

THE BULLETIN

BEHIND THE FOG OF THE ALEUTIAN AFFAIR

By George Marlen

"WHY BURMA FELL"

HOW THE CANNONITES PROPOSE TO
DEFEAT FASCISM

By Arthur Burke

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IN THE U. S. S. R.

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The Trotsky School of Falsification

Myths and Facts about Trotsky's Position
on the Anglo-Russian Committee

From the Arsenal of Stalinism

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Address Communications to:

T H E R E D S T A R P R E S S
P.O. Box 67 Station D.
New York

BEHIND THE FOG
OF THE
ALEUTIAN AFFAIR

THE unceasing crisis which has been shaking world capitalism ever since the Russian Revolution of 1917 has presented the imperialist rulers with the problem of stabilizing their system as a whole. At present world imperialism is striving to solve this problem along two parallel lines; one, under the cover of a sham war between the Fascist and bourgeois-democratic powers, the so-called "Second World War," to place the entire capitalist world under the Fascist form of rule; the other, to assure the victory of international imperialism over the Soviet Union for the purpose of destroying the last remains of the October Revolution and bringing the territory of the Soviet Union back into the capitalist fold. The chief centers of the capitalist world in which the form of bourgeois rule is scheduled by the international imperialists to be transformed to Fascism are the bourgeois-democratic countries. Behind the smokescreen of the "war" between the Fascist and bourgeois-democratic powers, the path is being opened for the entrance of the Fascist gendarme. This constitutes a temporary submerging of imperialist rivalries for the general and fundamental purpose of saving the capitalist system in its entirety. Sham war amongst the imperialists, real war of world imperialism against the Soviet Union --- such is the true picture of the present situation.

How far this development will proceed remains for history to unfold. Meanwhile it is necessary for the workers to watch every symptom of the imperialists' policy, for without understanding the course of events it is impossible for the workers successfully to oppose their class foes.

* * *

Early in June of this year a report from Tokyo sources was printed in the bourgeois newspapers stating that the Japanese Fascist troops had landed on a few islands of the Aleutian chain. At first Washington denied this fact, though it was known in Japan and other countries and hence was no so-called "military secret." Another peculiarity about the Aleutian occupation is that in this country information is not too readily being given out as to what is going on, although the Japanese Fascist Government seems to be well informed. This peculiarity is so pronounced that even the capitalist press made a sham gesture of "dissatisfaction" with the Washington policy. The New York Times wrote in the June 28, 1942 issue:

"The announcement that the Japanese had landed on several of the islands came from Japanese sources. At first Washington denied it; then Washington admitted it. There has been almost no information regarding activity in those regions, except from enemy sources. The statements that bad weather interferes with activity and the obtaining of information is none too impressive when the Japanese make definite statements about what goes on."

The Aleutian affair is, evidently, a ticklish business. The sly capitalist press naturally does not reveal certain "strange" phenomena. How does it come about that despite the fact that since December 1941 Japan reportedly suffered considerable losses in naval and air units, and that a large part of her fleet was reportedly defeated and scattered in the Midway battle, the Japanese Fascists not only maintained hold on the islands of Japan proper, of the Mandated Islands scattered over thousands of miles of

the Pacific area, of the occupied islands, the Dutch Indies, the Philippines, the Andamans, Guam and Wake, but continue occupying new territory, and move close to the American continent? The bourgeois press has to offer some "explanations" for such an amazing situation. The old excuses of lack of forces, so often repeated by the ideological agents of the capitalists, are again brought out to conceal the true reasons for the continuous spreading of Fascist occupations which, in the Aleutian case, clearly points in the direction of the American masses. Here is a sample of the story being given:

"But of course the most tragic proof that our commanders lack sufficient sea, land and air forces to defend the strategic Aleutians is that Attu and Kiska islands had to be sacrificed --- apparently even without a fight.

"It is now three weeks or more since the enemy occupied those crossroads between the bases of Japan, Russia and the United States. That brought the enemy 2000 miles nearer Seattle from Tokyo -- near enough to shell Vancouver Island and the Oregon coast with submarines.

"Tokyo claims that her army of occupation is moving on from Attu and Kiska to other Aleutian islands -- the same stepping-stone strategy by which she conquered lower Asia and the southwest Pacific islands." (World-Telegram, June 26, 1942. My emphasis - G.M.)

The islands evidently were allowed to be occupied by the Japanese Fascists without even the pretense of a fight.

An AP dispatch made it known that the military authorities were well aware that the Japanese Fascists would spread their occupation to other islands in the Aleutians:

"MORE JAP LANDINGS EXPECTED IN ALEUTIANS"

"An effort by the Japanese to expand their landings in the Aleutian islands was expected by military authorities today, but whether they

will try for knockout blows against important American bases was considered debatable." (New York Post, June 15, 1942)

The average worker, reading the news of the Japanese landing in the Aleutians coming upon the reported naval catastrophes for Japan, naturally expected to hear that the American forces would at once attack and drive the Japanese forces out of the Aleutians. But the Japanese Fascists were not driven out. They have been carrying on operations in the Aleutians since June 3, and after the first landings, new landings were reported.

The tragic situation which the opportunists in the workers camp, and the imperialists have created for the world oppressed, compels every thinking worker to sharpen his wits. The picture in the countries occupied by the Fascists is appalling. A situation like the Aleutian imposes upon the imperialists the necessity not only of fraudulent explanations and flimsy excuses but of loyal "criticism." It is the loyal "critics" that allay the alarm and dissatisfaction of the average worker who believes that a real war is being fought to stop the spread of the Fascist forces, but sees that the Fascist forces constantly occupy new territories. Such a piece of loyal "criticism" is furnished by an editorial in The New York Times:

At the outset, the editorial admits that there is an official fog around the Aleutian situation:

"It is not weather alone that shrouds the Aleutian Islands in a fog. An obscurity of official comment also veils them."

Taking on an air of displeasure, the editorial recounts the evasive assurances and statements that have been made public, and virtually indicates a very strange behavior on the part of those giving information about the Aleutian business:

"First we were assured that the enemy had landed in no 'inhabited' area. The landings were even dismissed as a Japanese 'face-saving

gesture.' Then it was suggested that the islands were too rocky and forbidding to be of much value to the enemy. In this stage the difficulty of building landing fields and submarine basins was emphasized. Later it was admitted that enemy ships had entered Kiska harbor and that troop barracks had already been erected on shore. Now we are informed that there cannot be more than a few hundred Japanese soldiers there."

Taking the last-cited statement at face value, the editorial raises the question, no doubt uppermost in many worried minds:

"If that is the case, why have they not been driven off? More than three weeks have elapsed since they were first reported and our only known attempt to dislodge them has been by sporadic bombing through occasional breaks in the mist. The fogs which permitted them to get a foothold in the first place should favor equally a determined counter-attack provided it is made in sufficient force. Experience in the East Indies has repeatedly shown that if such an attack is not made soon it will be too late."

And finally the paper raises the cry that the Japanese forces must not be allowed to continue occupying the Aleutian islands. The New York Times creates the impression that it calls the attention of those who conduct this so-called "war against the Axis" to the danger. But one should not be misled by the tone of the editorial of the imperialist paper which acted similarly in similar cases, and every time had its writers "explain" away the police occupation of territories by the Fascist troops. The editorial concludes:

"We cannot tolerate this invasion of the Western Hemisphere. We could not hold the Philippines because they were too close to Japan. We must hold the Aleutians because they are too close to our own continent. It would be unthinkable folly to let the Japanese remain where they are, astride our only

route to Siberia and in the very zone that we must use to launch an invasion of Japan." (June 26, 1942)

Thus "criticise" the capitalist editors, without doubt fully aware of the reasons for the amazingly easy march of the Fascist gendarmes into one territory after another and why the Fascists are not being driven out. We have witnessed many "strange" and "mysterious" events, such as the unopposed Fascist landings in the Philippines, and the policy of withholding reinforcements from Wake Island when the Japanese navy was besieging it; but even more "mysterious" is the establishment of a Japanese Fascist base in the Aleutians as a possible stepping stone toward entering Alaska, Canada, perhaps the Oregon and California coasts.

So far the events in the Aleutians have followed very closely the pattern of the Fascist occupation of the Greek islands in the Aegean, of Crete, Luzon and in other instances. The pattern is simple enough. First comes the unopposed landing of the Fascist troops. Next, the news is flashed that the "democratic" forces have launched a "heavy attack" against the "invaders," sinking numerous naval ships and transports--- if the number of Japanese warships reportedly sunk by the Dutch, Australian, British and American air and naval forces, were compiled, it would be found that there is hardly any Japanese navy left. On the heels of the reports of terrible blows dealt to the Fascist "invaders" there usually follows the news that the Fascists are advancing and are rapidly expanding their operations. Here is this pattern in the Aleutians, described with a dash of sarcasm by the Daily News of July 7, 1942:

"On July 4 and yesterday, the Navy and War departments issued accounts of vigorous bomber and sub activities since June 21 against the Jap footholds on two Aleutian islands, Attu and Kiska. A nice picture of a Jap transport smoking in Kiska harbor after a hit by an Army plane went with these reports. Then, like an afterthought or a footnote, came the news that oh,

yes, by the way, the Japs had just grabbed another Aleutian island, Agattu."

This cynical comment touches closely on the treacherous game being played by the imperialist rulers, a maneuver which under the cover of a "war" is bringing the Fascist forces rapidly toward the throat of the workers of this continent.

* * *

The Aleutian affair is a new, recently appearing symptom of the imperialists' policy. It recalls to mind another affair which in certain basic features resembles the Aleutian business.

For some "mysterious" reason, just two years ago, the Nazis were allowed by the British to occupy the fortified Channel Islands, Guernsey and Jersey, without any opposition whatever. A discussion in the British Parliament on July 31, 1940 brought out some interesting details of this operation. A member on that day made the following statement:

"For the first time in our history, this territory has been invaded without any resistance whatever and, to a very large extent, the news of that event has been suppressed. . . . (Omission in original -- G.M.) Not until announcements appeared in the Berlin press on 1 July was there information that German troops had occupied the Channel Islands, the first occupation by German troops of British soil." (The Penguin Hansard, Vol. 3, p, 46. My emphasis - G.M.)

The Channel Islands, strategically situated in British-controlled waters, had been fortified by the British. But for some "mysterious" reason in the midst of the so-called "Second World War," the Churchill Government decided to evacuate these islands. The M.P. whom we have quoted above, stated:

"Only a few days before the evacuation, military equipment and armaments were being poured into the Islands. These were then withdrawn." (Ibid.)

While this M.P. in speaking of the evacuation said that the military equipment and armaments "were then withdrawn," he revealed what he really had in his mind when he asked the following peculiar question:

"I want to ask whether the airport was left intact in order that it could be used in an offensive against our people." (Ibid., p. 49)

According to another M.P., also participating in the debate on the evacuation of the Channel Islands:

"Demilitarization was thus announced on 19 June (1940 -- G.M.); the first raid was on 28 June, and the actual occupation took place on 30 June and 1 July." (Ibid., p. 50)

For what reason did the British rulers decide to evacuate the Channel Islands? Were the British in a weak position with respect to the English Channel? The day before the demilitarization of the Channel Islands was announced, Churchill spoke in Parliament of the superior British naval forces in the Channel and North Sea:

"In the Channel and in the North Sea, on the other hand, our superior naval surface forces, aided by our submarines, will operate with close and effective air resistance." (Ibid., p. 37)

And in the same speech, Churchill claimed air superiority had been shown by the British only a few days before at Dunkirk:

"In the fighting over Dunkirk, which was a sort of no man's land, we undoubtedly beat the German air force, and this gave us the mastery locally in the air, and we inflicted losses of three or four to one." (Ibid., p. 38)

In a word, militarily, there could be no reason for the peculiar evacuation of the British forces from the Channel Islands. As far back as the days of Napoleon Bonaparte these Channel Islands were used by the British as bases for invasion of the European

continent. They would have been of immense value in preventing the Nazis from occupying the Channel areas of Northern France --- had such been the intention of the British rulers. In the face of the great value of these islands, the British evacuated them without a struggle and even in advance of any Nazi attack on them -- a mode of behavior which is virtually the fundamental distinguishing mark of the military course of the so-called "Second World War" and which can be illustrated with striking documentary evidence.

What is even more significant about the whole affair is that in the two years since the Nazis entered the Channel Islands, there has been no announcement of any British attempt to drive the Nazis out, or even to bomb them. It is obvious that, possessing as they do colossal naval and air strength, the British imperialists could in the brief space of a few hours remove the Nazi garrisons on those islands in the English Channel. Yet, for a reason, the British imperialists are not retaking possession of these strategically important islands. Little will we be surprised if these islands are eventually used as a stepping stone by Hitler, the international Fascist gendarme of world capitalism, for a leap at the throats of the toilers of England, and perhaps Ireland, to inflict upon them a fate as sinister and bloody as the one inflicted upon the French, Czechoslovak and other masses.

* * *

The Aleutian affair at this writing is in the process of development. There is little doubt that it will play a far greater role in the total picture than the Channel Islands. The situation around the latter, after their occupation by the Nazis, has lain dormant for two years. But there is every indication that on the Aleutian scene the course of events will be relatively swift, boding no good for the workers of this continent.

If one wishes to obtain an idea of what the policy will be in the Aleutian situation, one can find an inkling in the significant remark of an

authoritative capitalist newspaper:

"Despite the gravity of the Japanese menace, it was believed, the Allies could not yet spare forces from the many other global theatres for a campaign to regain the far Aleutians." (The New York Times, July 12, 1942)

This tone definitely is one of flimsy excuses, and is quite in contrast with the "critical" tone the same newspaper struck in the earlier editorials. A glance at the "global" situation plainly shows that of the "Allies" the British at present have a tremendous force which, except for a small fraction of it in Libya, is not even in contact with the Axis armies. Canada, involved in the Aleutian situation, has sufficient strength of its own to drive the so-far small Japanese force out of the Aleutians. As to the gigantic American war machine, it is not at this time engaged in any special place, unlike for example the Nazi war machine which is heavily occupied in Russia and on the European continent. Thus, in this situation when the "Allied" military might is kept in virtual idleness, with the Japanese troops spread out in Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Philippines, the Mandated Islands, and occupied American islands like Guam and Wake, when a large Japanese army is engaged in China, another big army stationed on the Siberian border, a force kept in Korea and at home, the Japanese Fascist command can and does spare forces for occupying one Aleutian island after another. But the American imperialist press, no doubt pursuing a certain definite policy, disregards the obvious military illogicality of the Japanese occupation of the Aleutians. It is already beginning to give a cock-and-bull turn to the situation by asserting that "somebody" "believes" no forces are available to drive out right now the Japanese Fascist troops from American waters!

If the Aleutians are actually scheduled to be an avenue of entrance for the Fascists, the American workers must take heed not to be made victims in the manner of the French workers

who imagined that the "democratic" imperialist rulers were actually at war with the Fascist powers. Especially the advanced workers who are told by their leaders, the Socialists, Trotskyites, Stalinists, that a real war is taking place between the "democratic" and the Fascist powers must become con-

scious of the true state of affairs and bestir themselves to prevent the repetition of the tragedy which occurred in France.

George Marlen
July 12, 1942

A BURNING ISSUE -

INDIA

ALONG WHAT PATH CAN THE TOILING
MASSES OF INDIA WIN THEIR FREE-
DOM? BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRACY? PRO-
LETARIAN DICTATORSHIP?

WHICH FORCES IN THE WORKINGCLASS
RANKS OFFER THE CORRECT SOLUTION
TO THE VAST PROBLEMS FACING THE
INDIAN WORKERS? THOSE WHO ISSUE
THE CALL FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEM-
BLY? THOSE WHO SOUND THE CRY FOR
A PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOVIET GOVERN-
MENT?

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"WHY BURMA FELL"

SINCE the declaration of war in September 1939, the peculiar character of the course of events has evoked an unusually enormous host of "explanations." The first phenomenon whose queer nature brought forth a veritable deluge of "explanations" was the eight month "Sitzkrieg" on the so-called Western Front. Since then the remarkable phenomenon giving rise to "explanations" has been the amazingly easy entrance of the fascist forces into one crucial territory after another. Britain and her official ally, France, together possessed the greatest naval power in the world, but the inferior Nazi naval forces were able to ship panzer divisions into Norway over the wide water route of the Skagerrak. The general "explanation" given then was that the Nazis had a superior air force. Nevertheless several weeks later the "successful withdrawal" of the British army at Dunkerque was said by Churchill to have been due to British mastery of the air. The unopposed entrance of the Nazis into France was "explained" by the imperialists as due to treachery on the part of some French generals. Such a veritably magical feat as the transfer of Nazi panzer divisions over the British-controlled Mediterranean into North Africa was also "explained." The incredibly rapid Japanese occupation of the enormous fortress of Singapore is still being "explained."

The Japanese occupation of Burma is no exception to the rule. Among those who receive "explanations" are not only the general masses but also the advanced workers. These advanced workers know better than to take the

imperialists' "explanations" at their face value, but unfortunately, they do have faith in the stories of the self-styled "revolutionary Marxists." A case in point is the "explanation" given by the Trotskyite leaders for the entrance of the Japanese fascist forces into Burma.

In an article, "Why Burma Fell," (The Militant, May 23, 1942) two reasons are given by the Trotskyites:- 1) the British feared to arouse the Burmese masses to fight the Japanese, and 2) the British feared to accept the aid of a huge Chinese army which was available. The first reason is given in the form of the following quotation from a U.P. correspondent: "There was no attempt to win Burmese support by the British Imperialists, so that many Burmese joined the Japanese or remained passive." The second reason is stated by The Militant in these words:- "Another important factor in the fall of Burma was the failure to utilize the Chinese veteran troops, offering to fight the Japanese." In support of this the Trotskyites also quote U.P. dispatches. In both cases, the Trotskyite paper states, the cause of this policy was the British fear of independent, anti-imperialist action on the part of the colonial masses. The Militant speaks of the British fear "that the Burmese people would rise up and take advantage of the opportunity to gain their independence" and "that the Chinese soldiers who themselves were fighting valiantly for independence from imperialist domination, would sympathize with and perhaps aid the Burmese in securing their independence."

It appears from the Trotskyite "explanation" that without arousing the Burmese and without using the Chinese troops it was not possible for the British to defeat the Japanese in Burma.

From the Trotskyite tale one would imagine that the Japanese forces which entered Burma were so colossal that the British could not possibly muster sufficient forces of their own to outweigh the Japanese. An investigation of the actual situation, however, will reveal that the matter was quite different. The Japanese force in Burma was not large. The article in The Militant, making mention of the fact that the Japanese campaign was "ridiculously easy," quotes an A.P. dispatch as saying that the Japanese occupation of Burma was accomplished by an army "authoritatively estimated not to exceed four divisions (about 72,000 men) and an air force of probably not over 450 planes." Clearly, the Japanese fascists brought no insuperable force into Burma. Was it possible for the British to concentrate in Burma a force of their own sufficient to cope with the Japanese, thus putting the matter of having to invoke the aid of the Asiatic colonials entirely out of the realm of necessity? And if this was possible, then why did not the British leaders do so? While these questions are obviously crucial for an understanding of the Burma affair, strikingly enough they are not raised by the Trotskyite paper. Let us first go more into detail on the actual situation in Burma and then see the significance of the Trotskyites' failure to raise these questions.

We have indicated that the Trotskyite paper quotes a dispatch which attributes about 72,000 men to the Japanese forces in Burma. As a matter of fact, the official estimate is even smaller, and by a considerable percentage at that. The press reported an interview with General Stillwell, the American Chief of Staff of the Chinese army, who declared that the Japanese in Burma "used about 40,000 to 50,000 combat troops" (World-Telegram, May

25, 1942). Interestingly enough, even the bourgeois press was compelled to raise the question which the Trotskyite "revolutionary Marxists" avoided, namely, for what mysterious reason were the "Allies" unable to match this small Japanese force. In an editorial entitled, "Burma Post-Mortem," the World-Telegram (May 26, 1942) remarks:

"The Japs only had between 40 000 to 50,000 combat troops, according to Stillwell. Why couldn't the Allies match this small figure? He does not say."

Indeed, to hold back this small force it was not in the least necessary to arouse millions of colonials. There are several second rate powers which can easily match such a force as that which the Japanese sent into Burma. Will any one pretend that such gigantic empires as the British and the American could not muster from their own huge forces an army of, say, 100,000 men and 1000 planes for Burma?

Let us take up the matter of the air force first, for this is most easily disposed of. In the early phase of the Burma affair, it was declared by the Air Chief of India that from the start the "United Nations" had air superiority:

"Air Marshal Sir Richard E.C. Peirse, new Air Chief of India, predicted today that Burma would prove to be different from the other areas in which the United Nations had fought and lost, because 'from the start we were able to gain air superiority.'" (New York Times, March 16, 1942.)

Peirse maintained that this was crucial for the situation in Burma:

"Fighting in Burma has now taken on the essential nature of defense of India, he said. United Nations air superiority permits a continuous attack on Japanese communication lines that will slow and may halt the advance." (Ibid.)

Peirse even declared that the progress

of events only served to increase the air superiority of the "United Nations" in Burma:-

"Sir Richard began the interview with a tribute to the American Volunteer Group, which he said had gained 'a world-wide reputation' and had done 'magnificent work.' They and the R.A.F. since the Burmese campaign started had accounted for 200 Japanese planes against the loss of forty-two for themselves. He added that 'our air forces today are infinitely better than when the Burmese campaign opened.'

"Reinforcements,' he continued, 'are coming through faster and our plans are accelerated accordingly.'" (Ibid.)

On top of all this, easily accessible for transportation to Burma is the reported huge concentration of British and American air power in the Near and Middle East. During the Burma events, The New York Times of May 3, 1942 stated:

"As far as is physically possible, the United Nations have been building up their strength, and particularly their air power, in the Middle and Near East areas, the British having shipped in thousands of planes, with the number of American aircraft dispatched there also running into four figures."

It must be noted that there is not the slightest difficulty in the problem of transporting planes from the Near and Middle East to Burma since the route lies entirely over British-controlled land territory.

On every side it is recognized that air power is crucial. As we have shown, air superiority was entirely on the side of the British. Nevertheless the Japanese occupation of Burma, to use the expression of The Militant, was "ridiculously easy." All this only adds to the mysterious features of the Burma affair. Certainly, insofar as air forces are concerned, the British rulers did not have to rely on colonial natives. Yet this tremen-

dous air power of the British was not made use of.

Toward the end of the Burma campaign, the report came in from the Allied headquarters in Burma that-

"The Allied soldiers in the front lines of Burma for the past two weeks have seen as few of their own planes as the British Expeditionary Force in Crete saw in 1941." (New York Times, April 10, 1942.)

This remarkable absence of ^{the} British air fleet was continued to the end of the Burma affair. Why did not the British rulers make use of their enormous air forces? The Trotskyite "explanation" about the British fear of using the colonial natives does not explain this peculiar policy of the British rulers.

We shall now consider the question of troop reinforcements for the British in Burma. That the Middle East is a veritable fortress of British imperialism holding huge numbers of well-trained and well-equipped troops has been reported time and again in the press. According to the reports, these troops are composed to a great extent of British, Australian and even American soldiers. In any case there were plenty of troops available who were neither Burmese nor Chinese. Considering the small number of Japanese soldiers sent into Burma, it would have been a simple matter to ship an adequate force from the Middle East to Burma. In reference to this aspect of the situation, there is a very striking circumstance which throws light on the Trotskyite methodology. We have referred above to an A.P. dispatch from which the Trotskyites quoted to the effect that the Japanese in Burma had four divisions amounting to 72,000 men (official figures, only 40,000-50,000). It should be understood, incidentally, that these Japanese troops were not there all at once in full force, but were brought in gradually in the form of reinforcements. This same A.P. dispatch contains some other highly significant details which, characteristically, the Trotskyites did not quote.

It mentions that facing the Japanese "in the first half of the campaign were two Imperial divisions." The question arises - a question carefully avoided by the Trotskyites, - why could not the British, like the Japanese, also bring in reinforcements and keep the British forces in proportion to the Japanese. What, however, do we find in this matter of British reinforcements? This same A.P. dispatch contains an amazing piece of information - also omitted by the diplomats on The Militant staff. The dispatch states that:-

"Two Australian divisions were expected from the Middle East, but they went home instead." (New York Times, May 16, 1942.)

If these two divisions - who were neither Burmese nor Chinese - had been sent to Burma, as they "were expected," the alignment of forces would have been equal, and if it had been the policy of the British rulers to hold back the fascists, the campaign would at least not have been "ridiculously easy." But something very mysterious happened, something referred to in a New York Times editorial several days later. This was a--

".....change of plans which sent two Australian divisions from the Middle East home to Australia instead of into Burma." (May 26, 1942.)

The Times editors, of course, no more than the Trotskyites, enter into the ticklish problem of what peculiar policy of the British rulers lay behind this "change of plans." Whether there were any actual plans to send reinforcements to Burma, we do not know. We do know from the admissions of the bourgeois press itself, however, that British Imperial troops were deliberately withheld from Burma, making the Japanese occupation "ridiculously easy." This whole story about the two Australian divisions which the British rulers diverted, is concealed by the Trotskyites. It is only by such tactics that the Trotskyites can give plausibility to their "explanation"

which makes it appear that the British had no means of defeating the Japanese in Burma.

The Trotskyite methodology is an interesting case of using some general truths to "explain" a specific situation where they are irrelevant and not explanatory. Not everything which is true is necessarily an explanation of some circumstance. It is generally true that the imperialists fear the colonial masses. This fact, however, does not account for the conduct of the British rulers in Burma, any more than it accounts for their conduct in Norway where they made a mere pretense of holding off the Nazis. The British themselves could very well have fought off the Japanese fascists, had this been their policy. A specific situation can be genuinely explained only by its specific features, not by generalities. It will be of value to take up another specific feature of the Burmese affair to show the real policy of the "democratic" imperialists. It goes without saying that this specific detail also is not mentioned by the Trotskyite "explanation."

In a highly vital position to the southwest of Burma lie the Andaman Islands. These islands are strategically situated in the Bay of Bengal offering a commanding position for Burma. Furthermore--

"The Andamans offer excellent harbors for warships, especially submarines, and perfect concealment as well as taking-off places for seaplanes." (N.Y. World-Telegram, March 26, 1942.)

One would imagine that the British rulers whose forces were stationed on these islands would make a special effort to hold such an advantageous position. Yet it was precisely in the early part of the Burma campaign that the report came in of the British abandoning the Andaman Islands to the Japanese without a fight. Under a sub-heading, "Occupation Is Unopposed," a New York Times dispatch of March 26, 1942 stated:-

"Japan occupied the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal last Monday, it was acknowledged in New Delhi today. Apparently the enemy moved in without having to fire a shot, as British troops evacuated together with a 'considerable portion' of the population 'some days previously.'"

The Burma affair, like Malaya and Singapore, and perhaps India to come, is only the extension into Asia of this same policy. This policy represents that of world imperialism as a whole - under the cover of a sham war to spread fascism throughout the world, to restore capitalism in the former Czarist empire.

What have such tactics of the British rulers to do with fear of arming the Burmese population! The British Navy and airforce which could very easily have made an attempt to defend the Andaman Islands are not manned by Burmese natives, as even the Trotskyite leaders know. Yet the Japanese fascists were allowed by the British to enter the islands "without having to fire a shot."

It is evident that the "ridiculously easy" entrance of the Japanese into Burma is explained by an entirely different series of circumstances from that which the Trotskyites pose. The policy of the British imperialists in Burma is the same that they have been pursuing in general since 1939 and even earlier. This policy, initiated yet under Chamberlain, is the one which, under the guise of fighting Hitlerism, aided and abetted the consolidation of the fascist regime in Germany, the rearming of German imperialism, the occupation of Austria and Czechoslovakia, the crushing of Poland, thus bringing the Nazi Army to the border of the Soviet Union, and the spreading of the fascist police force throughout Europe to crush the masses.

The life of imperialism as a whole today hinges on the establishment everywhere of the Fascist form of rule. In this respect, the present period differs from all previous periods of history. The transformation of the world bourgeois regime to fascism is being effected under a pretense of the "democratic" powers fighting against the fascist powers in a so-called "Second World War." Unless the masses realize that there is no real war amongst the imperialist powers, that the fascist forces are being used by world imperialism as international gendarmes against the toilers, the extension of the fate which befell the workers of Czechoslovakia, France, Denmark, Holland, Norway is inevitable for those workers who are not yet under the heel of fascism. The first step in preventing this disastrous course of events is the understanding of the situation by the most advanced, class conscious workers upon whom falls the historical task of giving direction to the toilers as a whole.

June 27, 1942

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HOW THE CANNONITES PROPOSE
TO DEFEAT FASCISM

THE territorial shift that occurred during the winter months on the Russian front occasioned a flood of demagogy from the Stalinist press. The Stalinist writers gleefully pointed to the advance of Stalin's army and the corresponding Nazi retreat as proof of Stalin's "wise and correct" leadership. That the winter situation on the Russian front was one which tended to reinforce the illusions of the Stalinist workers and of workers generally, concerning the nature of the Stalinist leadership is a fact which is indubitable.

In the light of this situation, the task of exposing the Stalinist renegades became more difficult, but none the less imperative. History provides many terrible lessons of the workings of Stalinism. It is primarily due to the counter-revolutionary efforts of the Stalinist bureaucrats that proletarian revolution has been prevented in Germany, France, Spain and other countries during the past two decades. The Stalinist predominance among the vanguard workers is due to the illusion which the Soviet and Comintern bureaucrats persistently keep alive, namely, that Stalinism is Bolshevism. It is precisely the prevalence of this illusion which enables Stalinism to mushroom into a gigantic force during periods of revolutionary crisis when masses of the workers swing over to the idea of revolution. Revolutionary-minded anti-Stalinist workers will readily understand that the Stalinist leadership can only contribute to the present forward sweep of the fascist hangmen to one country after another.

The terrible tragedy which now faces the whole world proletariat, the

threat of the establishment of universal fascism and the complete destruction of the Soviet Union, must turn the attention of the revolutionary-minded workers to the decisive question of the character of political leadership in the struggle against the class enemy. The proletariat can pursue a successful struggle against its class enemy only when it is armed by a Marxist policy, only when it rejects and defeats the opportunist misleaders.

THE CANNONITES DRAW SOME "LESSONS"

THE present world-wide sweep of fascist reaction brings to the fore the question of combatting and defeating the malignant Stalinist disease which politically paralyzes the proletariat and leaves it an easy prey to fascism. The character of every existing political group in the working-class movement is manifested by its reaction to the problem of Stalinism and by the policy it accordingly advocates. The determination of this character should be of particular concern to the Trotskyite workers who are Bolshevnik-minded and who have advanced to the point of desiring the destruction of Stalinism by the revolutionary proletariat. Let us investigate the lessons which the Trotskyite leaders gave to their followers at the Winter stage of the imperialist onslaught on the Soviet Union and the international toilers and see whether the Trotskyite line exposes the Stalinist leadership which functions to prevent the proletariat from pursuing a successful struggle against fascism.

In speaking of the ^{Winter} advances of Stalin's army the Trotskyites made the following statement:

"But neither must these victories be underestimated. They can teach the workers of the world the most important lessons on how to defeat fascism." (The Militant, December 27, 1941, p. 1. Original emphasis.)

Before going into the details of the "lessons" presented by the Trotskyite leaders, it is necessary to have clearly in mind what constitutes a struggle against fascism. Fascism is a form of the political rule of the capitalist class. The struggle against fascism - the genuine, not sham, struggle, - is in reality a fight for the overthrow of the capitalist class, i.e., it is the revolutionary proletarian class war. This war can occur only under a revolutionary proletarian, i.e., a Bolshevik, leadership. The defeat of fascism is an historical, political gain for the proletariat. As only the proletariat itself can accomplish its own liberation from oppression, as well as the liberation of all other oppressed, so only the proletariat, following a Bolshevik policy, can lead a struggle against fascism. All other so-called "struggles" against fascism are shams.

What specific lessons on how to fight fascism can the workers learn from the ^{Winter} events in the Soviet Union, according to the Trotskyites?

THE "WORKERS AND PEASANTS ARMY"

IN speaking of the Winter situation on the Russian front, The Militant describes Stalin's army as "a workers' and peasants' army, created by a victorious workers revolution":-

"The chief significance of these victories lies in the fact that the first army to halt, and then thrust back the vaunted Reichswehr was a workers' and peasants' army, created by a victorious workers revolution." (Ibid.)

That there was a workers revolution in Russia in 1917 is a fact; that this revolution created a revolution-

ary workers' and peasants' army is also a fact. But the statement that the Army which is now engaged with the Nazis on the Soviet Front is the same army as that created under Lenin's leadership is not a fact. The present "Red" Army is functioning under a counter-revolutionary Stalinist leadership, a leadership which usurped power from the Soviet masses. This army is politically and in organizational form no way similar to the real revolutionary army created by the October Revolution.

Generally speaking, all armies are composed of workers and peasants. The criterion for determining an army's political class nature is its leadership and policy. The Trotskyite statement which blurs the sharp distinction between the really revolutionary Red Army which fought for the cause of the October Revolution during the years of 1917-21, and the present one under the counter-revolutionary stranglehold of Stalinism is not at all accidental. It represents the basic Trotskyite policy. We can cite the same distortions in an even sharper formulation contained in the following Trotskyite statement which appeared during the second month of the Nazi invasion:

"It is the Army of the October Revolution and the Civil War -- Trotsky's Red Army -- that is now fighting so heroically." (The Militant, August 16, 1941, p. 3. Emphasis original.)

Anyone who has some understanding of the degeneration of the Soviet Union knows full well that the army now engaged with the Nazi forces is not the "Army of the October Revolution," is not "Trotsky's Red Army," and, as a matter of fact, is not a Red Army at all. It is an army of deceived workers and peasants who have been completely subjugated politically and organizationally by the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy.

The significance that the Trotskyites thus derived from the Winter Soviet situation is one which not merely slurs over the Stalinist reaction but goes so far as to identi-

fy the Stalinist-led "Red" Army with the revolutionary Red Army created by the October Revolution.

proposal for military training of workers, financed by the government and under the control of the trade unions." (Ibid., p. 2.)

ARMED WORKERS GUARDS AND TRADE UNION CONTROL OF MILITARY TRAINING

WHAT other "significant aspect" and "lessons" were there on the Russian front, according to the Trotskyites?

"Another significant aspect of these victories was the participation of armed worker detachments in the struggle." (I B I D., Dec. 27, 1941, p. 1.)

History has shown that armed workers detachments in themselves are not and cannot possibly be instruments of proletarian struggle against the class enemy when these detachments function under opportunist leadership. The tragic significance of Austria in 1934 where armed workers detachments made their appearance under the rotten Social-Democratic leadership, and of Spain in 1936-38 where armed workers detachments functioned under Stalinist-Socialist --- Pouvist --- Anarchist leadership proves this point conclusively. The Trotskyite phrases about "the significance" of armed workers detachments on the Russian Front shunts the attention of the advanced workers from the decisive question of the political leadership under which these guards function, in this instance, Stalinism.

It should be noted that the Trotskyites have utilized this situation to push their slogan of military training under trade union control. This is another "lesson" which the Trotskyites teach. It is with such specious arguments that the Trotskyites push their opportunist slogan of military training under the control of the reactionary-led trade unions.

"In the light of these developments, workers in this country who are concerned about the defeat of Hitlerism would do well to ponder the significance of the Trotskyite

We have analyzed this slogan in some detail in one of the previous issues of our publication (See "Cannon Draws an Analogy," The Bulletin, Vol. 3, #7). Suffice it here to note that in the propagation of their slogan, the Cannonite leaders have specifically stated they mean control exercised not by revolutionary-led unions but by the present reactionary-led unions led by the labor agents of capitalism, the Greens, Lewises, Murrays, etc. (See speech of J.P.Cannon, reported in The Socialist Appeal, Oct.26,1940). This policy of fetishizing a form by concealing the reactionary content given to this form by opportunist political leadership has been a consistent one with the Cannonite leaders. In the previous instances we saw that the Cannonites heralded the form of "RED Army" and "armed workers detachments" as instruments which could function for the proletariat in its struggle against the fascist reaction. In each instance, the Cannonites divert attention from the political leadership and thus function to blunt the revolutionary understanding of the workers.

C O N C L U S I O N

I N evaluating the Soviet ^{Winter} situation, it must be pointed out that political, not territorial, considerations are primary. Territorial gains under Stalinism, whether partitioning of Poland with Hitler or entrance into the Baltic States or capture of a portion of territory lost to Hitler, do not constitute political gains for the workers due to the continuance of the counter-revolutionary leadership. On the other hand, territorial losses can constitute political gains for the workers when they occur under a revolutionary leadership; such was the case in the Brest-Litovsk peace which the Bolsheviks signed in order to give the Soviet regime a breathing spell.

The "lessons" which the Trotskyite leaders say must be drawn from the

situation in the Soviet Union must be tied up with the fundamental slogan which they advance for that situation. In the Trotskyite line there is established a contradiction between the problem of fighting the Stalinist bureaucracy and that of defeating the imperialist assault on the Soviet Union. In some way, according to the Trotskyite reasoning the struggle against Stalinism is supposed to have harmful effects on the fight against the Nazi forces. Hence the Trotskyites call for subordinating the one to the other:-

"For the sake of the Soviet Union and of the World Socialist Revolution, the workers' struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy must be subordinated to the struggle against the main enemy - the armies of Hitler Germany." (Fourth International, July 1941, p. 171.)

In practice what form does this "subordination" take in the Trotskyite political system? We have shown it concretely above. It consists of trumping up Stalinist-led organizations as conducting a struggle "to defeat fascism." The Trotskyite line of "subordination" can take no other form. If the Trotskyites made it clear that the Stalinist-led organizations are not fighting and cannot fight fascism, that the "struggle" led by the Stalinists can result only in the ultimate defeat of the workers,

then the political question, that of combatting Stalinism, would be seen as the primary, most essential factor. On such a line it would be impossible to speak of "subordinating" the struggle against Stalinism. But by playing up the Stalinist-led organizations as fighting fascism, the Trotskyites can make out a plausible story for relegating to a secondary position the problem of fighting the Stalinist bureaucracy. Under the cover of the line of "subordination" of the struggle against Stalinism, the Trotskyite leaders fasten upon their followers a line of no struggle against Stalinism, which means in reality a line of support to Stalinism. An opportunist line like the Trotskyite slogan of "subordination" can only have pro-Stalinist deceptions as its basis. The Trotskyite leaders act as a disguised bulwark of Stalinist reaction.

The lesson of the present is that only exposure of Stalinism and only the destruction of its influence upon the masses will make a victory for the proletariat possible. The Trotskyite worker must absorb this lesson and must concretize it by rejecting his leaders who function to screen the crimes of Stalinism by playing up Stalin's regime of a portion of lost territory as exemplifying "the most important lessons on how to defeat fascism."

Arthur Burke
May 8, 1941

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FALSE DEFENDERS OF THE SOVIET UNION

THE TROTSKYITES AND THE SOVIET UNION

SUPPORTERS OF STALINIST DEMAGOGY

and other articles of THE BULLETIN exposing the pro-Stalinist line of the Trotskyites.

THE R.W.L.
ON
BOYCOTTING A PARLIAMENT

On previous occasions we have shown that in connection with various basic questions confronting the proletariat, the Revolutionary Workers League led by Oehler is not a Marxist group. The latest manifestation of the non-Marxism of the R.W.L. is seen in its attitude toward the important question of boycotting a bourgeois parliament. This is a matter of the tactics to be pursued by the revolutionary workers in certain situations; it has had in the past and may again have in the future the most profound effects on the growth or decline of the influence of the revolutionary proletarian tendency.

On what is the Marxist tactic of boycott or non-boycott of a parliament based? The rich experience of the Bolshevik Party is a gold mine of instruction in this problem. In various of his writings Lenin drew the lessons of this experience and set forth clearly and precisely the Marxist basis of boycott or non-boycott of a parliament. The Marxist principle is that when the revolution is on the ascendance and poses the seizure of power by the proletariat through Soviets, it is correct and necessary to boycott a parliament set up by the class foe; when, on the other hand, the revolution is on the downgrade and reaction is in the ascendance, it is essential and obligatory for the revolutionary party to participate even in the most counter-revolutionary parliament. Let us illustrate this principle from the history of Bolshevism.

In August 1905 the Bolsheviks boycotted the newly-proclaimed Tsar's parliament (known as the Bulygin parliament) not because boycott of a reactionary parliament is correct as a general principle, but because the objective situation at that time was rapidly being transformed into insurrection:

"When in August 1905 the tsar proclaimed the convocation of an advisory 'parliament,' the Bolsheviks declared a boycott against it—unlike all the opposition parties

and the Mensheviks — and the October revolution of 1905 actually swept away that 'parliament.' At that time the boycott proved correct, not because non-participation in reactionary parliaments is correct as a general principle, but because we correctly estimated the objective situation that was leading to the rapid transformation of the mass strikes into political strikes, then into revolutionary strikes, and after that into insurrection." (V.I. Lenin, Sel. Wks., Vol. X, pp. 73-74. My emphasis—G.M.)

On subsequent occasions some of the Bolsheviks made a mistake because in a situation where reaction was on the ascendance they wanted to boycott the parliament instead of participating in it as dictated by Marxist principle

"The mistake of boycotting the Duma in 1907, 1908 and subsequent years was a serious one and difficult to remedy, because, on the one hand, a very rapid rise of the revolutionary tide and its transformation into insurrection could not be expected, and, on the other hand, the whole historical situation of the renovated bourgeois monarchy called for the combining of legal with illegal work." (Ibid., p. 74. My emphasis - G.M.)

The Bolsheviks very definitely did not base their tactic on the shading of the parliament itself, whether it was reactionary or "liberal." Experience proved, said Lenin, "that it is obligatory to participate even in the most reactionary parliament," (Ibid., p. 75. Lenin's emphasis) provided, of course, the workers' revolutionary movement was not on the ascendance with the actual seizure of power by the workers immediately on the agenda. With a proletarian revolution in close view, even a "liberal" parliament must be boycotted. Such was Lenin's attitude toward the several "liberal," "democratic" parliaments that were cooked up by the bourgeoisie

shortly before the October Revolution. In 1917 Lenin wrote:

"One has only to reflect on these lessons from experience, on the conditions which go to determine a Marxist solution of the question of boycott or participation, in order to become convinced of the absolute falsity of the tactics of participating in the 'Democratic Conference,' the 'Democratic Council,' or in the Pre-parliament.

"On the one hand, we have the development of a new revolution. War is in the ascendant. Extra-parliamentary opportunities for propaganda, agitation and organization are tremendous. . . We must boycott the Pre-parliament. We must turn to the Soviets of Workers', Soldier' and Peasants' Deputies, to the trade unions, to the masses in general." (Sel. Wks., Vol. VI, pp. 236-238. My emphasis - G.M.)

Lenin did not falsely draw a distinction between a reactionary or counter-revolutionary parliament and a so-called "liberal" one, for he knew and taught that the "liberalism" of the bourgeoisie is a fraud, that all their institutions in essence are reactionary and counter-revolutionary.

In what way, however, does the R.W.L. pose the tactic of boycott or non-boycott of a parliament? Contrary to the principles established by Lenin, the R.W.L. draws an incorrect distinction between a so-called "liberal" parliament and a reactionary or counter-revolutionary one, and on those grounds calls for participating in the former and boycotting the latter. Speaking of India, the R.W.L. writes:

"Should a Constituent Assembly be formed with mass support, with a 'liberal' character, we will participate in it in order to expose it, and agitate for the Soviets.

"Should the Constituent Assembly take on reactionary or counter-revolutionary forms, we would advocate boycott, and if possible take necessary measures to destroy this instrument of reaction and exploitation." (International News, June 1942, pp. 4-5)

The Marxist compass by which Lenin guided his tactic of boycott or participation is completely absent in the R.W.L.'s formulation. The position

of the R.W.L. constitutes a subtle boost for bourgeois "liberalism" in the parliamentary field. Harping on the false distinction which it makes, the R.W.L. omits entirely the true Marxist criterion, the stage of development of the class struggle, the interrelation of the classes in the battle for power. Lenin defined this criterion in unmistakable words:

"The objective interrelation of classes, the part they play (economically and politically) both outside and inside representative institutions of a given type; the rise or fall of the revolution; the relation between extra-parliamentary methods of struggle - these are the chief and fundamental factors which must be taken into account if the tactics of boycott or participation are to be decided not arbitrarily and according to one's 'sympathies,' by according to Marxist methods." (Sel. Wks., Vol. VI, p. 235)

In formulating the reason for participating in a "liberal" parliament, the R.W.L. might seize upon its phrase, "with mass support," and try to palm this off as conforming to Lenin's criterion, "the objective interrelation of classes." Such a maneuver, however, would be a piece of sheer sophistry. It is a matter of historical record that Lenin did not consider "mass support" to the parliament as the criterion which determines participation. The Tsar's Third Duma (1907-1912), one of the most reactionary parliaments in history, a veritable paradise for the Black Hundreds, certainly did not have mass support. "Our Third Duma is a Black Hundred-Octoberist Duma," wrote Lenin (Sel. Wks., Vol. IV, p. 29) This Third Duma was launched by what was known as the "Tsar's coup d'etat of June 3," and its "elections" was marked by the outburst of anti-working-class pogroms. The Social-Democratic fraction of the dispersed Second Duma was arrested and sentenced to penal servitude. Through a special election law, the representation of the workers and peasants in the Third Duma was cut to a small fraction of its former already meagre self. Yet Lenin was heartily for participation in the Third Duma. In fact, "In 1908 the 'Left' Bolsheviks were expelled from our party for stubbornly refusing to understand the necessity of participating in the most reactionary parliament." (Lenin, Sel. Wks., Vol. X, p. 73)

In a highly revolutionary situation, on the other hand, when the bourgeois are frequently compelled to deck out their parliament in "liberal," "democratic" colors, the masses stand farthest to the Left, and, unless misled by opportunists, are least likely to support bourgeois parliaments. It is only those infected with bourgeois "liberalism" who automatically connect mass support with a "liberal" parliament. From every angle, the question of "mass support" is not the criterion which determines the Marxist tactic toward a bourgeois parliament.

As regards India, in connection with which the R.W.L. puts forth its Liberal-tainted formulation, a situation may arise in which the "liberal" frauds will be much in prominence and will strive in every way to lure the masses away from proletarian revolution to the deadly path of bourgeois-democracy. A Constituent Assembly be-decked in a gaudy "liberal" color will be one of the chief forms of bait

used by these agents of imperialism. The masses must not swallow this poisonous dose. If the revolutionary tide has the upper hand and the workers, led by a genuine Bolshevik Party, are in a position to effect the transfer of power to the workingclass, the workers must sweep aside all talk of participating in a Constituent Assembly, however "liberal" it may be, and draw the masses to the side of the revolution. The automatic connection of participation in a Constituent Assembly with its having a "liberal" color - this is in effect the line set by the R.W.L. - might prove an error impossible to correct in time and therefore fatal.

Time and again the R.W.L. demonstrates that its basic "teachings" have nothing in common with Marxist science. The R.W.L. is a group functioning not as an enlightener, but as an obscurer of the workers' mind.

G.M.

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THE QUESTION OF NATIONAL EQUALITY
IN THE U.S.S.R.

IN 1917 there occurred the liberation of a section of toilers of the oppressed nationalities. It took place through the agency of the Bolshevik Revolution which brought freedom to the nations suffering under the imperialist-bourgeois yoke of the former Tsarist Empire. But a reversal of this liberating process set in with the development of Stalinism. It is essential for the workers to know these two periods: the Bolshevik revolutionary period in the national problem and the Stalinist counter-revolutionary reversal of the whole Bolshevik trend. Any obliteration of the difference between these two phases, any concealment of the Stalinist phase, only serves Stalinism and world reaction.

In many "critical" outbursts after his loss of power, Trotsky characterized Stalin's national policy as reactionary. Trotsky testifies that one of the first issues on which Lenin clashed with Stalin was the latter's reactionary national policy, his Great-Russian Nationalism. As early as September 1922, Lenin opened fire on Stalin on this score (see Trotsky's The Stalin School of Falsification, p. 65, and The Suppressed Testament of Lenin, p. 29). At the XII Party Congress in 1923, Lenin intended to make the national question a center of his attack on Stalin, but unfortunately, due to Lenin's illness and the treachery of the other leaders, this attack was never delivered. With the passage of time, Trotsky testifies, the Stalin gang, as early as 1926, began to reintroduce anti-Semitism (see Trotsky in

The Fourth International, October 1941, p. 254). In 1939, sketching the growth of Stalinist bureaucratism in the national sphere, Trotsky declared its culmination in an "outright strangulation of any kind of independent national development of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.W:-

"In order to guarantee 'administrative needs,' i.e., the interests of the bureaucracy, the most legitimate claims of the oppressed nationalities were declared a manifestation of petty-bourgeois nationalism. All these symptoms could be observed as early as 1922-1923. Since that time they have developed monstrously and have led to outright strangulation of any kind of independent national development of the peoples of the U.S.S.R." (L. Trotsky, Socialist Appeal, May 9, 1939, p. 2.)

The reactionary situation of national inequality in Stalin's domain is quite clearly pictured in the above statement. But the Trotskyite leaders, when their opportunist needs demand that they close the workers' eyes to certain reactionary features of Stalinism, reverse the picture and teach the workers different "facts." In a recent issue The Militant featured an article called "An Open Letter to the British Workers" by J.V.P. De Silva dealing with the question of the liberation of the nations of the British Empire. This "Open Letter" appears under the guise of a "plea" to the British workers to break their present bloc with the imperialists as a step to freeing both themselves and

the oppressed nations of the British Empire. The article declares that the British imperialists are incapable of resisting the fascist advance. Witness, The Militant article says, the case of Malaya, Hong Kong, Singapore and Burma, with India next on the block and the fascist axe poised.

Who then can defeat the fascists? The Militant article points to the case of the Russian workers who in 1917 successfully overthrew imperialism and beat back the combined intervention during the civil war. But the Trotskyite leaders have more up their sleeve than merely an historical example. The article has a present-day, immediate illustration. Today, the Russian workers — so The Militant puts it — are heroically struggling against fascism. The Trotskyite paper draws a straight, unbroken line from October 1917 to the present. In October 1917 the Russian workers seized power, socialized the means of production and liberated the oppressed nationalities of the Tsar's Empire. Today — this is the article's "punch line" — the Russian workers are under a socialist economy with equality for the national minorities, hence they fight like super-men and women. Here are the Trotskyite new "facts" about national "equality" in Stalin's Soviet Union:-

"But, on the slogan, 'Land to the Peasants, Peace and Bread,' the Russian workers seized political power in October, socialized the means of production, liberated the oppressed peoples of their empire, and, together with them, fought and drove back the armies of Germany, France, Britain, Japan and Poland.

"Today you are astounded at the heroic struggle of these multinational, once backward, peoples. There is no mystery, the reason is clear. They are fighting like super men and women because under a socialist economy, White Russians, Eastern Tartars, ~~White~~ Mongolians, or Armenian Jews are equal, and have something to fight for." (The Militant, May 9, 1942, p. 4. My emphasis - J.C.H.)

Observe the deceitful manner in which the Trotskyite leaders merge the period of Bolshevik liberation with that of Stalinist reaction, concealing the latter under the former. The national minorities, we suddenly discover in The Militant, "are equal." A glance into the Stalinist official "History of the C.P.S.U." will yield a similar discovery:- "The equality of the citizens of the U.S.S.R., irrespective of their nationality or race, is an infeasible law." (p. 345.)

Indeed, who but Stalinists or concealed Stalinists write in such a vein? Who but Stalinists or concealed Stalinists spread the fraudulent impression that today there is equality and freedom for the national minorities of the Soviet Union?

We shall not press the point that the article contains another Stalinist impression, namely, that in the Soviet Union there is a socialist economy — "they are fighting like super men and women because under a socialist economy..." A socialist economy can exist only on an international scale. Apologists for the Trotskyite leaders may claim that on this score the editors of The Militant are guilty merely of letting a slip of the pen pass by, that only the system of socialized property was meant. Nevertheless, the connection in the same sentence between this "slip of the pen" and the out-and-out fraud about national equality must not be overlooked.

No apologetics, however, can whitewash the pro-Stalinist illusions spread by The Militant on the national question in the Soviet Union, illusions all the more insidious in an article concerned with the problems of the oppressed nationalities of the East and the role of the British workers therein.

Any tendency which "appeals" to the workers on such a deceitful line is not actually struggling to arouse the workers to overthrow imperialism. The Trotskyite Open Letter's pointing to the achievements of the October Revolution is coupled with its conceal-

ment of the depredations of Stalinism, and in that connection there is revealed the reactionary nature of the Trotskyite line. Such a tendency is a branch of the huge present-day opportunist net which enfolds and paralyzes the toilers. Its "critical" anti-Stalinist noise issued from time to time is a snare for workers who have subjectively broken with Stalinism; its fundamentally pro-Stalinist line shunts them back into support of the renegades who rule the Soviet Union and are leading it to destruction.

The period of equality and freedom for the national minorities of the Soviet Union is long a thing of the past. Those who, like the Trotskyite leaders, paint happy pictures of the situation in the Soviet Union by concealing the black Stalinist present

under the October red which in reality has long been obliterated, are opportunists and deceivers. Heroic armed struggles by the masses of the Soviet Union cannot in themselves yield victory over the fascist invaders. The essential element, that of a Bolshevik leadership and policy, is lacking and without such leadership and policy the Soviet Union is doomed.

To cast aside the sham anti-Stalinists, i.e., the Trotskyite leadership, is as much an integral necessity to the path of proletarian victory as is the overthrow of the Stalin clique itself. The former cleansing process is the prerequisite of the latter.

J. C. Hunter

R E A D

D I D T R O T S K Y C O L L A B O R A T E
W I T H S T A L I N

by

George Marlen

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THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT TROTSKY'S POSITION
ON THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE

RECENTLY The Militant ran a column headed "Crimes of Stalin" by Lydia Beidel. The important feature of the column was a description of Trotsky's alleged struggle against Stalin's policies. One of the stoutest links in the chain of Trotsky's supposed fight was his attitude toward the Comintern policy in England, specifically on the question of the so-called Anglo-Russian Committee of Trade Union Unity formed by the Stalinist and the British trade union bureaucrats in 1925.

To those who are not familiar with the facts, the story of Trotsky's "fight" sounds plausible and true. But when the veil is lifted and Trotsky's actual policy is opened to view it becomes clear at once that the Trotskyite story is wide of the truth.

In May 1925 Stalin sent his high bureaucrat Tomsky, the head of the Russian trade unions, to London to launch the Committee. The policy of the Committee, shaped by Tomsky and other of Stalin's political clerks of the Comintern, was treacherous and counter-revolutionary from the start. The basic feature of this policy was to help the General Council of the British trade unions deceive the workers. After Trotsky was expelled from the Stalinist "Party" he wrote:

"From beginning to end, the entire policy of the Anglo-Russian Committee, because of its false

line, provided only aid to the General Council." (Leon Trotsky, Third International After Lenin, p. 131.)

This statement was written in 1928, after the Anglo-Russian Committee had already been dissolved. What, however, was Trotsky's line while the Committee was being formed, and during the height of its opportunist activity, especially at the most crucial moment in the British General Strike in 1926, and immediately after when the exposure of the Stalinist policies of the Comintern would have proved most effective?

The Trotskyite leaders always give the impression that Trotsky fought the Anglo-Russian Committee tooth and nail. Peculiarly enough, they have never cited a single statement of Trotsky's opposing its formation, or exposing it while it was betraying the General Strike. There is a good reason for this "omission" on the part of the Trotskyite leaders. Such statements apparently do not exist. On the other hand, there are in existence statements by Trotsky on the Anglo-Russian Committee which Cannon and Shachtman are very careful not to produce or refer to. There is a very good reason for that omission too. These statements give support to the Anglo-Russian Committee and the Stalin-controlled Comintern.

At the end of January 1926, the

Congress of Soviet Textile Workers, dominated by the bureaucrats but attended by many workers, sent greetings to the Anglo-Russian Committee whose figure-heads were Tomsy and the British trade union bureaucrat, Purcell. It was the practice of the Stalinist bureaucrats to feed the workers all sorts of pseudo-scientific "explanations" of the Anglo-Russian Committee. The purpose was to conceal the opportunist origin and policy of the Committee. Among those spinning this kind of yarn was Trotsky who, concealing the Stalinist origin of the Anglo-Russian Committee, told the workers that the Committee grew out of the conditions in England:

"You, it appears, have sent today greetings to the Anglo-Russian Committee of unity of the trade unions. Wherefrom did it appear? It grew out of the economic decline of England." (Leon Trotsky, Report at the Congress of Textile Workers, Pravda, January 31, 1926.)

Gifted with the power of stirring speech, Trotsky warmed to his subject and painted the Anglo-Russian Committee not as a treacherous trap laid by the Stalinist bureaucrats, but as the "highest expression" of the increasingly revolutionary situation in Europe and England:-

"If 25 years ago - and this is a short time - the Russian revolutionists of those days had proposed fraternization to the labor leaders, if the same Tomsy had been sent 20 years ago to London for unification with the English trade unions, they would have kicked him in the pants, naturally in a British not a Russian fashion. (Laughter) But at present the trade unions receive Tomsy in a brotherly manner. Wherein lies the reason? The reason is that the last decade undermined British industry; there is not a trace left of the privileged position of the working class and the English proletariat is becoming politically proletarianized. He seeks a new support, and it is no accident that he finds it first of all in our Soviet trade unions. The Anglo-Rus-

sian 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." (Leon Trotsky, Report at the Congress of Textile Workers, Pravda January 31, 1926.)

Trotsky thus drew a veil of obscurity and falsehood over the true political quality of Tomsy and his visit to Purcell, Hicks and other trade union bureaucrats of Great Britain. As did the Comintern bureaucrats, Trotsky also gave a Stalinist dose of opium on the historical origin and significance of the Anglo-Russian Committee.

Splashed on the pages of the Stalinist press, these statements of Trotsky served not as a warning and an enlightenment to the workers but as a brightly colored mirage to lure them to the treacherous trap set up by the Stalinist Comintern for the British masses. Be it remembered that Trotsky painted this mirage long after the Anglo-Russian Committee had been established, and only about three months before the dark policy of Stalin's Comintern in England reached its black climax. It goes without saying that the most crucial part of the proletariat which was deceived by Trotsky was that section which already doubted Stalin and his Tomsys and had implicit faith in Trotsky, the leader of the supposed Opposition.

In the Spring of 1926 Trotsky went to Germany for an operation. While he was in Berlin the British General Strike took place. The climactic moment had arrived. One word of criticism, of exposure from Trotsky, who at that time was still an influential figure in the Comintern, and the advanced workers would have been shaken out of their Stalinist trance. But while the trap set up by the bureaucracy was closing over the head of the British proletariat, there was no word of criticism or warning from Trotsky. One must not think, however, that during those days Trotsky main-

tained silence about the situation in England. He wrote an article during the General Strike giving the workers not exposure of Stalin, of the Anglo-Russian Committee and the Purcells, the "Left" bureaucrats of the British Labor Party, but rather a dose of reassuring Stalinist opium which the Stalinist editors with alacrity featured in the publications of the Comintern. Trotsky said:

"Within the Labour Party, the revolutionary wing will increase in influence and will find more complete expression. The Communists will push forward resolutely. The revolutionary development of England will advance enormously." (Trotsky, Inprecorr, June 10, 1926.)

This was written a few days before the striking British workers were stabbed by the General Council which was backed by the Anglo-Russian Committee, which in turn was covered up by the "Oppositionist" Trotsky. The Stalinist editors in a note prefacing Trotsky's reassuring article stated:

"The following was written by Comrade Trotsky on May 6, i.e., six days before the calling off of the general strike by the General Council. Ed."

That is how Trotsky "fought" the Comintern's policy in England.

But this is not all. According to a statement in his autobiography while in the Berlin clinic, he followed the General Strike closely:-

"I eagerly gathered and collated in the clinic all the information about the course of the General Strike and especially about the relations between the masses and their leader." (My Life, p. 528.)

Trying to give the impression in his autobiography that he bitterly fought the Stalin gang on the General Strike, Trotsky continues with the remark:

"The thing that made my gorge rise was the nature of the articles in the Moscow Pravda." (Ibid.)

Again, it must be remembered, this was written some years after the events, in 1929. What, however, was Trotsky's line during the events of 1926? One would imagine that if his "gorge rose," as he says, he would have taken steps, either in Berlin or upon his return to Russia, to expose the machinations of the Stalinist "Comintern." What did he say to the international proletariat immediately when this "Comintern" policy was felt with painful intenseness when treachery triumphed and the bitterly disillusioned revolutionary workers saw capitalism entrenched in England more solidly than before?

Trotsky returned to the Soviet Union shortly after the sell-out of the General Strike, and at his first important public appearance he delivered a spirited address in which he dealt with the "Comintern" policy in England. The occasion was the Third All-Union Conference of Workers and Peasants Correspondents. The affair, of course, was dominated by Stalin's bureaucrats, but the atmosphere in the country was electric. Many workers who felt the heavy hand of the Stalinist bureaucracy and suspected that the "Comintern" employed tactics and policies opposite from those practiced by the Bolshevik Party in 1917, were particularly eager to learn Trotsky's opinion. It must be borne in mind that Trotsky spoke after the betrayal of the General Strike, after a whole series of Stalinist misdeeds, crimes and betrayals which by the middle of 1926 were already piled very high. In order to give a rounded view of Trotsky's pro-Stalinist policy of presenting the corrupt and bureaucratized "Comintern" as a true Bolshevik organization we deem it necessary to cite a considerable section of his speech. This citation must be read very attentively, and particular heed be paid to the portion where he spoke of the Stalinized "Comintern" of 1926 transferring to England "the same principles and methods" as those of the authentic Bolsheviks of 1917:

"That grandiose upsurge which our country lived through during the days of the English general

strike was in truth a great demonstration of the closest connection of the toiling masses of our union with the life and struggle of the English proletariat and the world working class as a whole.

"When our workers were collecting money and our trade unions sent it to the strikers the English bourgeois press wrote that the Russians are supporting the strike out of patriotic considerations in order to tear down British economy. Curiously, a few weeks prior to the strike, the British almost-Socialist Bertrand Russell wrote 'All the Bolshevik judgments and advices regarding revolutionary development of England are dictated by patriotism. The Russians want to draw England into a revolutionary uprising, to cause its decline in order thus to stabilize their own situation.'

"These gentlemen forget that in 1917 to us in the Petrograd of that period there arrived one of the English almost-Socialists, Arthur Henderson, one of the false leaders and factual betrayers of the recent general strike, and spoke for instance thus: The Bolsheviks are betrayers of Russia, they serve German imperialism, in their soul there is not a drop of healthy national feeling and patriotism. The Mensheviks and S.R.'s - these are the patriots that support the struggle for state independence and democracy.

"Such was the voice of official British socialism in 1917 in the sharpest moment when the Bolshevik party was struggling against the imperialist war. And now, when the Comintern transfers the same principles and methods upon the English soil reflecting the objective course of events, the condition of British economy, growth of contradictions, the inextricable condition of the English proletariat within collapsing capitalism — when all these circumstances transfer the methods of Bolshevism upon the English soil then this very Henderson together with the 'Daily Mail'

on the one side, with Russell on the other, no longer says that the Bolsheviks are traitors and betrayers of their fatherland. No. He says the Bolsheviks are the most cunning patriots, they serve the Great-Russian nationalist idea, they want to continue the Tsarist policy and dig under the might of old Britain. These gentlemen twist, lie, turn themselves inside out. But we remain the same. Whether Messrs Hendersons will call us traitors to Russia or the most bloodthirsty Russian patriots does not affect us. We were, are and will remain the same. If we are patriots, we are patriots of the working class including the British, we are patriots of the international proletarian revolution. (Stormy Applause)." (Leon Trotsky, Bravda, June 2, 1926. Speech before the Third All-Union Conference of Workers and Peasants Correspondents. My emphasis - G.M.)

That is how Trotsky consciously and deliberately lied to the workers of the whole world about the nature of the "principles" of Stalin's Comintern line on the soil of England, falsely calling them "the same principles and methods" as those used by the Bolsheviks of 1917. The stormy applause this poisonous Stalinist protector received only indicates how perfectly in line with Stalinism Trotsky worked. "We remain the same," Trotsky told the Stalinist-guided Workers and Peasants Correspondents. "We" in this case could be understood not otherwise than to mean not only himself but also Stalin, Tomsky, and all the other degenerated leaders of the revolution. No, "We" did not remain the same! "We" became different. "We" plotted during Lenin's illness for self-entrenchment in power, and then intrigued against one another for the major portion of power. "We," - Stalin, Trotsky, Zinoviev and others - became opportunists and bureaucrats, deceivers and betrayers of the proletariat.

Now it can be seen clearly that Trotsky's story in his autobiography in 1929 about his gorge rising because

of Pravda's articles on the General Strike is sheer hypocrisy.

Unless Trotsky's whole role in the rise of Stalinism is known, his role in any specific situation is very difficult to understand. As we have shown in previous documents, Trotsky originally strove to share power with the Stalin gang. He concealed their crimes, supported all their policies, deceived Lenin and the workers, and helped entrench the renegade leaders in their positions of usurped power. The Stalin clique, however, double-crossed Trotsky and entered upon a factional campaign to centralize all power in its own hands. Trotsky was converted into a factional target and scapegoat. Tied irrevocably to Stalinism, Trotsky continued to support its policies. Thus, to take the example we have outlined above, out before the workers, Trotsky stood solid with the Stalin clique on the Anglo-Russian Committee and the British General Strike. The drive of the Stalin gang against him, nevertheless, forced him to resort to factional measures of self-defense. One such measure was a proposal, made in secret behind the scenes, after the betrayal of the British General Strike, that the Anglo-Russian Committee be dissolved. The Cannons and Shachtmans make a great to-do over this demand. They try to make it appear proof that Trotsky fought against Stalin on the question of the Anglo-Russian Committee and the General Strike. This fraudulent pretense, of course, is based on a concealment of Trotsky's actual support of Stalin and of the sham, factional nature of his "oppositional" gesture. As if the root of the betrayal lay in the formation of the Anglo-Russian Committee and not in the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern! As if with the dissolution of the Anglo-Russian Committee, Stalin's "Comintern" could not and did not betray the workers again through many other devices!

The Trotskyite leaders, like Lydia Beidel, twist facts and build illusory views in the minds of the workers. Cannon, Shachtman and the others are quite aware that Trotsky did not move a finger to protect the British work-

ers from betrayal.

The Trotskyite leaders give a clever twist to this important issue by circumventing Trotsky's actual policy which he carried on when the Anglo-Russian Committee was founded and during the betrayal of the General Strike by diverting the workers' attention from the damning facts. They speak of the "Opposition" being "correct" in its demand to dissolve the Committee - after the betrayal. Here is their maneuver:-

"The Opposition was absolutely correct when it demanded the immediate rupture of the Anglo-Russian Committee and the concentration of all the fire of the Comintern and the British Party upon the leaders of the British Trade Union General Council (Purcell, Hicks and Co.) immediately after the betrayal of the general strike." (Statement by Cannon, Abern and Shachtman, The Militant, November 15, 1928. My emphasis - G.M.)

This maneuver also contains a subtle lie hidden in the words "immediately after." Where is the record, the substantiating evidence that Trotsky immediately after the betrayal demanded the rupture of Stalinism with the British trade union swindlers? Cannon, Shachtman and others, offer none, for apparently, there is not a document to prove this. On the other hand, there is the Pravda of June 2, 1926, showing Trotsky's actual line on Stalin's Comintern, establishing beyond peradventure of a doubt that immediately after the betrayal Trotsky covered up the criminal Stalinist "Comintern" with "Bolshevik" veneer and deceived the workers by concentrating their resentment upon the British trade union betrayers and diverting their minds from the chief culprit, the Stalinist Comintern.

We can cite many Trotskyist distortions of a similar pattern. For illustration we shall give two more in connection with the Anglo-Russian Committee. In 1925 Trotsky wrote a book, Whither England. There was nothing unusual about that work.

Trotsky traced some developments of England, its past history, its position in world economy since the war. The book contained stock criticism of British reformism, basically the criticism employed by the Bolsheviks years before. The book was in no sense a threat to Stalin. Quite conspicuously Trotsky omitted all reference to the Comintern's policies in England. From the point of necessity of setting the workers' minds on guard against the Stalinist gang directing the Soviet Union and the Comintern, the book is positively a convenient blind behind which Stalin could conduct his machinations unobserved by the workers. Stalin and his clique received from Trotsky the manuscript of the work. They found no objection at all to its publication. As a matter of fact, they did not even suggest any changes, so completely and perfectly acceptable was the book insofar as the interests of the Stalin clique were concerned.

Writing his autobiography four years later, following his exile from the Soviet Union, Trotsky felt, as he was describing the period of the General Strike, that the reader would expect some evidence of his alleged fight against the policy of Stalin's Comintern. Since there is not a word of even mildest criticism of the Comintern policy in any of his writings for 1924, 1925 and the first part of 1926, Trotsky was unable to furnish any documentary proof of his alleged struggle against Stalin's policy in the Anglo-Russian Committee for that period. So Trotsky decided to palm off his book Whither England as a work directed against Stalin's "conception" of evolution to the Left of the British General Council. If one scans every sentence in Whither England through a magnifying lense he won't be able to detect even a remotest indication that Trotsky was posing a view different from that held by Stalin. On the other hand, Trotsky felt constrained to acknowledge that his manuscript was not a "criticism after the fact" and was not condemned as a "Trotskyist" work. Trotsky wrote:

"During the winter and spring of

1925, while I was in the Caucasus, I wrote a book on this- 'Whither England?' The book was aimed essentially at the official conception of the Politbureau with its hope of an evolution to the left by the British General Council, and of a gradual and painless penetration of communism into the ranks of the British Labor Party and trade-unions. In part to avoid unnecessary complications, in part to check up on my opponents, I submitted the manuscript of the book to the Politbureau. Since it was a question of forecast, rather than of criticism after the fact, none of the members of the Politbureau ventured to express himself. The book passed safely by the censors and was published exactly as it had been written. A little later, it also appeared in English." (My Life p. 527. My emphasis - G.M.)

That Trotsky's story about his line of aiming at Stalin's "conception" of penetration of "Communism" within the British Labor Party is untrue can be gleaned from his writings during the General Strike, cited earlier, his statement that "Within the Labor Party, the revolutionary wing will increase in influence and will find more complete expression. The Communists will push forward resolutely." The book was a Stalinist work from the first word to the last.

Imagining that the more time that elapses from the moment a certain event occurs the greater is the fog enveloping that event, the Trotskyite leaders grow bolder in their falsifications as the years go by. Lydia Beidel goes a great deal further than her Master and writes the lie that in Whither England Trotsky warned against "every move" coming in the approaching betrayal of the workers, and brazenly adds that the work was condemned by Stalin as a piece of "Trotskyism":

"Anticipating the disaster to come from Stalin's opportunism, Trotsky wrote a bitingly critical work entitled 'Whither England,' in

which he warned against every move which was to come in the ensuing disaster; it was condemned by Stalin as more evidence of 'criminal Trotskyism.'" (L. Beidel, The Militant, November 8, 1941, p. 6.)

workers sheer fabrications about Trotsky's line on the Anglo-Russian Committee, indellible facts tell a different story, revealing Trotsky's political collaboration with the renegade Stalin in betraying the British masses.

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FROM THE ARSENAL OF STALINISM

[N the section called, "From the Arsenal of Marxism," the Fourth International of November 1941 reprints a speech by Cannon "delivered at the Party Conference of Coal Miners at St. Louis, Mo., July 27, 1924. First published in the Daily Worker, August 2, 1924." In view of the fact that at a certain stage of its existence the Third International with all Parties became Stalinist institutions of opportunism, the questions arise: Could a speech delivered by a leading Party functionary in 1924 be a weapon "From the Arsenal of Marxism"? Was the Party a Marxist Party and the Comintern to which it was affiliated, a Marxist International? What was the situation in 1924 in the American Party and the Comintern in general? What kind of a leadership and political line did these organizations have? Above all, what does Cannon know today about that past situation?

Cannon knows that already in 1924 the American "Party" was a bureaucratically degenerated body attached to a bureaucratically degenerated "Comintern." The chief source of this corruption - destined to become known in history as Stalinism - was the Russian Party, more specifically, its top leadership, the Central Committee. Dates are essential, since they represent historical landmarks. We have Trotsky's testimony as to the date when the Stalin clique came into control not only of the Central Committee, but of the country as a whole:-

"They became, Zinoviev and Kamenev - with Stalin they created the so-called 'Troika', or Triumvirate, which was the directing body of the Central Committee and of the country during the period from the end of 1922 to 1925." (The Case of Leon Trotsky, p. 77. My emphasis - J.C.H.)

Cannon is well acquainted with the above statement by Trotsky. Note that Cannon today is conscious of the fact that when he spoke at a coal miners' conference in July 1924 the Stalin gang had already undergone a year and a half of bureaucratic entrenchment in the dominating section of the Comintern.

Furthermore, Cannon knows today that from the end of 1923 the entire Comintern leadership was handpicked by Stalin and Company on the basis of willingness to enter the faction fight against Trotsky. The latter, in his autobiography, wrote:-

"On the other hand, the morally unstable elements who were being mercilessly driven out of the party during the first five years, now squared themselves by a single hostile remark against Trotsky. From the end of 1923, the same work was carried on in all the parties of the Communist International; certain leaders were dethroned and others appointed solely on the basis of their attitude toward Trotsky." (My Life, p. 501. My emphasis - J.C.H.)

Observe that Trotsky states this process of Stalinist selection of leaders occurred "in ALL the parties of the Communist International." Indeed, this is absolutely true. A lick at the Stalinist boot and a kick at Trotsky was the essential prerequisite for a top post in any of the "Comintern" Parties from about 1923 on. Cannon is not oblivious of the fact that the definitive Stalinization of the "Comintern" leadership also considerably antedated his speech of July 1924.

In December 1923, i.e., precisely at the time when, as Trotsky indicated,

the selection of the leaders in all sections of the Comintern was a Stalinist selection, the Foster-Cannon faction in the American Party won the leadership. Inprecorr reported:-

"The third convention of the Workers Party (Communist) took place on December 29, 1923, and was one of the most important in the history of the Communist movement of the United States. The general policies carried out by the Central Executive Committee of the Party were approved, nevertheless the former minority of the Committee, led by Foster and Cannon, representing the 'industrials' in the Party, carried the convention against the 'politicals,' led by Pepper and Ruthenberg, and now direct the Party." (Inprecorr, Feb. 28, 1924, p. 121. My emphasis- J.C.H.)

In 1924, as Cannon well knows, Foster made a fast dash to Moscow, sized up the factional situation, and declared in favor of the "Old Guard" in the Russian "Party," i.e., the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev gang of usurpers. He could not do otherwise if he wanted to remain in the leadership. The Foster-Cannon leadership received the approval of the Stalin gang at the head of the Comintern. It was as a leader of such a faction that Cannon delivered in 1924 a speech which today he tells the workers is a weapon "From the Arsenal of Marxism."

After his expulsion from the "Party," for forming a Trotsky group in 1928 Cannon on an occasion declared that the faction fight which raged in the "Party" since 1923 had been a product of the Stalinization of the Party and that, quoting a contemptuous phrase which Stalin's "ECCI" had the cynicism to spit frequently in the face of all the factions, it "had no basis in principle":-

"The Party is in the throes of a factional crisis which has raged continuously since 1923. This factional struggle, which the E.C.C.I. frequently declared 'has no basis in principle,' is the product of the Stalinization of the Party and

the imposition upon it from above of an artificial and incompetent leadership." (The Militant, Feb. 17, 1929, p. 7.)

Thus, not only in 1941, when he reprinted a 1924 speech as being "From the Arsenal of Marxism," but even so far back as 1929, Cannon was already fully conscious that since 1923 the course of the American "Party" was marked by Stalinization, an unprincipled clique fight for power.

After Cannon was expelled from the "Party," he issued from time to time biographical sketches of the various "Party" leaders, among them his former faction-mates. Concerning Foster, the "Party" leader of 1924 and for years his co-worker in the "Party," Cannon wrote in 1929:-

"His methods were marked by an ingrained and incurable dishonesty. His inability to put any question squarely, his systematic muddling and misrepresentation of issues and his subordination of the task of educating the Party to the immediate aim of securing votes in a faction struggle had a sad effect on the workers around him. Their political development was arrested in its most elementary stages, and what became finally crystallized as the Foster faction was always a picture of political impotence." (The Militant, Aug. 15, 1929, p.3. My emphasis - J.C.H.)

Such was the sordid character of the leadership of the American Stalinist Party in 1924 - as at all times before and after regardless of what specific clique of swindlers was in control. Cannon today is well aware of this matter and has been for many years.

It is now time to say something about the line of Cannon's 1924 speech which the Trotskyite leaders today tell the workers is "From the Arsenal of Marxism." An examination reveals that speech to be wholly from the arsenal of Stalinism. Here is how that speech characterized the American Stalinist Party in 1924:-

"Our Party is a party of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat." ("From the Arsenal of Marxism," Fourth International, November 1941, p. 285.)

It is indisputable that today, when the Trotskyite leaders reprint this speech, they know these remarks were falsifications from the arsenal of Stalinism. Today they know that the "Party" of 1924 was not a Party of proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, but was a "Party" of Stalinist corruption.

The "Party," having already condemned "Trotskyism," was rapidly becoming a factional instrument in the hands of the Soviet and Comintern bureaucracy, standing for the preservation of Stalin's leadership in the Soviet Union. But in Cannon's speech the workers were taught something quite different; the "Party" was -

".....the only Party standing for the solution of the labor problem by means of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism." (Ibid.)

And, in a final sweeping sentence, the opportunist outfit led by a man whose "methods were marked by an ingrained and incurable dishonesty," secretly guided by the Usurper in the Kremlin

whom Lenin stigmatized as disloyal, was pictured as the engine of the future proletarian revolution:

"We will win over the masses to the side of Communism; we will wrest the labor movement from the hands of the agents of the bourgeoisie and convert them into mighty instruments for the proletarian revolution." (Ibid.)

Cannon and his aides, the Morrums and Wrights, know that his 1924 speech was a cover for the Stalinization of the Party. Yet Cannon is not above palming off a Stalinist document as being "From the Arsenal of Marxism." This happens to suit the needs of his career, of his total pretense of being a Marxist leader of the proletariat, and so he brazenly indulges in such antics. Cannon is an old-time careerist whose political life has consisted of prowling about the labor movement seeking a base of operations now with Stalin's approval as his trade mark, now with Trotsky's. It is the great tragedy of the present-day proletariat that these fraudulent trade marks still have an attractive force, and it is only when the advanced workers learn to repudiate these shams that they will be able to forge a genuine revolutionary Party and International.

J. C. Hunter
June 28, 1942

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