the R.W.L. leadership but they are not told to the advanced workers here by that organization in its press.

The reason for the Okun distortions about our group now become quite clear. Manifestly, the R.W.L. leadership is perturbed over the fact that our group has taken an active hand in unearthing the hidden facts about

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Comradely yours,
Ann Wilcox
(For the Workers League for a Revolutionary Party)

All these and other controversial political questions raised by Okun which do not fall within the scope of this letter, need discussion in order that all of us may achieve the highest degree of political clarity. No honest Marxist can have any reason for avoiding or shutting off honest discussion.... It is only those who need to conceal their own opportunism who seek to do so. We invite any comrades who are interested to contact us for further discussion on any political question confronting the working class, either by group discussion, or by correspondence. Because of Okun and Co.'s reported slanders of our group, it may perhaps be well to repeat, even though we hope our readers already know it: We have never been a "mere study group", have never considered research and discussion as an end in themselves, but as the means of hammering out a correct political line on which can be built a genuine Marxist party which will lead the workers to a successful proletarian revolution. To those comrades who are genuinely interested in this aim, we extend the invitation to join with us in the fight against all those opportunist groups which are responsible for maintaining the rotting body of capitalism, in the recognition that only by the removal of these obstacles will capitalism be destroyed and the genuine rule of the proletariat, and the forthcoming classless society be established.

the R.W.L. splits and bringing these facts to the attention of the advanced workers. As a cover-up for his political duplicity in concealing facts, Okun is trying to divert attention from his suppression of news of splits in his own organization and therefore is busy trying to cook up imaginary splits elsewhere.

WHO TELLS THE TRUTH ABOUT TROTSKY?

Editorial Note:

On reading the documentary evidence we present in our press to prove Trotsky's collaboration with Stalin in centralizing the bureaucratic usurpation of power from the Russian masses, some workers express the idea that our evidence may be valid per se but is too narrow in total viewpoint. These workers feel that The Workers League for a Revolutionary Party presents only one side of Trotsky's activities and therefore distorts the full meaning of his line. Presumably, this other side of Trotsky's activity is his alleged attempt to fight or oppose the Stalin bureaucracy, and this angle, they feel, is not pointed out in our publications.

Is it true, perhaps, that there was another aspect to Trotsky's line and that the one presented by us was not the sole one? The following letter represents our answer to this question when it was raised by one of our readers about two years ago. This point has often been raised in discussions, and we reprint it now.

*

*

*

Dear Comrade:

....

To translate the meaning of your doubt into concrete words, you apparently have in mind that possibly there is material evidence which would establish that Trotsky actually fought the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Comintern.

Political caution is very healthy and we can only voice regret that so little of it is manifested among the misled workers. The only question about a doubting worker is whether his doubts are well founded or are based on imaginary premises. Let us see whether the doubt you harbor has any valid basis.

You say you have no time to dig in the vast store of historical documents to see for yourself whether there is not hidden from view some "other side" of the Trotsky story. Very well. But surely you will not deny that Cannon, Shachtman and other leaders of the Trotsky movement, as well as Trotsky himself and a host of their secretaries, researchers, translators and copyists represents a far greater force than the one at the disposal of The Bulletin. Moreover, Trotsky had far easier access to many important historical documents: As is well known, he brought with him out of the Soviet Union literally trunkfuls of letters, records and documents produced before and during the rise of Stalin. You will grant also that no people would be more anxious to establish that hypothetical "other side" of the Trotsky story than Cannon, Shachtman and other official and unofficial Trotskyites. Also, they have ample time to do research and study of the historical data. And yet, what do we see? An unsupported claim that Trotsky joined Lenin in the letter's fight against Stalin. They made public some documentary material, much of it from Trotsky's own pen, showing that in the Fall of 1922 Lenin definitely set his mind to remove Stalin and his aides, urging the expulsion of one of them, Ordjonikidze. But they never have produced a single document of that period

to show that Trotsky's policy jibed with Lenin's. We, on the other hand, quote Trotsky's conversation with Kamenov as recorded by Trotsky himself showing that he was opposed to Lenin's basic line on the Stalin crew. Whereas Lenin, according to Trotsky himself, laid down the line of using the coming XII Congress of the Party as the battleground for wiping out Stalin organizationally and politically, Trotsky had the following line, according to his self-quoted statement to Kamenov on March 5, 1923:

"I gave him my opinion of the situation. 'Sometimes,' I said, 'out of fear of an imaginary danger, people are capable of bringing real danger down upon themselves. Remember, and tell others that the LAST THING I WANT IS TO START A FIGHT AT THE CONGRESS FOR ANY CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION. I AM FOR PRESERVING THE STATUS QUO. If Lenin gets on his feet before the congress, of which there is unfortunately little chance, he and I will discuss the matter together anew. I AM AGAINST BLOWING STALIN and expelling Ordzhonikidze, and displacing Dzerzhinsky from the committee of transport.' " (L. Trotsky, MY LIFE, pages 485-6 (my caps.)

Having plainly shown that he did not agree with Lenin in substance, Trotsky goes on to state that he told Kamenov: "But I do agree with Lenin in substance." (Ibid.) Is there any wonder that the shrewd Kamenov reacted in this way to Trotsky's assurances: "Kamenov gave a sigh of relief. He accepted all my proposals." (Ibid.)

From Trotsky's own writings we see that Lenin chose the 12th Congress of the party, convened in April 1923, as the battleground to smash the Stalin ring. Lenin, as is shown, was prevented by illness from attending that Congress, but he had prepared a number of anti-Stalin documents - the "bomb" which he entrusted to Trotsky to explode on the floor of that gathering before the entire working class. Trotsky mentions that "bomb" in his writings. We checked the stenographic record of the 12th Congress and found no explosion of Lenin's "bomb." Instead, the record shows clearly that everybody, including Trotsky, stood as one with Stalin, who controlled the Congress. We did not write the stenographic report of the speeches and resolutions of that "united Congress." We only quote from it. The record shows that Lenin's documents were UNANIMOUSLY SUPPRESSED BY THE ENTIRE LEADERSHIP and that each and every one of the Stalinist resolutions was adopted unanimously. Trotsky's vote was included in these unanimous decisions.

One may search the entire Trotskyite literature for a scrap of evidence that Trotsky carried out Lenin's line at the 12th Congress. In vain! They do not have such evidence, and no one dares to invent any. Be it remembered that the 12th Congress was a very important, perhaps the most important, bridge for Stalin to cross over on his way to absolute personal power. This Congress was the fork in the road. Along the first path-if Trotsky had followed Lenin's policy-Stalin would have rolled downward to an inglorious end; along the other-if Trotsky maintained silence about Lenin's policy-and continued himself to talking about irrelevant economic questions, thereby giving Stalin a clear field to carry out his bureaucratic centralization, Stalin would eventually rise to a terrible personal dictatorship. This latter course was the one chosen by Trotsky. As we have said, there is not a phrase which the Trotskyite researchers can produce to substantiate their claim that Trotsky followed Lenin's line, but we can quote Trotsky's own words which show that Trotsky did not fight Stalin. Referring to the period of the 12th

congress when Lenin entrusted to Trotsky the line of struggle against the Stalin clique, Trotsky wrote in ^{his} autobiography: "And what is more, I have no doubt that if I had come forward on the eve of the twelfth congress in the spirit of a 'bloc of Lenin and Trotsky' against the Stalin bureaucracy, I should have been victorious even if Lenin had taken no direct part in the struggle." (p. 481) This without question proves our case, for Trotsky's "If I had come forward" shows that he did not come forward.

Let us take another instance. In discussing the history of the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party, the Trotsky leaders often refer to the Stalin move of diluting the party in the Spring of 1924 with opportunist elements soon after Lenin's death. The Stalin bureaucrats labelled that maneuver the "Leninist Levy," or "Leninist recruiting." In his book Revolution Betrayed Trotsky writes: "By freeing the bureaucracy from the control of the proletarian vanguard, the 'Leninist Levy' dealt a deathblow to the Party of Lenin." (p98) When we first read this in 1937 we incautiously saw in it an implication that Trotsky had attacked that bureaucratic maneuver at its inception. But then we observed that nowhere did the Trotsky leaders publish any evidence to that effect. We, of course, never regarded the speeches of Cannon and Shachtman, in which they assure their followers that Trotsky fought Stalin, as authentic historical evidence. We went to the archives to check what Trotsky was doing in the Spring of 1924 during the "Leninist recruiting." And what did we find? In the midst of that recruiting, at the Thirteenth Congress of the Party, Stalin's speech in which the Usurper lied that the "Leninist recruiting" as a great elective democratic achievement, was wholeheartedly echoed by Trotsky, who declared: "Without a doubt the Leninist recruiting, as has been correctly stated here, has brought our party closer to being an elective party." (Pravda, May 27, 1924)

Trotsky thus covered up Stalin's lie. Years afterward Trotsky and his staff talked much about the "Leninist recruiting" delivering a death blow to Lenin's Party. Have they been concealing the documentary evidence to prove that Trotsky tried to ward off that blow? Why could not the Trotskyite researchers produce a motion by Trotsky, a WORD uttered against the "Leninist recruiting" in 1924! Because the evidence shows the very opposite, exposing Trotsky's support to the "Levy!"

Many years after the event, Trotsky declared that the so-called "Lenin Recruiting" of 1924 was a matter of Stalin's packing the Party with scores of thousands of hand-picked flunkys, careerists and reactionary workers. But in 1924, during the "Lenin Recruiting," here is the fakery that Trotsky in a speech fed the workers- for Stalinism's benefit:

"When the workingclass reacts to the death of its leaders in such manner that Baku gives 9,500 new party members-this is the highest voting; this is not parliamentary charlatanism, not parliamentary deception, but a genuine democratic workers voice." (L. Trotsky, PRAVDA, April 15, 1924)

Yes, the recruiting of those 9,500 workers of Baku was not parliamentary deception, it was Stalinist deception, part of the deathblow to the party. But the deceived workers, due to Trotsky's treacherous role, saw this as "A genuine democratic workers voice." Trotsky was the builder of Stalinism, organizationally and politically.

Without doubt the greatest noise the Trotsky leaders ever made has been

about Stalin's "theory" of socialism in one country. The impression has been created that Trotsky opposed that opportunist innovation. But has any one ever seen a speech, a resolution or motion of Trotsky's at a closed meeting of Stalin's Central Committee, or within any other RCP body, in which Trotsky voiced his opposition to that "theory"? You may rest assured that the Trotsky leaders would have cited such a speech or motion a hundred times over if it had ever been made. It is a matter of record that in the entire Trotskyist literature as well as in the Comintern records and in the bourgeois historical accounts by Walter Duranty and others there is not a hint at any specific thesis or line which Trotsky, supposedly, presented when Stalin several months after the Thirteenth Congress launched his fake "theory." Is the "other side" of the Trotsky picture being concealed by Stalin, the bourgeois and the Trotsky leaders? No, on our part, found substantiating evidence proving that Trotsky had no line in opposition to that of Stalin's Central Committee- neither before nor after the Thirteenth Congress. Writing in January 1925, after the introduction of the "theory" of Socialism in one country, Trotsky said:

"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 Defense, or the Revolutionary Military Soviet, this assertion needs no proof." (PRAVA, Jan. 20, 1925)

You have never witnessed a situation in which a Trotskyist rank and file, hard pressed by our exposure during a personal discussion with us, retreats to the wall, never ceasing to nervously repeat-"Yes, Trotsky fought Stalin!... He fought against Stalin's policy, not publicly but within the Central Committee." Yet it is not we but Trotsky who established that he did not oppose Stalin's platform in the Central Committee: he specifically refers to the people who attended the meetings of the Central Committee and other high committees for corroboration, as his statement of January, 1925 reveals.

And while the Trotsky researchers produce no documentary proof to establish that Trotsky put up an opposition when Stalin concocted his bureaucratic factory of building Socialism in Russia, we shall cite Trotsky's speech on the eighth anniversary of the October Revolution, Trotsky left the impression among his listeners that they would enter the Socialist paradise under the existing leadership of the Stalinist Party!

You have heard, of course, the story that Trotsky opposed the entry of the Chinese Communist Party into the Kowintang and that he fought the Stalinist fakery that they would revolutionize the Kowintang. That story was repeated so often that almost everybody believes it. The Chinese Communist Party entered the Kowintang in 1925. Where is the evidence that Trotsky opposed that move? There is none! But you can find in the Imprecor of May 1924, in Trotsky's speech to the Students of the East, the following:

"We approve Communist support to the Kuomintang party in China which we are endeavoring to revolutionize." (International Press Correspondence, Volume 4, No. 51, May 29, 1924.)

When you said maybe there is "another side" to the Trotsky picture it meant we might have left out important material. It is really the Trotskyites who leave out the tell-tale evidence, and for a good reason. They never dared to publish this damning piece of evidence which shows that Trotsky supported Stalin's preparations to cut the throat of the Chinese Revolution. They scraped together the Trotsky documents which date from 1927, after the betrayal was consummated; those of the period of the betrayal they never published, for Trotsky's role in the betrayal was clear. But even after the event, not a single one of the documents shows that Trotsky ever opposed the policy of sending the Chinese Communist Party into the Kuomintang. There is not a single sentence which exposes Stalin and the deliberate policy of selling out the revolution to safeguard the power of the bureaucracy at home. It was a desperate moment for Stalin because the opposition workers in Russia felt it was an ideal moment to oust Stalin and take over the Party. Following the betrayal to Chiang Kai Shek, Stalin's influence in the Party and in the Comintern was shaken. But Trotsky's policy was to pour cold water upon the aroused opposition masses. Who established this fact? Trotsky himself:

"Many younger comrades thought the patent bankruptcy of Stalin's policy was bound to bring the triumph of the opposition nearer. During the first days after the coup d'etat by Chiang Kai-shek, I was obliged to pour many a bucket of cold water over the hot heads of my young friends—and over some not so young. I tried to show them that the opposition could not rise on the defeat of the Chinese revolution." (L. Trotsky, MY LIFE, p. 530.)

Things are not different with the Anglo-Russian Committee, the third "ace" in the Trotsky dock of politics. The Trotskyite "historians" vociferously denounce Stalin for organizing and maintaining the Anglo-Russian Committee. But they will never dare cite Trotsky's statement made several months before the betrayal of the British workers with the aid of the Anglo-Russian Committee. Speaking to the Congress of Textile workers Trotsky said the following about that treacherous Stalinist creation:

"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 21, 1926. our emphasis)

Although the Trotskyite "historians" cavort through the files of Pravda and translate Trotsky's long-winded abstract treatises on science and other distracting subjects, they shun such damning statements as the above because these statements prove that Trotsky gave direct support to Stalin's opportunist manufacturers. Stalin's Comintern in 1926 was rendering the British trade union bureaucrats all the required cover to prepare the betrayal. When the General Strike was knifed many revolutionary workers began to suspect that the Comintern's policy was rotten. Who furnished the cover for Stalin at that critical period? Trotsky! He covered up for Stalin in the main. After

more than two years of the Stalin policy of the Anglo-Russian Committee, its purpose was accomplished; the revolutionary situation in England was shattered. Then came Trotsky and told the workers that the Stalinist Comintern policy was the same as the one Lenin and he had applied in Russia in 1917! That outrageous piece of pro-Stalinist fakery is printed in Trade, June 2, 1926. If there is "another side" to the Trotsky role in the Stalinist betrayal of the British proletariat, the "Trotskyite" "historians" have never shown it. The only picture plainly visible in the officially published press of that period is the one we have discovered, a picture of collaboration with Stalin.

How do things stand with respect to the suppression of Lenin's documents written against Stalin? Trotsky, Cannon and Shachtman often railed vehemently at the Stalin clique for hiding from the workers a whole series of Lenin's letters, including the famous Testament. But do they offer an ounce of proof that Trotsky demanded their publication at the time Lenin turned them over to the Party leadership? Of course not! We, on the other hand, have discovered that Trotsky actively joined Stalin in the suppression of all the anti-Stalin documents of Lenin. At the XII Congress of the Party in March, 1925, the existence of Lenin's letter on the "national question" was known among the delegates and the question was asked why it was kept from the floor of the Congress. The Stalin gang was forced to give an explanation. Speaking for the Presidium, whose proceedings were secret not only from the Party membership, but also from the main body of the delegates of the Congress, Zinoviev reported a strange decision. The stenographic record of the XII Congress states on page 541:

"The presidium of the Congress of the Party adopted a UNANIMOUS decision: not to publish for the time being this document." (Our emphasis)

The question might be asked: "Where was Trotsky?" The answer is that he was on the presidium of the XII Congress, as can be seen by the list of names. Trotsky was on the presidium which voted UNANIMOUSLY to suppress the document. Trotsky could have raised an objection to the proposal to hide Lenin's letter on the national question instead of making the vote unanimous. The stenographic record stands black on white and Trotsky, Cannon and Shachtman never refer to it with so much as a single word. Trotsky had in his possession a copy of that letter but he never published it.

Let us deal briefly with the most famous of Lenin's documents against Stalin—the Testament. According to Trotsky's testimony, the Testament was read in secret to a small select group, the council of seniors of the XIII Congress of the Party in May, 1924 in his presence. Trotsky was a powerful figure in the Soviet Union at that time—why didn't he talk? Not only did he maintain a criminal silence about that important document but when Eastman published some facts about the suppressed Lenin will over a year later, Trotsky agreed with the Stalin gang to come out openly with a vicious denunciation of Eastman and lie in the most dishonest fashion, as follows:

"Comrade Lenin has not left any will; the character of his relations to the Party, and the character of the Party itself, exclude the possibility of such a will. The bourgeois and Menshevik press generally understands under the designation of 'will' one of Comrade Lenin's letters (which is so much altered as to be almost

illegible) in which he gives the Party some organizatory advice. The 13th Party Congress devoted the greatest attention to this and other letters, and drew the conclusions corresponding to the situation obtaining. ALL TALK WITH REGARD TO A CONCEALED OR MUTILATED 'WILL' IS NOTHING BUT A DESPICABLE LIE, directed against the real will of Comrade Lenin, and against the interests of the party created by him." (Leon Trotsky, Inprecorr, Sept. 3, 1925, pp. 1005, 1006.)

Trotsky lied to the entire world working class.

Such a flagrant crime on Trotsky's part could never be erased and all that Trotsky, Cannon and Shachtman could do was to explain it away. The statement on Eastman was foisted upon Trotsky, they alibied; it was a question of party discipline: "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." (L. Trotsky, In Defense of Marxism, p.160.)

But what of Trotsky's silence about the Testament for over a year before Eastman published it! What about Trotsky's silence concerning Lenin's letter on the National question addressed to the XII Congress over two years earlier, a copy of which was in Trotsky's possession? Trotsky, Cannon and Shachtman would rather not discuss all that; it is embarrassing.

So to return to your remark. It should be quite plain that the "other side" of the Trotsky picture does not exist. It is a myth. And, curiously enough, that myth was not originated by Trotsky but by Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev. It was the Trio, supported by the other leaders, who invented the slogan "Trotskyism" in order to tear Trotsky down from his position of prestige and power. This was later admitted by Zinoviev when Stalin elbowed this partner of his out of power and into "Opposition." The Trio spread the story that "Trotsky underestimated the peasantry," that he was attempting "to set up the young against the old," that he had "lost faith in the creative forces of the revolution," that his aim was "to supplant Leninism with Trotskyism." Because Trotsky, like all the other leaders, was completely involved in the crime of double-crossing Lenin at the XII Congress, because he had attempted to work with Stalin, he could not lay the truth before the workers. His "oppositionism" reduced itself either to silence or to a mild denial of the accusations made against him. Chained politically to Stalin, he could not help but continue collaborating with the Usurper in every move against the proletariat. That he did everything possible to avoid the struggle against Stalin, and even deliberately chose defeat, Trotsky himself admits. In a series of articles captioned "What Happened and How", Trotsky stated:

"To the last possibility I avoided the struggle, inasmuch as at its first stages it had the character of an unprincipled conspiracy directed against me personally. It was clear to me that such kind of struggle, once it bursts out, will inevitably assume exceptional acuteness and in the condition of revolutionary dictatorship can lead to threatening consequences. This is not the place to discuss the question whether it was correct at the price of the greatest personal concessions to tend to preserve the ground

Our interest in getting to the bottom of the whole bureaucratic business which ruined the most revolutionary party in the world's history is not academic. We are engaged in the task of building a new revolutionary organization. But how can one proceed with this task if he does not possess the exact facts about the origin, the cause and the course of the degeneration of the previous revolutionary movement? That is here to prevent the Stalinist disease from blighting the new movement unless the disease is correctly understood and effectively combated? How can one make a scientific analysis of such an important political tendency as Trotsky's if one's view is based not on scientific investigation but on fabrication? And is it not obvious that true information can be gotten, not out of one's head but by digging deep in the historical records? When we study the lesson of Stalinism and Trotsky's role we do it with the question in mind: What did it all mean to the anti-Stalin revolutionary workers and to the world's toiling masses since the Stalinist policy overwhelmed the first worker's State? We know that because they imagined that Trotsky represented a Leninist policy, the anti-Stalin Communist workers flocked to Trotsky in the Fall of 1923, the minute the Stalin gang made him its target. They represented the best there was in the party, the most militant and self-sacrificing workers, true Bolsheviks, and their number was HALF of the party membership. Moreover, their political weight was decisive. In 1923 they constituted a MAJORITY in Moscow and a few other cities, while many workers within the section that was lined up behind Stalin's Central Committee were there because of fear of losing their jobs, the threat of bureaucratic persecution, and because, above all the truth about Lenin's line on Stalin was hidden by both Stalin and Trotsky. An honest opposition leadership would have opened a fight to remove the Stalin gang and reorganize the Party and the State on the line of genuine workers democracy. Trotsky at once disoriented the powerful proletarian vanguard by drafting up a resolution on "Workers Democracy" without even mentioning Stalin and Lenin's line of reorganizing the leadership. Little wonder Stalin and his clique enthusiastically signed the fake resolution (December 6, 1923), making it unanimous. When Stalin intensified the drive

WHY ALL THE "RUSS"

of collective work, or whether it was necessary that I myself go over to an offensive along the entire line, despite the absence for this of sufficient political foundations. The fact is that I chose the first p. th, and despite everything do not repeat this." (L. Trotsky, What Happened and How. Six Articles for the Bourgeois Press, Russian Edition, Paris, 1929, pp. 24, 25. Our emphasis.)

It was only later, as an expediency in the job of gathering the anti-Stalin workers into the Trotsky international movement that Trotsky's liou-tenants, none so then he himself, broadcast far and wide the grossest lie that Trotsky continued Lenin's policy, that he had fought against the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Comintern.

The documentary evidence which we have unearthed establishes that Trotsky was a discarded Stalinist bureaucrat, just as was Zinoviev, Bukharin, Rykov, Radek and the rest of the degenerated leaders of the Bolshevik Party. This material is open to everybody for verification. Nobody has refuted this material; nobody can invalidate it; it represents the true picture of Trotsky's role in the Stalinist degeneration.

against Trotsky and also against the befuddled opposition workers, Trotsky wound around their neck a paralyzing policy of do-nothing, of peace-making and conciliation. Seeking to appease Stalin, Trotsky aided in the "Leninist recruiting" and in spreading the Stalinist fraud about revolutionizing the Kuomintang. Every time there was a danger to Stalin's regime Trotsky threw a wet blanket over the opposition masses, he lied to them that the Stalin "Central Committee" is a Leninist Central Committee (Declaration of The Opposition, October 16, 1926) he gave them a line of "unity at all costs" with the Stalinist bureaucracy (Platform of the Opposition). The whole mass of the proletarian vanguard in Russia, securely shackled within the Stalinist system by Trotsky perished in Siberia and in other ways. Concurrently, the proletarian vanguard of China was led by Stalin, with Trotsky's aid, to Chiang Kai-shek's execution block.

Our investigation throws light upon the fate of anti-Stalin revolutionary workers outside of Russia. Trotsky organized them into a "fraction of the Comintern" and handed them a line of "correcting" the Stalin gang. Because they never knew the true story of Trotsky, they were prevented from grasping the consciousness of the crime of Stalinist usurpation of power, the deliberate nature of the bloody destruction of the vanguard workers in Russia, in China and elsewhere, they followed Trotsky's policy and supported the Stalinist Comintern with "criticism." Believing Trotsky that Stalinism was blundering "centrism", they ended in the concentration camps of Hitler.

Then Trotsky reorganized those anti-Stalin workers who remained alive outside Russia, China and Germany into a "Fourth International" which he based on the sinister fraud that Trotsky was a fighter against the Stalinist counter-revolution. The line of support with "criticism" remained and Stalin led the Spanish proletariat including the Trotskyite and semi-Trotskyite workers (POUM) to destruction.

Principles, recognized and accepted, are a guiding light for the proletariat. Frauds are dangerous snares, leading to defeats and annihilation. Lenin's fight against Menshevism is an established principle. Trotsky's "fight against Stalinism" is a fraud. The acceptance of this fraud as a principle has proved fatal for the proletarian vanguard.

The whole chain of our investigation leads to the glaring fact that Trotsky represents the historical trap which captures the current of subjectively anti-Stalin workers and holds them fast within the Stalin orbit. We see that it is these workers who, beginning with 1923, formed the key element for reorganizing the whole vanguard upon revolutionary lines, but were betrayed to Stalin by Trotsky. Knowing this, we realize what terrible fate is in store for those workers and for the proletarian revolution which is now brewing in Italy, France, England and other countries- unless we reach these workers in time with the true story of Trotsky, help rid them of Stalinism, and tear them out of the clutches of that destructive Stalinist power and begin to build a Marxist movement.

Like you, we too, for a while, imagined that perhaps what we discovered about the XII Congress and other events was accidental, and that if we investigated further we would find "another side" of Trotsky. Alas! The more documents we examined the clearer grew the picture, until there was no mistaking the dastardly role Trotsky played in the Stalinist degeneration. It then became clear that our duty was to pass the information to the workers

and fight to win them to the true Marxist line.

Honest revolutionary workers have no reason for accepting fiction as truth. It should be obvious that since the truth has been discovered, these workers, sooner or later, will see it. It should be equally obvious that people like Cannon and Shachtman will guard zealously the dark secret of Trotsky, will do everything to blur the view, to conceal the facts about the early phases of Stalinism and when confronted by an overwhelming array of facts will try to create among the workers, as the last resort, the misleading impression that somewhere there is hidden "another side" of the Trotsky story.

Here is the problem in a nutshell: Ever since the beginning of the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Comintern, the counter-revolutionary, disguised pro-Stalinist tendency led by Trotsky, plus his various "Left" satellites, has been THE PRIMARY FORCE PREVENTING THE FOR-MATION OF A NEW MARXIST INTERNATIONAL. Unless a principled, Marxist strug-gle is fought directly against that treacherous tendency, NO NEW MARXIST INTERNATIONAL IS POSSIBLE, just as without Lenin's fight against the chief current of the Second International, the Bolshevik movement and the October Revolution would have been impossible. The fight against the sham Fourth International of Trotsky and his "Left" satellites is the direct form of the present, immediate struggle for the cadres of the New Marxist Inter-national which must arise out of the ruins of the old movement to lead the toilers to freedom from capitalist oppression. We call upon every worker who stands for a new Marxist International to unite with us in that struggle.

Comradely yours,
George Marlen