

IN DEFENSE OF BOLSHEVISM

THE RIGHT AND THE WRONG WAY
TO DEFEND THE VICTIMS OF
STALINIST FRAME-UPS

The frame-up of Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and other former leaders of the Bolshevik party and the Comintern is not an isolated event. It represents one of the stages in the uninterrupted process of steady augmentation of power in the hands of Stalin and his immediate assistants. In 1923, using Trotsky as a convenient target, Stalin formed a conspiracy for the usurpation of leadership in the party and the State. The subsequent history of the Soviet Union is the gradual elimination of inner-party and workers democracy, its replacement by a regime of bureaucratic centralism, and the political and organizational subjugation of all the popular, great figures of the Soviet Republic by the less prominent Stalin. The country became the subject of intensive and extensive bureaucratization. With the expulsion of the Opposition bloc at the end of 1927, the first stage of the process came to a close. By 1930, invariably employing Trotsky as his chief target, Stalin had emerged as the unquestionable master of the Soviet Union, standing on the summit of a colossal bureaucratic pyramid which rests on the shoulders of the Soviet toiling masses.

The concentration of power in the hands of Stalin brought with it the terrific friction within the bureaucracy itself; and the ever-growing oppression and despotism of the usurping band culminated in the assassination of Kirov, one of Stalin's closest henchmen, by a minor functionary. The bloody phase of centralization and enhancement of Stalin's personal power followed. Stalin now eliminated physically all those who had at any time stood in his path. Next he exterminated many of his outstanding supporters perched on the upper blocks of the bureaucratic pyramid who had grown accustomed to exercising authority, therefore constituting a potential danger to his absolutism. Third, he evolved a system of decimation of functionaries and workers to keep the entire population in a state of perpetual dread of his unlimited power.

To safeguard his usurped domination and the bureaucratic structure sustaining him in his seat of personal dictatorship, Stalin must prevent the development of the international proletarian revo-

lutionary situation periodically issuing out of the crisis of imperialism. Compelled to appear before the working class as a Leninist in order the better to mislead it, Stalin through his "Comintern" lays down to the international proletariat a line which contains a feature or two of genuine Leninism, but which in reality represents a zigzag running now far to the Left of Leninism (1924, 1929-34), now a great distance to the Right of Leninism (1923, 1925-1929, 1935-). Being opportunist in essence the line diverts the working class from its historical objective, the struggle for power. In the course of his rule Stalin has repeatedly succeeded in warding off the proletarian revolution, simultaneously strengthening his personal dictatorship over the only workers' State. In this betrayal of the workers Stalin has been aided directly or indirectly by the social democracy and all the other opportunist forces within the proletariat.

Consequently the fact stands out that the scope of the criminality of Stalinism reaches beyond such horrible outrages as the Moscow "Trials," and includes the well-planned, cold-blooded wiping out of the Bolshevik vanguard in the Soviet Union, the destruction of the revolutionary section of the Chinese toiling masses, of the flower of the German proletariat and of revolutionary workers of Spain.

It is clear from the foregoing that the problem of combatting Stalinist crimes and the ejection of the Stalinist poison from the veins of the proletariat is inseparably bound up with the task of resuscitating Bolshevism and reviving the struggle for the international proletarian revolution. Historically, therefore, the complete and victorious clearing of the frame-up victims of Stalinism from the monstrous charges can be accomplished exclusively by the full exposure of Stalinism. And it is absolutely impossible to bring this about without a correct, Leninist understanding of what this force is, without the precise knowledge of how it originated and how it operates. Attempts to leave out certain important facts bearing on the history of Stalinism, a policy of divorcing the question of proletarian revolution from the job of clearing Trotsky and other victims of the frame-up, confusion with respect to Stalinism, play directly into the hands of Stalin.

Precisely such has been the policy of Trotsky prior to and after the Moscow "Trials." Instead of transforming the defense of himself into a powerful offensive against Stalinism, orienting in the main towards the historically revolutionary class within the bourgeois society, he has turned primarily in the direction of liberals and intellectuals, who may be quite competent in the handling of juridical problems, but who are utterly alien to Bolshevism and the revolutionary interests of the proletariat. The "Preliminary Commission of Inquiry" set out upon its task while in a state of disintegration. Machinations of Stalin had reached into its very midst, and its resigning members performed an invaluable service for the Kremlin

Usurper, as concretely illustrated in the case of Hallgren and Beals. The evidence brought out at the private hearing held in Mexico has not at all been convincing to the Stalinist workers; yet it is they who must be regarded as the most vital element to be clarified, for they are emotionally attached to Stalin as to the "leader" of the Soviet Union and the world proletariat, and through their lack of knowledge and information, uphold and defend him. Leaving out of sight the elementary Marxist axiom that there is no "public conscience" in the abstract, that the "purification" of social atmosphere is but an empty phrase unless the purification is effected through the concrete struggle of the proletariat for revolutionizing society, Trotsky declares that -

"Here in the person of the Commission we have a precious cell of unmarketable public conscience. All those who thirst for purification of the social atmosphere will turn instinctively toward the commission." (L. Trotsky, closing speech at the 13th Session of the Preliminary Hearing.)

The American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, holding rigidly to the judicial details of the Moscow frame-up, in its ardent endeavor to "purify" social atmosphere has been zealously disseminating among the workers much literature which included some poisonous shafts against the Leninist Comintern (The Witchcraft Trial in Moscow, by Friedrich Adler, in which the author indulges in an attack upon Trotsky's and Zinoviev's Bolshevik past, and against "the infamous 'twenty-one conditions' to be adopted at the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920."). Presumably this article by Adler is promoting the defense of Trotsky. In reality it undermines the actual defense because it attacks Bolshevism, the only true defender of victims of Stalinism and capitalism. Adler identifies Stalinism with Bolshevism thus contributing to the strengthening of the illusion in the minds of the Stalinist workers in Russia and the Comintern that Stalin carries forward Lenin's work.

What stands out conspicuously in the testimony submitted by Trotsky to what purported to be a close scrutiny and investigation of Stalinism, is the fact that Trotsky did not deem it essential to reveal his own true role during the rise of the Stalinist monster. It must be stated openly that had the Opposition pursued a correct policy towards Stalin during Lenin's illness and after his death, the world, very possibly, would have never witnessed the gruesome spectacle of the Moscow "Trials." It will suffice to give a few documentary facts. When Lenin, disabled, urged Trotsky to initiate a vigorous, uncompromising struggle for the removal of Stalin, Trotsky reassured Kamenev, then one of Stalin's closest assistants, that

"I am for preserving the status quo... I AM AGAINST REMOVING STALIN." (L. Trotsky, My Life, p.485,486.)

This attitude of Trotsky's was an invaluable boon to Stalin.

The seed which years afterwards sprouted into the Moscow "Trials" was planted by Stalin in 1923 and 1924, when he slashed out against Trotsky with a vicious campaign of slander. In the circumstances which required an immediate counter-offensive, Trotsky maintained a strange silence.

"Despite the fact that during the run of the discussion against me were put forth numerous incorrect and really monstrous accusations, I think my silence was correct..."
(L. Trotsky, Pravda, January 20, 1925.)

In a negative way Trotsky thus enabled Stalin to retain the cloak of Lenin and stimulate the further advance of bureaucratism. Lenin's advice to the party to remove Stalin was carefully concealed by the bureaucratic gang, and when Eastman came out with the revelations concerning Lenin's will, Trotsky, pursuing the policy of peacemaking and conciliation with Stalin, shielded the Usurper by declaring,

"Comrade Lenin has not left any 'will'...All talk with regard to a concealed or mutilated 'will' is nothing but a dispicable lie." (L. Trotsky, Imprecorr, September 3, 1925, p. 105)

Throughout the long stretch of years since 1923 there have been numerous striking instances of Trotsky's peculiar "fight" against Stalinism which invariably aided Stalin. Some time after the Stalinists sold out the British workers to British imperialism, and the Chinese toiling masses to Chiang Kai-shek, Trotsky wrote "All this was undertaken, of course, with the best of intentions." (L. Trotsky, What Next, p. 74.) Such a wrong explanation created the false notion that Stalin really wanted the revolution to succeed but unwittingly introduced policies which brought about the defeat of the proletariat. Today the absolute ruler of the only workers' State has secured a tremendous victory in Spain by having smothered, through his policy of defense of bourgeois democracy, the proletarian revolution which would have inevitably caused an anti-bureaucratic upsurge in the Soviet Union. But Trotsky writes that "Stalin-Nogrin suffered a defeat." (L. Trotsky's letter to the N.Y. Times, December 7, 1937.) He introduces the illusion that Stalin seeks a proletarian victory in Spain.

It can be said with certainty that the advent of Stalin is due, in part, to the fact that with Lenin's retirement and death, no Leninist force existed in the Soviet Union and the Comintern to oppose his bureaucratic usurpation of power. The illusions produced by Trotsky's policies have rendered the struggle against the Stalinist scourge very difficult. His own defense and with it the work of enlightening the workers is effectively obstructed and crippled by such acts as the dispatching of the cable of June 17, 1937 to Moscow, addressed to the cynical Stalinist clique. In it Trotsky said:

"Stalin's policy is leading to complete collapse internal as well as external. The only salvation is a radical turn toward Soviet democracy, beginning with an open review of the last trial. Along this road I offer complete support."

This, after the criminal gang had framed him and thousands of others, had driven to suicide or murdered Tomsky, Gamarnik, Cherviakov, executed Tukhachevsky and many other high functionaries of its own regime. Such a line of Trotsky creates fantastic hopes that through pressure the Stalinist clique, which is steeped in crime and renegadism, will make a turn towards self-exposure and workers democracy. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that such a line distracts the workers from the path leading to an uncompromising fight against Stalinism, and in the final count nurtures and sustains destructive misconceptions about Stalinism.

Only a keen and penetrating Leninist policy can clear Trotsky and all other frame-up victims of Stalinism before the entire proletariat, Russian included, and open the road towards the building of the Fourth (Leninist) International. Only through an orientation towards the working class, organized and unorganized, can a genuine and full exposure of Stalinism be secured and the tide turned towards the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of world proletarian rule. Any other path will inescapably permit more vicious frame-ups by Stalinism and the unleashing of Fascism in France, England, America and other countries which will result in the turning of the clock of history back a thousand years.

FOR THE REVIVAL OF MARXISM - LENINISM !

AGAINST THE HARMFUL DEMORALIZING ILLUSIONS AND OSTRICH POLICIES WHICH IN ESSENCE LEND AID TO THE STALINIST REACTION !

FOR THE DISCLOSURE OF ALL THE EVIDENCE REGARDING THE POST - LENINIST DEGENERATION OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE COMINTERN, LEAVING OUT NOTHING, SPARING NO ONE ! LET THE WORKERS KNOW THE TRUTH, AND ALL OF IT!

FOR THE MERCILESS EXPOSURE OF ALL OPPORTUNISM WITHIN THE CAMP OF THE PROLETARIAT ! ! !

THE LENINIST LEAGUE of the U.S.A.

*****R L I D*****T L I D*****

STALIN, TROTSKY OR LENIN

by GEO. MARLEN

A LENINIST Exposure of Stalinism—An Evaluation
of TROTSKY'S errors and illusions

493 pp. clo. \$1.50 paper \$1.00 Box 67 Station D New York