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T H E BULLETIN

THE WAR ON THE SOVIET UNION AND THE TROTSKYITES

J. C. HUNTER

STALIN'S PATH TO POWER

Cannon's "STRUGGLE FOR A PROLETARIAN PARTY"

By GEORGE MARLEN

OEHLER SUPPORTS A BETRAYAL

By ARTHUR BURKE

THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION

- 1. SOVIET DIPLOMACY: LENINIST vs. STALINIST**
- 2. POLITICAL JUGGLERY**

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THE WAR ON THE SOVIET UNION,
AND
THE TROTSKYITES

— (From the Super-Wrangel Thesis to the "Second World Imperialist War")

HE bringing of Hitler to power clearly indicated that the "peaceful" relations with the Soviet Union pursued by the German imperialists during the Weimar Republic were to be transformed into their opposite. The Nazis for many years proclaimed themselves the determined apostles of the anti-Soviet war. The problem for advanced political analysis was to determine in what relation the British, French and American imperialists would stand to a reconstituted German military power embarked on the task of wiping out the Soviet Union. Many persons imagined that the period following Hitler's rise to power would lead to a repetition of 1914 and that the imperialists would act mechanically along the lines which led to the World War. Such persons were destined for many surprises, for the line of the "democratic" imperialists was actually to assist the Nazis in building the German war machine and to give their blessings and sanction to the Nazi regime in the project of attacking the Soviet Union.

Leon Trotsky on the eve of Hitler's triumph in Germany outlined the new relation of world forces. In a pamphlet, "Germany, the Key to the International Situation," dated December 1931, Trotsky formulated his thesis that Hitler would be the Super-Wrangel of the world bourgeoisie in the war against the Soviet Union. "A victory of Fascism in Germany would signify the inevitable war against the U.S.S.R.," wrote Trotsky in this pamphlet (p. 19). The real gist of Trotsky's thesis was his formulation of the relation of the American, British and French imperialists to German imperialism in the inevitable war against the Soviet Union. A mechanical repetition of the 1914 "Allies" versus "Central Powers" situation was categorically rejected by Trotsky. In light of the post-1917 development, Trotsky wrote:

"In this enterprise, [the war

against the Soviet Union--J.C.H.] the Hitler government would only be the executive organ of world capitalism as a whole. Clemenceau, Millerand, Lloyd George, Wilson could not directly carry on war against the Soviet government; but they were able, in the course of three years, to support the armies of Kolchak, Wrangel and Denikin. In case he is victorious, Hitler will become the Super-Wrangel of the world bourgeoisie." (Ibid., p. 19. My emphasis - J.C.H.)

We have not included Trotsky's inaccurate detailed predictions as to the concrete unfolding of the anti-Soviet war, since we are not taking up that matter and since, moreover, no one could possibly foresee in every detail in 1931 exactly what course this development would take. We emphasize only Trotsky's thesis of the general relations amongst the imperialists in an anti-Soviet war, namely, Hitler as the spearhead supported somehow by the whole of world imperialism, Hitler as the agent of the present-day Clemenceaus, Lloyd Georges and Wilsons.

Some months after Hitler was already in power, Trotsky pointed out that to think in terms of an attack by Hitler to the West was fantastic because, among other things, such an attack required a military alliance between Fascist Germany and the Soviet Union. Of course, Trotsky was speaking of a real, not a paper military alliance, and depicted it as an out-and-out absurdity:

"An attack upon the West in the more or less proximate future could be carried out only on condition of a military alliance between Fascist Germany and the Soviets. But it is not the most turbulent sections of the White Guard emigration that can believe in the possibility of such an absurdity or can seek to make a threat out of it." ("Hitler and

the Prospects of War," The Militant,
September 9, 1933, p. 3)

It would appear that in the period of 1931-1933, Trotsky definitely ruled out a war amongst the imperialist powers like that of 1914-1918. Not only had the relation of class forces changed fundamentally since 1917, but according to Trotsky there was now the peculiar feature that Nazi Germany would have to form a real military alliance with non-capitalist Soviet Russia in order to wage war against the Western imperialist powers. That the Nazis had no intention of turning the whole structure of world capitalism inside out by embarking on adventures to the West in alliance—we emphasize, real alliance—with the Soviet Union was entirely clear to Trotsky. This should be held in mind firmly as we proceed to outline the subsequent development of Trotsky's analysis.

* * *

BY the middle of 1934 a new note began to creep into the Trotskyite prognosis. This was a period in which Stalin was entering on the line of forming his fake "pacts" with bourgeois-democratic powers. Trotsky now began to write that it was possible that a war would break out amongst the major imperialist powers with the Soviet Union an "ally" of one of the coalitions:

"In the existing situation an alliance of the U.S.S.R. with an imperialist state or with one imperialist combination against another, in case of war, cannot at all be considered as excluded." (War and the 4th International, June 1934, p. 20. Emphasis in the original.)

The imperialist combinations envisaged in this thesis were, of course, those of the "democratic" powers against the Fascist group headed by Nazi Germany. This new line of the Trotskyites, therefore, postulated a war between Nazi Germany and her satellites against the Western powers, with the Soviet Union an "ally" of the "democratic" camp.

Trotsky's new line was in complete contradiction with his previous one. Before, Trotsky had said Hitler would only be the Super-Wrangel of world imperialism against the Soviet Union. Now Trotsky declared Hitler would undertake a war against the "democratic" imperialists. Previously Trotsky had written that Hitler could launch a war against the West only on the condition of a military alliance with the Soviet Union. Now the Trotsky line held a war of Hitler against the West to be possible without a German-Russian military alliance. To top the whole thing off, Trotsky now presented the Soviet Union as the ally of one of the hypothetical camps of imperialism. To this degree had Trotsky reversed the analysis he had made only a short time earlier.

While Trotsky began to sound the line of an inter-imperialist war with the Soviet Union as an "ally" of one camp, he also attached a "safeguard" clause, a "however" clause which clearly barked back to the old thesis of an attack by world imperialism upon the Soviet Union. Thus, in the 1934 pamphlet just quoted, Trotsky wrote:

"It would be a fatal mistake, however, to consider the armed intervention against the Soviet Union as entirely off the order of the day." (Ibid., p. 8)

Thus, up to the middle of June 1934, the Trotskyites had the following series of theses to their credit (it should be remarked that at no point ~~was~~ any of these contradictory theses repudiated by the Trotsky leaders):

1. Hitler can be only the Super-Wrangel of the world bourgeoisie in a war against the Soviet Union.
2. An attack to the West by Hitler is excluded because, amongst other things, it would require an absurdly impossible military alliance between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.
3. A war amongst the imperialists is entirely possible and the Soviet Union can even be one of the adherents of the "democratic" camp.

4. A war against the Soviet Union is nevertheless also not excluded.

From this point on, the Trotskyite prognosis of the impending war had to be examined very carefully to ascertain what war was being discussed — the Super-Wrangel war against the Soviet Union or war amongst the imperialists with the Soviet Union allegedly an "ally" of one of the hypothetical coalitions.

It remained for history to reveal which war would materialize and for the Trotsky leaders to decide which thesis they would finally select from their voluminous grab-bag as the definitive Trotskyite line for the present period of history.

* * *

THE most outstanding turn in world history prior to September 1939 was the Munich crisis of the year before.

At the beginning of the Munich crisis, the Trotskyite press, laden with its contradictory theses, was pushing now one thesis, now another, sometimes several at once. The resolution of this crisis, wrote the Socialist Appeal, would decide "definitely and irrevocably" whether there would be war amongst the imperialists or a Super-Wrangel type of war against the Soviet Union:

"The Sudeten issue is the weather-vane of Germany's foreign policy. The direction it takes will indicate the direction of German imperialism and German war plans. It will decide definitely and irrevocably whether the coming world war will be primarily a struggle between conflicting imperialist blocs in which the Soviet Union will participate as an ally of one of them, or if it will subside into a four-power treaty that will settle conflicting interests in Europe by giving Germany a free hand in the Soviet Union, with the blessings of England and France." (Socialist Appeal, September 3, 1938. My emphasis - J.C. H.)

This article goes on to say that "A four power treaty [England, France, Germany, Italy - J.C.H.] at the present time is a purely academic alternative." In other words, even before the upshot of the Munich crisis, the Trotskyite press placed one alternative, Super-Wrangel type of war, in the category of academic speculation. The other alternative, concretized by a Nazi drive against Czechoslovakia, declared the Trotsky press, would be the outbreak of inter-imperialist war, a coalition of the "democratic" powers with the Soviet Union as an "ally" against a coalition of the Fascist powers:

"Should Germany drive on Czechoslovakia, and should Italy support her, then the beginning of the European war is a matter of days. Once it begins in Europe, the imperialist blocs will expand over the world. On one side Italy-Germany-Japan, and on the other side England-France-United States, with the Soviet Union finding a fitful resting place among the "democratic" powers." (Ibid.)

This analysis made in 1938 is to be particularly noted for we shall see the Trotskyites execute a 180 degree reversal on this question only a few weeks later. Meanwhile, the Trotsky press was temporarily pushing the balance in favor of the position that an inter-imperialist war was being precipitated by the Munich crisis.

Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler and Mussolini in their Munich machinations made it unmistakable that they were organizing a drive against the Soviet Union, taking the preliminary steps of bringing the Nazi forces Eastward. The French, British and American financial interests had already provided the necessary millions for the rearmament of Germany. Now, at Munich, the imperialists were engaging in territorial maneuvers, opening the path for the Nazi forces toward the Soviet border.

The Cannon-Shachtman paper, to all appearances, at least for an issue or two, came to a "definite and irrevocable" conclusion as to the line of the imperialists. The Socialist Appeal in

an editorial presented a definitive evaluation of the Munich Accord. This accord, the Trotsky leaders asserted, was dictated by the understanding of the leading imperialist spokesmen that the inter-imperialist war was the most fatal thing they could undergo:

"At Munich Chamberlain, Daladier, Mussolini and Hitler came together in recognition of the fact that nothing could be more fatal to all of them than the outbreak of an inter-imperialist war which none of their regimes would survive. (Editorial, Socialist Appeal, Oct. 3, 1938, p. 1)

More and more at this period the super-Wrangel war against the Soviet Union appeared in the Trotsky press as the decision of history, while the prospect of inter-imperialist war was cast aside. A rounded-out Trotskyist evaluation of the Munich agreement declared that although the imperialists realized they still had contradictions among themselves, yet in the face of the total factors in the situation, they were thrown together rather than apart, on the basis of organizing an attack on the Soviet Union. Only a month before the Trotskyites had put a four-power agreement in the realm of academic speculation, but now they wrote:

"But the imperialists in London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome recognized that they had fundamentally more in common than they had in conflict. They recognized, even while they were mobilizing their troops for a gigantic display of military might, that their wisest course was to be master of Central Europe — in order to turn the edge of war against the remaining small nations and align all against the Soviet Union.

"This is what they made a beginning at in Munich. This is the real meaning of the Munich four-power agreement." (Socialist Appeal, Oct. 5, 1938, p. 1)

It is entirely clear that, according to the Trotsky press of that period, the "definite and irrevocable" decision given by the resolution of the Munich crisis was in favor of a

Nazi-led drive against the Soviet Union with the blessings and support of the "democratic" imperialists. On September 3, 1938 the Socialist Appeal had declared that a German drive on Czechoslovakia would result in the beginning of an inter-imperialist war in a few days. But a month later, on October 5, 1938, the Trotsky paper completely reversed itself and posed the super-Wrangel war against the Soviet Union as the outgrowth of Munich. Unquestionably this latter conclusion was justified by every objective fact in the situation. The Munich discussions were held in a secret, highly conspiratorial atmosphere. No record is available to the masses of what was actually cooked up and agreed upon for the future. The Soviet Union, at that time an "ally" of the French rulers, was barred from participation in the discussions. Not even the Czechoslovak officials, loyal flunkies of the big imperialists, were permitted to be present. The only reasonable conclusion to be drawn was that the major imperialist rulers had agreed on supporting the Nazi drive to the East. What remained cloudy was the way in which the imperialists would unfold the attack on the Soviet Union.

There are certain aspects of this matter which must be considered. The bourgeois leaders are vastly experienced connivers, shrewd and skilled. No set of fools can guide so enormous and complex a system as capitalism, a system so plagued by instability, internal dangers and contradictions. There can be no particle of doubt that the British and French rulers clearly realized that to give Hitler a free hand to the East meant to strengthen German imperialism immensely. It does not take much intelligence to understand so obvious a matter. The intelligence and experience of the Chamberlains and Daladiers extend far beyond the ability to perceive the simple and patent. Czechoslovakia, handed over to Hitler shortly after the Sudetenland, was and is a tremendous arsenal, a mighty addition to the Nazi war machine.

The question arises: Did not the British and French rulers fear to put so much power into the hands of the

German rulers? How could Chamberlain and Daladier be certain that Hitler would not double-cross them and instead of attacking the Soviet Union, turn about and strike to the West? (When we say strike to the West, we have in mind a real war in which millions of soldiers fight for years on land fronts, a war like that of 1914-1918. We do not have in mind an eight-month "Sitzkrieg" and an unopposed Nazi parade to Paris.)

The British and French rulers did not fear a double-cross by Hitler for several reasons. Hitler as well as they understood perfectly that a real inter-imperialist war under present conditions would spell the final collapse of the capitalist system. The German imperialists are neither madmen nor suicides. For what insane reason should the German rulers undertake a struggle against a gigantic coalition of all the "democratic" powers when to the East they had the choice, as Munich indicated, of attacking the Soviet Union with the support of the "democratic" imperialists? Picture those alternatives! On the one hand, a hopeless struggle against the "democratic" coalition, leading to the collapse of world capitalism, German in the first place, and on the other hand, a possibility of rich pickings with world-wide support in an attack on the Soviet Union. Can there be any doubt why the British and French rulers had not the slightest fear of a double-cross? From every angle, the British and French imperialists, and their American colleagues behind the scenes, had no fear of adopting the Munich policy.

* * *

PROCEEDING from the correct interpretation that at Munich a four power agreement against the Soviet Union had been secretly formed, the Trotskyites prognosticated that Stalin would try to buy his way out of an immediate attack by offering enormous concessions to Hitler for a "friendship pact." The bourgeois press, in the form of some writings by Walter Duranty, also voiced predictions of a Stalin-Hitler rapprochement. The significant feature of this affair is

not the coincidence of the forecasts in both the bourgeois and Trotskyist press, but rather the political content which the Trotsky leaders imparted to their version. On October 15, 1938, the Socialist Appeal contained an article entitled: "Will Stalin Bow to Hitler." It was in this vein that the Trotskyist forecasts of the forthcoming pact were made, that it would involve enormous concessions by Stalin to Hitler:

"The major stake Stalin can lay on the table - and we may be sure Hitler will demand no less - is the abrogation of the foreign trade monopoly and the opening of Russia to capitalist exploitation; in other words, the final act in the liquidation of the conquests of the October revolution." (Socialist Appeal, October 15, 1938, p. 1)

The same issue of the Trotskyist paper reports a speech by James P. Cannon in which he declared in the identical vein:

"Hitler will demand, and Stalin will offer, concessions, concrete and tangible. A breach in the foreign trade monopoly, which will immediately undermine Russian industry and prepare its collapse? A slice of the Ukraine, as a beginning of the dismemberment of the Soviet Union? To show good faith on the part of Stalin, a new trial, perhaps, new killings? Litvinov's head, as the scapegoat for the discredited policy of alliances with the capitalist democracies? Another purge of the Red Army on which the 'disappearance' of Marshal Blucher will be recorded as an advance payment? Or, proceeding to a drastic solution of the real conflict between the Soviet Union and all the imperialist countries, will Stalin move to a direct attempt to restore private property, and offer up the Russian market to foreign exploitation?"

"These are the questions which can constitute the only possible basis for rapprochement between Hitler and Stalin." (Cannon, Socialist Appeal, Oct. 15, 1938, p. 3. My emphasis - J. C. H.)

A breach in the foreign trade monopoly, a slice of the Ukraine, a direct attempt to restore private property, to mention the most important questions which Cannon declared to be the "only possible basis for rapprochement between Hitler and Stalin" — these elements were the specific content of the Trotskyite forecast of the Stalin-Hitler Pact. "Hitler will demand, and Stalin will offer, concessions, concrete and tangible," said Cannon with perfect assurance in outlining the foundation of the forthcoming Pact.

On August 24, 1939 the Stalin-Hitler Pact was signed. That it contained not a single element of Cannon's "only possible basis for rapprochement between Hitler and Stalin" is crystal clear. Far from giving Hitler a slice of the Ukraine, Stalin received half of Poland, the Baltic states and Bessarabia. No breach in the Soviet Union's monopoly of foreign trade occurred, nor did the Stalin gang attempt to restore capitalist private property. The actual Pact took a form directly the opposite of the Trotskyite forecasts.

When the signing of the Stalin-Hitler Pact was actually announced, the Trotsky press, without a word repudiating its previous false predictions and explanations, executed a most remarkable flip flop on its "analysis" of the relations between Germany and the Soviet Union. Amongst its earlier theses, we recall, the Trotsky press contained one expressed in September 1933 to the effect that Nazi Germany could not strike to the West because such a move would require a military alliance between the Nazi and the Stalin governments, which alliance the Trotsky leadership proclaimed an absurdity whose possibility was beyond the imagination even of the more hysterical White Guards. After Munich, the Trotsky leaders declared their belief that a Stalin-Hitler Pact might be forthcoming, but pictured the then hypothetical pact as a matter of Stalin bowing to Hitler, of Stalin yielding vast territories to Hitler and generally opening the Soviet Union to the direct exploitation of the foreign capitalists. Upon the announ-

cement of the Pact in August 1939, the Trotsky leaders turned themselves inside out and began to shout that Stalin not only had a "non-aggression" pact but an actual military alliance with Hitler, and would be granted territories by Hitler to such an extent that it positively staggered the imagination. One would imagine that these people would have learned some caution from the fantastic nature of their prognosis of what the Stalin-Hitler Pact would be like. But no, on the contrary, the announcement of the Pact only keyed up the "Marxists" of the Trotsky variety to a veritable opium-eater stage. Trotsky set the pace and the disciples followed in faithful order. Having ridiculed the very idea of a Stalin-Hitler Pact as an absurd impossibility, Trotsky now declared categorically that the Pact was a military alliance!

"The German-Soviet pact is neither an absurdity nor sterile — it is a military alliance with a division of roles: Hitler conducts the military operations, Stalin acts as his quartermaster." (Socialist Appeal, Sept. 11, 1939, p. 2. My emphasis — J. C. H.)

With Trotsky winding the spring, the gramophone sang the ordered tune:

"The Stalin-Hitler pact, first explained as an innocent device to secure the neutrality of the Soviet Union, actually gave the signal for Hitler's invasion of Poland. This has already been followed by the Red Army's invasion, first of Polish Ukraine and White Russia and now of large sections of Poland proper which Hitler's army had conquered. The partition of Poland has been carried out before our eyes by the amicable collaboration of Hitler and Stalin. What else is needed to confirm the opinion that the pact of Stalin and Hitler is in fact a military alliance, that Stalin has linked his fate in the world war now unfolding with that of Hitler." (James P. Cannon, Socialist Appeal, Sept. 29, 1939. My emphasis— J.C.H.)

Trotsky definitely and explicitly declared that the Stalin-Hitler Pact

contained secret clauses governing the division of territories and the collaboration of military staffs:

"In entering Polish territory, the Soviet armies knew beforehand at what point they would meet - and as allies, not as enemies - with the armies of Hitler. The operation was determined in its main parts by the secret clauses of the German-Soviet pact; the general staffs of both countries were to be found in constant collaboration; the Stalinist invasion is nothing but a symmetrical supplement of the Hitlerite operations." (Socialist Appeal, October 24, 1939, p. 1)

As seen from the above writings, the chief leaders of the Trotsky movement were feeding the workers with the story that the Soviet Union and Germany were definitively allied along the lines of the division of territories and that this alliance was a fundamental feature of world relations. Some of the lesser fry of the Trotsky leadership went completely wild and pictured Stalin and Hitler as dividing between them practically the whole British Empire and a big portion of the continent of Asia. If Cannon could say "that the pact of Stalin and Hitler is in fact a military alliance, that Stalin has linked his fate in the world war now unfolding with that of Hitler," why could not a Sherman Stanley babble in the Trotskyite paper about Stalin striking at Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Tibet and Burma, all at Hitler's behest! Listen to this fantastic product of Trotskyite "Marxism":

"Fulfilling his current role as a supporter and agent of German imperialism, Stalin may - at the command of his present master - be instructed to strike vital blows at British imperialism in its territories that extend from Iraq on the West to distant Burma on the East.

"These lands are now the prize possessions of the badly shaken British Empire. They include Iraq, Iran (Persia), Afghanistan, British and Native India, Nepal, Tibet, and Burma. . . ." (Socialist Appeal, Oct. 31, 1939, p. 4)

All this noise sounded very plausible until the Nazis attacked Russia in June 1941. The situation up to June 1941 must be recalled to observe the consequences the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union had for the story that there was a real military coalition between Hitler and Stalin. France and almost the whole of Europe had been occupied by Hitler. Ostensibly the Nazis were all set to pounce on England which was said to be isolated and highly vulnerable. In the East, according to the Trotskyites, Hitler was being bolstered by Stalin who presumably was not only sanctioning Hitler's seizure of territories, but was providing him with military supplies and food. In light of all this, why should the German imperialists suddenly strike out at the Soviet Union? By this act they destroyed the alleged military alliance which was supposed to be bolstering them in the East against the West. Instead of beating down one foe at a time - remember the popular story that the British and the German rulers were actually at war - the Nazis seemed to prefer to fight everybody at once. From allegedly a convenient bulwark in the East the Nazis transformed Russia to an active foe. No one will pretend that Stalin was threatening to attack Germany. Stalin's policy pursued in all periods of his power is well known. To live at peace with all the big imperialist powers, to collaborate with them in betraying and crushing the workers in order to keep himself and his bureaucrats in power. The war was launched by Hitler upon Stalin. Every sign points to the fact that Stalin was making no concrete move to attack Nazi Germany. Why, then, did the Nazis attack the Soviet Union if the story is true that they were really at war with England and had a valuable military alliance with Stalin?

To have a clear answer we must grasp what the Stalin-Hitler Pact was in actuality. This Pact can be understood only in light of the fundamental military and political aims of all the imperialists in the present epoch, namely, the destruction of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism therein. The situation prior to August 1939 was not one in which the

imperialists could launch an attack on the Soviet Union, using the Nazi Army as a spearhead. In the rear of the Nazi Army stood the French proletariat, then an enormous, immediate danger to the imperialists. The situation in France was highly explosive from the standpoint of the profound crisis which rocked French capitalism for a number of years. Moreover, the French workingclass, highly class conscious, was thoroughly pro-Soviet Union. The Franco-Soviet Pact, then existing, served to heighten the friendly feeling of the French toilers for the Soviet Union. Even the Social-Democratic workers had been permeated by this feeling. In the face of this situation, an attack by Hitler on the Soviet Union would have caused terrific turmoil in France, leading to a probable uprising by the workers. In the eyes of the imperialists, this situation was a nightmare which had to be liquidated.

The formation of the Stalin-Hitler pact completely reversed the situation. Overnight, the Soviet Union was placed before the French masses in the light of a treacherous and deadly foe. The impulse of the French proletariat to rise in defense of the Soviet Union had the ground cut out from under it. This reversal, of course, was reflected throughout the masses of Europe as a whole.

Thus, one function of the Stalin-Hitler Pact was to isolate the Soviet Union from the class conscious workers of Europe who most immediately could have rallied to the Soviet Union's defense.

Another function of the Stalin-Hitler Pact was to decoy Stalin's army from the territories in which it had prepared itself for almost two decades into territories where it would be relatively much weaker in the face of a sudden attack. When Hitler attacked, Stalin's original army was smashed almost to the point of annihilation in the very territories into which it was decoyed by the Nazis.

Typical of the whole Stalinist system of opportunism, Stalin swallowed the Nazi bait - hook, line and sinker.

Occupation of territories gave Stalin an opportunity to parade for a brief period as a conqueror before the Soviet masses and the bureaucracy. This short-lived glory for Stalin cost the Soviet toilers millions of lives. The Pact lulled the workers of the Soviet Union to sleep with a false feeling of security, made them think there was nothing short of a military alliance, and Stalin's opportunist occupation of the territories completely paralyzed them.

An additional feature of the Stalin-Hitler Pact might be cited. Not only was the Soviet Union isolated from the French masses, but the French masses were isolated from the Soviet toilers. When the Nazis entered France, the French workers, who for many years believed they had a friend in the East, in the Soviet Union, as a counterweight against the Nazis, discovered they had no one to look to, for that country was a partner-in-crime of Nazi Germany.

From every angle, the Stalin-Hitler Pact was not an alliance between Stalin and Hitler. This Pact was in reality a maneuver of world imperialism against the Soviet Union. Its aspects were political, diplomatic and military, and was thoroughly in line with the imperialist policy of using the Nazi Army as the spearhead of the attack on the Soviet Union.

When the unfolding of events made it abundantly clear that the Pact was not a military alliance to divide territories between Stalin and Hitler, that the Trotskyite "analysis" about an actual military alliance between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union was the exact opposite of reality, the Trotskyite paper with majestic sarcasm denounced those who had spoken of the Pact in terms of a real alliance:

"The 'non-aggression' pact which Stalin and Hitler entered into with such fanfare in August 1939 lasted less than two years. Only people who were removed from the fundamental principles of Marxism took that pact to mean an alliance between Stalin and Hitler to conquer and divide the world. Is it possible

that people who interpreted the Hitler-Stalin pact in such a manner have the gall to continue writing and interpreting events of the day? Alas, it is not only possible but they are actually doing so." (M. Morrison, The Militant, July 4, 1942, p. 3. My emphasis - J. C. H.)

Only one thing is omitted, to recall to the reader that it was precisely Trotsky and Cannon who had set the pace for the "analysis" of the Pact as an actual military alliance to divide territories between Hitler and Stalin. Morrison goes on to say that such sorry "Marxists" should be compelled to take a five years holiday from writing! If this advice were followed literally, The Militant would have to suspend publication, for the concepts which Morrison ridicules were the official line of the Trotsky movement as a whole.

* * *

WE have shown how the "democratic" imperialist powers were conniving with Hitler for an attack on the Soviet Union, as manifested by the Munich affair, the historical expression of this line of development. Yet seemingly contradicting this line, in September 1939 the British and French imperialists declared war on Germany. The Trotskyites, as we know, had among their many theses a major one to the effect that Hitler would be the super-Wrangel, acting for world imperialism as a whole. The Trotskyite's final evaluation of Munich was that the imperialists had "definitely and irrevocably" decided upon this line. How, then, did the Trotskyites reconcile this thesis with the September 1939 declaration of war? How did the Trotskyites fit the declaration of war into their picture of the "democratic" imperialists building up the German war machine for an attack on the Soviet Union? Why did the imperialists execute what must be considered - if we take the declaration of war literally - as the most staggering about-face in all history? Trotsky cut the Gordian knot very shrewdly. His story ran as follows:- up to Munich the "democratic" imperialists supported Hitler's expansionist moves.

But a few weeks later, the astute rulers of British imperialism "finally discovered" that German imperialism would not stop after occupying Central Europe but would strive toward world domination. So - (supposedly, the British imperialists, the most perspicacious and experienced of all, had not been able to find this out before) war on Germany is declared, and in all seriousness. Thus spoke Trotsky. Let us quote him directly lest we be accused of a malicious parody:

"In Munich England supported Hitler in the hope that he would be satisfied with central Europe. But a couple of weeks later, England 'finally discovered' that German imperialism strives toward world domination. In its role as the world colonial power, Great Britain couldn't fail to answer the unrestrained pretensions of Hitler with war." (Socialist Appeal, September 11, 1939, p. 1)

This statement must be analyzed minutely for it is a sample of the out-and-out phrase-juggling which is being palmed off on the workers as Marxism.

Observe the first sentence. It speaks of England supporting Hitler at Munich in hope he would be satisfied with Central Europe. This statement is not only not a true explanation of Munich but it is a brazen falsification of the Trotskyites' own evaluation of what happened in Munich. We have quoted the Trotskyite evaluation made at the time of Munich. That evaluation consisted of the following points: 1) At Munich, Chamberlain, Daladier, Mussolini and Hitler recognized that the outbreak of an inter-imperialist war would be fatal to the capitalist system as a whole; 2) the imperialist leaders named above recognized they had more in common than in conflict; 3) they understood that their wisest course was to be masters of Central Europe, to line up the small nations and to turn all against the Soviet Union. Far from confining Nazi depredations to Central Europe, the Chamberlains and Daladiers envisaged the unleashing of the Nazi war machine against the rich territories

of the Soviet Union. In the Trotskyite explanation in that period, Munich was a continuation of the line that Hitler would be the super-Wrangel of world imperialism.

The first sentence of the above-quoted passage by Trotsky is followed by a statement which indicates supreme contempt for the reader. Trotsky would actually have his reader believe that in Munich the British imperialists did not think that German imperialism would strive for world domination, "but a couple of weeks later" England made the great discovery! It should be noticed that Trotsky put the words finally discovered in quotation marks. This is a clever trick. Without this trick the first reaction of the discerning reader would be — This is sheer hokum! Trotsky would have the workers imagine that before Munich the British imperialists did not understand the predatory nature of German imperialism! By putting finally discovered in quotation marks, Trotsky made it appear that he did not really mean this literally. Yet, this deception is one of the essentials of his "analysis." Thus Trotsky was able to put over harmful nonsense with the air of a jest and at the same time have it accepted in all solemnity. Trotsky tried to delude the workers into believing that at Munich, where the policy of building up the Nazi machine was continued with epoch-making vigor, the British imperialists did not realize that they were expanding the power of a predatory regime. If this patent lunacy is accepted, then it is logical that suddenly the British — and obviously the French — imperialists were shocked out of their alleged trance — those poor, uninformed, naive, child-like, innocent dreamers who could not remember back to 1914 — and plunged into a war against the monster they themselves nursed to colossal size.

It is clear that Trotsky explained nothing. The reader will never discover from the Trotsky press why the imperialists supposedly dropped the Munich line and embarked — so goes the Trotskyite story — on an actual war against German imperialism like in 1914. Nor will the Trotsky press pro-

vide the least enlightenment as to what the Stalin-Hitler Pact actually was. This is no accident, for the "analysis" of the Pact in the Trotsky press was nothing more than an echo of the deceptive phrases of the bourgeois press.

* * *

WHEN Chamberlain and Daladier declared war on Nazi Germany in September 1939, the Trotskyites, as did the Stalinists, immediately painted this declaration as entirely serious and proclaimed that the "Second Imperialist World War" had begun. Chamberlain and Daladier, and the finance imperialists whose mere agents they were, however, had a totally different view of the matter. The "democratic" rulers shouted that they were at war with Nazi Germany in reprisal for the attack on Poland. One would imagine, following this, that some efforts would be made to aid the Poles. The Anglo-French forces consisted of at least 5 million men equipped with the tanks and artillery for which France was famous, the air force of the British and the French consisted of nearly 7,000 planes, while the "democratic" sea-power was predominant. In the face of this immensity of "democratic" war power, the "democratic" aid to Poland consisted of dropping some leaflets over Germany! Not a single effort was made to relieve the Poles who were being torn to pieces in the Nazi drive to the Soviet border. The obvious fact is that the Anglo-French rulers betrayed Poland to the Nazis, just as they had done previously with Czechoslovakia under the guise of "appeasement."

The alleged "Second Imperialist War" unfolded in its first phase as the notorious "Sitzkrieg" or the "Phoney War." So far the line of the imperialists was perfectly consistent with the Munich policy — we go by concrete facts, not by the damagoric declarations of the Chamberlains and Daladiers and the pseudo-Marxist phrases of the Trotskyite and "Comintern" bureaucrats. The Nazi forces had been given a free hand to wipe out Poland, the only geographic barrier separating Germany from the Soviet Union. The chief difference between the situation during the Nazi occupation of Czecho-

slovakia and that of Poland was that during the former the "democratic" imperialists openly acquiesced in the Nazi advances while during the latter the "democratic" rulers sanctioned the Nazi advance under the disguise and pretense of wanting to stop them. There was a declaration of war in existence during the attack on Poland but the concrete actions of the imperialists were the same at both stages. Why, then, the declaration of war, since the imperialists clearly had not the slightest intention of preventing the Nazi destruction of Poland and the advance to the Soviet border? To continue the Munich game openly would have entailed the danger of a mass explosion, especially in France. The fear and resentment of the masses in the "democratic" nations against the Nazis was reaching a boiling point. The "democratic" rulers were compelled to camouflage their continued collusion with Hitler by pretending to fight him. The September declaration of war provided this camouflage.

The actual attack on the Soviet Union required some further preparatory moves in which the "democratic" rulers would have to collaborate with Hitler. The situation in France, highly dangerous for the capitalists, had to be quelled. The social, economic and political crisis in French society, mounting to a revolutionary pitch since 1934, could not be left hanging in the air while the Nazis were attacking the Soviet Union. Picture the situation among the French masses. Bitterly hating the Nazis, class conscious to a greater degree than any other section of the proletariat in Europe at the time, the French masses presented a problem that the imperialists had to settle before the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union. Imagine what would have happened in France if the Nazis had attacked the Soviet Union while in the West there was a continuous "Sitzkrieg." Even though the French masses were disoriented and baffled by the Stalin-Hitler Pact, the spectacle of the Nazis attacking the Soviet Union while in the West there continued a "Sitzkrieg" would have aroused sharp suspicions that the "democratic" rulers were in collusion with Hitler. A Nazi

attack on the Soviet Union would have made Hitler loom as even a ~~greater~~ monster than before in the eyes of the French masses. What if Hitler destroys the Soviet Union, the French masses would have asked? Such a victory will vastly increase Hitler in power and it will be our turn next, they would have understood. Under no circumstances would the French masses have tolerated a war on the Soviet Union with a "Sitzkrieg" in the West. Hence, the "democratic" imperialists in collaboration with the Fascists determined to crush the French masses, in part as a preparation for the Nazi move against the Soviet Union.

In the present period, the method used by the bourgeoisie to crush the masses decisively is to establish fascism, during which process the advanced workers are butchered and the whole mass of toilers is ground under the heel of military rule. How was this to be done in France in 1939-1940?

To stage a military uprising by some French general or to try to use the French fascist forces would have resulted immediately in a prolonged and tremendous civil war in France. The echoes of the Spanish Civil War which ended in March 1939, were still ringing in the ears of the rulers. An attempt to use French fascist forces would have resulted in immediate disaster for the whole scheme of the imperialists. There was only one way that Fascism could be established in France quickly, without the precipitation of a civil war. The fascist spearhead had to be brought in from the outside. And this is precisely the scheme used by the imperialists. The French masses imagined that France was actually at war with Germany. This illusion, assiduously spread by the "Comintern," by the Social Democrats and the Trotskyite leaders, was deadly. It gave the French masses the feeling that the Nazis would be fought sooner or later. Organized in and around the French army, the masses were paralyzed both by this illusion and by the machinery of the capitalist state. With the French workers duped by the fake Marxists, it was a simple matter for the imperialists to introduce the Nazi spearhead into France. This occurred

in May-June 1940. A relatively small force of Nazis entered France and "captured" the country. The enormous French and British armies were ordered to retreat and the path was opened for the fascist hangman to enter. Gigantic fortresses such as Sedan and Verdun were occupied by the Nazis without a battle. In a few brief weeks, the process of fascization of France was completed. The French masses inside and outside the army were unable to resist because they were bound by the illusion that their rulers carried on a "war against Germany," while in reality the "democratic" rulers were clearing the path for the fascist entrance.

With the fascization of France by the use of the Nazis, the imperialists proceeded to set the final stage for the Nazi drive on the Soviet Union. The rest of the year and the first half of 1941 were spent by the imperialists in bringing the Balkans under Nazi policing to provide oil and food for Hitler's army.

The scheme of the imperialists to utilize Hitler as the "super-Wrangel" against the Soviet Union was put into action June 1941. Trotsky and his satellites, however, "forgot" the old super-Wrangel thesis and adopted the new one about "imperialist war." Like the opportunist Social Democrats who in 1912 glibly signed the Basle Manifesto when the imperialist war of 1914 was still a thing of the future, and turned tail when faced with concrete reality, so Trotsky, when the war on the Soviet Union was still in the offing, wrote a correct thesis only to abandon it when life proved it to the hilt. It is a regular practice of the pseudo-Marxists to cover themselves with many correct phrases beneath which is concealed their basic opportunism. Inevitably, somewhere along the line, the pressure of reality forces into the open the pseudo-Marxist essence of the opportunists.

J. C. Hunter
Oct. 19, 1943

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STALIN'S PATH TO POWER

In a large variety of forms, the question of why Stalin was successful in his march to personal dictatorship continues to come to the fore. The self-styled Opposition, officially the Trotsky movement, is especially called upon to give answers to this question.

In the course of a recent article advertising Trotsky's "The New Course," Max Shachtman very briefly touched upon this question. Shachtman took exception to a remark by the notorious Stalinist literary stooge, Henri Barbusse, which implied that because Stalin won out in the end he must have been right. With an air of indignation Shachtman quotes this remark by Barbusse: "'If Trotsky had been right,' says the official iconographer of Stalin, Henri Barbusse, 'he would have won.'" (The New International, Sept. 1943, p. 232) Shachtman's reply to Barbusse is a cryptic one. "How simple! What a flattering compliment to....Hitler." (Ibid.) With this literary thrust, Shachtman lets the question rest, leaving the reader with the impression that the question of why Stalin won has been answered.

There is no law which says that Shachtman has to exhaust every question he touches upon. It is his privilege to let any problem hang in the air if he so chooses. But it is our privilege to place such a vital problem in its proper light, regardless of how brief or how fragmentary the original statement of it may be. This is particularly so since the Trotskyites have never in any of their writings enlightened the workers as to what really happened in the Soviet Union that Stalin was so overwhelmingly triumphant in becoming master of the Soviet State.

It is highly pertinent to recall what Trotsky himself had to say on the question of why Stalin rose to the pinnacle of power. The most important single remark Trotsky ever made on this momentous topic is the following one:

"And what is more, I have no

doubt that if I had come forward on the eve of the twelfth congress in the spirit of a 'bloc of Lenin and Trotsky' against the Stalin bureaucracy, I should have been victorious even if Lenin had taken no direct part in the struggle." (My Life, p. 481)

The gist of this statement is that Trotsky did not fight Stalin. This revealing remark quite significantly has never been quoted or referred to by Shachtman or Cannon. The reason is very obvious. The essence of the Trotskyites' political broad and butter is the fable that Trotsky took up Lenin's line of struggle against Stalin and carried it out loyally. When it is understood that Trotsky did not fight Stalin, did not conduct himself in the spirit of a bloc with Lenin, then the simplified "who-was-right-who-was-wrong" formulation is seen to be a way of avoiding the real issue. The question is: Why did Trotsky not fight Stalin? More, what did Trotsky do? What was his actual line? That Trotsky did not fight Stalin is only half of the story. What is the rest?

It is to be noted that in the above-quoted remark Trotsky refers to the period on the eve of the XII Congress of the Russian Communist Party (March-April 1923). Why was this period so crucial that Trotsky singled it out in a special manner?

In his autobiography, My Life, and in other works, Trotsky shows that on the eve of the XII Congress, Lenin was preparing a decisive fight to wipe Stalin out politically and organizationally. The battleground of this anti-Stalin war was to be the forthcoming XII Congress of the Russian Communist Party. Lenin wrote several documents detailing Stalin's opportunism and bureaucratic methods. Lenin termed these documents his "bomb" against Stalin. According to Trotsky's own revelations, he gave Lenin the impression that in the event the latter was too ill to appear at the XII Congress, he, Trotsky, would act in the spirit of a bloc with Lenin and lead a struggle against the growing

monster of Party burocratism personified in the General Secretary Stalin. Lenin, in this understanding, turned over to Trotsky the "bomb" against Stalin. Trotsky thus was officially designated by Lenin to be his spokesman at the XII Congress, the proposed historic arena for firing the first open shot against Stalin — the first one before the whole Party and the proletariat — as a beginning in breaking up the entire burocratic structure which was strangling the workers state.

Lenin was too ill to attend the Congress, but Trotsky was there, clothed in all his enormous authority, second only to Lenin in influence and popularity amongst the masses of the Soviet Republic and the Comintern. Did Trotsky hurl Lenin's "bomb" against Stalin?

The reader may scour the pages of Trotsky's autobiography from end to end, but he will receive no answer as to the actual role Trotsky played at the historic XII Congress. It is a most significant fact that after building up a dramatic picture of Lenin's program for the XII Congress and of his own alleged agreement with Lenin, Trotsky breaks off the thread of the narrative and tells not a word of what transpired at the Congress. The critical reader of Trotsky's book will ponder deeply on this tell-tale omission. This omission permeates the whole Trotskyite political system, for to this day all the leaders of the Trotsky movement maintain an impenetrable and strategic silence on the role of Trotsky at the XII Congress.

(In previous issues of THE BULLETIN and in separately printed documents we have presented concrete proof of the part played by Trotsky at the XII Congress. We take occasion here simply to recount it. For the documentary evidence we leave the inquiring reader to turn to other issues of THE BULLETIN and to the separate monographs.)

The XII Congress met with much fanfare struck up by the leading Party burocrats headed by the "Troika" of Zinoviev-Kamenev-Stalin who were quite conscious of the double-dealing they

were about to enact behind Lenin's back. The greatest enthusiasm of all was aroused by the appearance of Trotsky, the commander of the Red Army and the co-leader with Lenin of the Bolshevik Revolution.

The workers at large did not know that Trotsky had been designated by Lenin to convert the XII Congress into the political graveyard for Stalin. Also, unfortunately, they did not know that in private discussions Trotsky, on the eve of the XII Congress, had already assured Stalin and his cohorts that he was opposed to the removal of Stalin or to any fight for organizational changes at the forthcoming Congress.

The records of the XII Congress reveal that Trotsky did not utter a syllable against Stalin! More, they show that Trotsky, together with the Presidium of which he was the leading member, voted to suppress Lenin's documents against Stalin. On the floor of the Congress, Trotsky made a flowery speech about — economics! No wonder Stalin and his burocrats applauded cheerfully. Speeches on economics troubled them not in the least. They were worried lest a speech be made against Stalin, for they were aware of Trotsky's talks with Lenin. But the Stalin clique had really nothing to fear, for at the XII Congress Trotsky concretely proved that he was their man.

Interestingly enough, certain speeches against Stalin were made at the XII Congress — but not by Trotsky! They were delivered by several leaders of the Georgian Party who had felt the blows of Stalin's burocratic machinations. These Georgians demanded the publication of Lenin's documents against Stalin, for word had passed about — the burocrats among themselves babbled quite freely in those days — that such documents existed. Stalin's partner, Zinoviev, in the name of the Presidium, "explained" with a torrent of deception why the documents were not to be published. Trotsky, with the documents in his possession, remained loyal to his agreement with the Stalin clique to suppress the documents and did not put up even a sham

fight on behalf of the Georgians. The matter rested in Stalin's interests. The re-election of the whole Stalin clique to posts of top leadership was engineered and these careers were thus raised another rung on the bureaucratic ladder.

After the Congress, the leading bureaucrats wrote articles arising it as the very climax of the history of the Party. The criminal concealment of Lenin's line was palmed off as carrying out Lenin's will, no less. Amongst the demagogues who deceived the workers in this vein was Leon Trotsky. To his dying day, Trotsky maintained his pretense that the XII Congress was a genuine Leninist gathering. Shachtman and Cannon still keep up this pretense.

The XII Congress was the historic Party occasion at which Stalinism - as the bureaucratic degeneration later became known - was officially sanctioned and entrenched. When the actual facts are known, it is clear why in My Life Trotsky discontinued the narrative and maintained a discreet silence on the events at the XII Congress.

* * *

THE story of the XII Congress, though vital for an understanding of the vicious transformation that had occurred in the character of the leaders of the Party, by no means exhausts the situation at that period. By 1923 the bureaucratic degeneration of the top leaders of the Party was already profound. In 1940 - sixteen years after the events! - Trotsky revealed that a few days after Lenin in his Testament proposed to remove Stalin from the General Secretaryship, the latter came to Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky with a remarkable story that Lenin had asked him for poison to put an end to his physical suffering. Trotsky hints clearly that this story of Stalin's was a falsification. Trotsky makes it sufficiently plain that Stalin was proposing to the three leading Political Bureau members to assassinate Lenin. One can readily grasp from Trotsky's description of that secret meeting the utterly cynical opinion which Stalin already had of

Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev, who could not possibly misunderstand his meaning. The shrewd Stalin did not misjudge his men, for Zinoviev and Kamenev never spilled anything, and Trotsky held his tongue at that crucial time and for many years after. It took sixteen years of constant and most vicious hounding by Stalin before Trotsky told the shocking details of the "poison conversation" among Stalin, Zinoviev, Kamenev and himself. In 1924 Lenin died. His death allegedly was due to arterio-sclerosis. Trotsky in 1940 showed that Lenin had almost completely recovered from his illness by the end of 1923. In light of the secret "poison talk" and of other highly significant occurrences Trotsky had observed at that time, he raised the question: "Did Stalin Poison Lenin?" Evidently writing very guardedly with every word meticulously chosen, he leaves no doubt as to how this question must be answered.

Incidentally, like the affair of the XII Congress, these appalling charges made by Trotsky in 1940 are another striking matter about which Shachtman and Cannon have kept complete silence, for to air the matter before their followers would leave Shachtman and Cannon facing the extremely embarrassing questions: Why did Trotsky conceal what he knew for sixteen years? Why didn't he reveal Stalin's story of Lenin's alleged request for poison at a time when Trotsky was still a tremendous power in the Soviet Republic and could have caused Stalin's annihilation? Why did Trotsky speak up only when it could do Stalin no harm?

* * *

WHAT game was Trotsky playing in that early period that on the one hand he deceived Lenin with yarns about agreement to a bloc against Stalin and on the other hand acted in a bloc with the Stalin clique, protecting them, concealing Lenin's proposed war against Stalin, and freeing his path to bureaucratic entrenchment?

By 1923 Stalin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rakovsky, Kalinin, Litvinov and many other eminent lead-

ers were completely transformed from the revolutionists they once had been. During the years of the Civil War, these leaders had arrogated power to themselves. In fact, by 1923, and even earlier, the Bolshevik Party had already been turned into a bureaucratic machine, for the actual power was not in the hands of the rank-and-file, but in the hands of the top leaders, headed by the "troika." By 1923 the workers at the bottom were in actuality completely cut off from control or any knowledge of the secret machinations within the high circles of the Party. At the top there was a hardened caste of uncontrolled leaders who no longer had to get the sanction of the masses as in the first months of the revolution. As early as the X Congress of the Party, against Lenin's advice, Stalin had been proposed by Zinoviev for a newly-created post of General Secretary in back-stage maneuvers in which the rank-and-file had absolutely no say whatever. The General Secretaryship invested with inordinate bureaucratic powers of appointment and removal was foisted on the toilers. In general, this far-reaching episode characterized the every-day behavior of the top leaders even before the Civil War was over. Accustomed to tremendous personal power, Stalin, Zinoviev, Trotsky and other leaders came to view themselves as "big shots" as "statesmen" and "ministers," as people with fine "careers" which had to be enhanced. Indeed, their "careers" came to be the central concern of their political existence. Socialism, with the extension of true workers democracy as its basis, assumed a totally new aspect in the view of these bureaucrats. They came to fear socialism because they saw in it the forward movement of the masses and the lessening of their own eminent position. There is no place for "big shots," adored "statesmen," careerists in permanent posts, machine politicians and similar riffraff in the socialist order. Coming to fear socialism, the degenerated leaders were transformed from conscious revolutionists to conscious counter-revolutionists, plotters for bureaucratic power and self-aggrandizement. History has known such transformations before in the societies of the enemy classes. Now this corrup-

tion occurred on the soil of the first workers state.

Very soon, as is to be expected from people of a careerist frame of mind, cliques began to crystallize amongst the corrupted leaders. The Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev clique took a conclusive form in 1921 and functioned behind the scenes at first very cautiously and then, during Lenin's illness, with greater decision and boldness. This clique held the key position amongst all the bureaucrats because, as we have said, they had in their possession the pivotal post of bureaucratism, the General Secretaryship. Many bureaucrats strove to come under the wing of the Stalin clique.

As far as Trotsky was concerned, he had an intimate circle of supporters among the high bureaucrats but nothing comparable to the well-organized Stalin machine. But in addition to this he had something which the Stalin clique did not have, namely, prestige with the masses and in the Party far above that of any of the other bureaucrats. Because of this he imagined for a long while that nothing could touch him. Since the Stalin clique had the key to the whole bureaucracy, to start a gang-war against the "Troika" of Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev would have meant a fight to oust Stalin from the post of General Secretary. Such a fight could have only one result, the disruption of the whole bureaucratic structure. This Trotsky did not want for he felt it would be a danger to all the bureaucratized leaders, himself included. Hence, Trotsky turned his back upon Lenin's line of removing Stalin from the General Secretaryship as he himself inadvertently divulged in his autobiography, describing his conversation with Stalin's partner, Kamenev, to whom he made the clear statement "I am against removing Stalin" (My Life, p. 486).

At the end of 1922 and the beginning of 1923, the "Troika" played a very clever game with Trotsky. They pampered him on all sides. They caused eulogistic articles to be written about him. One famous article of this sort is Radek's "Trotsky, the Organizer of Victory." When a history of the

Bolshevik Party was compiled, the Stalin clique saw to it that all references to Trotsky's non-Bolshevik, pre-1917 past were removed. In every way they fawned before Trotsky on the eve of the XII Congress. This Congress was a crucial moment for Stalin's whole future. The "Troika" who knew what Lenin was preparing against Stalin wanted to do everything in their power to bind Trotsky to them. They wanted his support at the XII Congress so that the bureaucratic power could receive official sanction and become solidly imbedded in the soil of the Soviet State.

To keep peace in the bureaucratic structure Trotsky reciprocated and entered into an alliance with the "Troika." This bloc with the "Troika" had for its purpose the establishment of a collective bureaucratic security and a "fair" sharing of power among the bureaucrats. Stalin and Company would have their share; Trotsky would have his. The bureaucratic structure in its totality would be safeguarded from internal strife and above all, Stalin would not be disturbed in his post of General Secretary. Trotsky approached the XII Congress with this program in view and unflinchingly carried it out to the end.

The Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev-Trotsky bloc, on the surface, was progressing smoothly during the early months of 1923. No worker could detect the slightest difference between Stalin and Trotsky at the XII Congress or for some time thereafter. Behind the scenes, however, the bureaucratic kettle of poisons was brewing madly. Having utilized Trotsky to entrench themselves in power, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin were prepared to play for still higher stakes. The "Troika" was ambitious to remove Trotsky entirely and centralize all power in its own hands. The very unaggressive attitude taken by Trotsky, that of a friendly, conciliating bloc with the "Troika," emboldened Stalin and Company to double-cross Trotsky and fight to wipe him out completely.

Toward the end of 1923, the conspiracy of Stalin-Zinoviev and Kamenev to oust Trotsky from the bureaucratic

leadership took on a disguise of "defense of Bolshevism against the menace of Trotskyism" and the Stalin gang began to raise a hue and cry against Trotsky in the open. Trotsky, in turn, attempted to defend himself. Both sides indulged in the dishonest maneuvers common to clique fights. For example, the Stalin gang demagogically began to rake up Trotsky's non-Bolshevik past. Although in the "Testament" Lenin had expressly declared that Trotsky's non-Bolshevik past was not to be held against him, the Stalin clique violated this honest policy of Lenin's and dug up all sorts of remarks and incidents of the past to inflame the workers against Trotsky. The latter played the same crooked game against the "Troika." Trotsky in his "Lessons of October" written in the Summer of 1924 dug up the long-forgotten October episode in which Zinoviev and Kamenev had come out against the Bolsheviks taking power. Lenin in his "Testament" had expressly declared that the October episode of Zinoviev and Kamenev was not to be held against them, but Trotsky, for factional reasons, raked over the old coals in an effort to smear Zinoviev and Kamenev.

It is an ironical thing to note that neither Trotsky nor Zinoviev-Kamenev could appeal to Lenin's "Testament" against these filthy tactics because all of these treacherous bureaucrats, by way of protecting Stalin, were concealing the "Testament" from the workers! Thus the conspirators were caught in the web of their own degeneration.

Gradually the contending factions began to concoct new "issues" against each other. The Stalin clique was the aggressor, controlling the machinery of the party. Moreover, the ruling clique knew that Trotsky was unbreakably bound to it in the crime of entrenching the bureaucratic rule and that he did not want to have the whole structure of crime brought toppling down his ears by a real fight to disrupt the bureaucracy through ousting Stalin. Trotsky's March 1923 declaration "I am against removing Stalin" rang in their ears and gave them confidence to open the clique warfare against Trotsky.

The "Troika" began to pretend that Trotsky underestimated the peasantry, and shouted this accusation from the housetops. This was a sheerly factional trick which sounded very plausible and authentic to the poorly informed workers who had vaguely heard that in the past Lenin had also accused Trotsky of this during their fight on the question of Permanent Revolution. Naturally, the Stalin gang kept quiet about the fact that in 1917 Lenin had factually adopted Trotsky's position on Permanent Revolution and later asserted there were no differences between him and Trotsky on the peasant question. By hook or by crook they tried to blacken Trotsky before the workers and to oust him from the bureaucratic regime.

Trotsky was definitely on the defensive. Tied to Stalin by the common crime of sanctioning the bureaucracy and double-crossing Lenin and the Party membership, Trotsky was forced to adopt what he himself characterized as a line of "peacemaking and conciliation" with Stalin and Company. Along this line, Trotsky busied himself with public declarations that he had no policy of any sort different from that of the Stalin Central Committee. Trotsky supported the Stalin gang in every one of its opportunist policies. In 1924, shortly after the announcement of Lenin's death, the Stalin clique undertook a huge recruitment campaign to draw scores of thousands of bribed and willing bootlickers into the Party. This was paraded as the "Leninist Levy." Trotsky gave full support to this Stalin maneuver which further corrupted the Party from top to bottom and marked the end of Lenin's Party in so far as the revolutionary rank-and-file membership-composition was concerned. Trotsky took the lead in establishing and carrying out the ultra-rightist line which betrayed the German workers in the revolutionary situation in Germany in the Autumn of 1923. Trotsky participated in the crime of urging support to the bourgeois Kuomintang Party in China, the Stalinist line which culminated in 1927 in a frightful bloodbath of the Chinese toilers. Trotsky aided the "Troika" in the treacherous policy of supporting the reformist trade union

bureaucrats in England and thus had a hand in facilitating the betrayal of the British General Strike in 1926. He voluntarily resigned important posts — Red Army Commander, for example — as a gesture of conciliation to Stalin. Trotsky violently slandered those who made any effort to expose the "Troika" — Max Eastman, for instance, whose revelations of the bureaucratic intrigues in 1925 were criminally and publicly denounced by Trotsky in a direct attempt to mollify the Stalin gang. Trotsky even went so far in his policy of "peacemaking and conciliation" as to try to take a "political holiday," to get out of the whole business through the back door.

However, all this bootlicking of Stalin with the view to keeping peace in the bureaucratic family was of no avail. The "Troika" pursued him relentlessly, leaving no trick unused to destroy every vestige of his truly colossal prestige and popularity with the masses.

The line of "peacemaking and conciliation" lasted until 1926. Obviously, with such a line Trotsky would be swamped very shortly. Trotsky realized this and cast about for some way to halt or at least slow down the Stalin drive against him.

In 1926 the opportunity arose for a self-protective clique combination which could serve Trotsky as some sort of bargaining card with Stalin. While Trotsky was on his "political holiday," the rumblings of a rift between Stalin and Zinoviev-Kamenev came out into the open. Stalin was playing the same trick on Zinoviev-Kamenev as Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev had played on Trotsky. Stalin rapidly centralized the real power in his own clutches, and Zinoviev-Kamenev were left out in the cold. They began to seek for new clique-allies in the bureaucratic intrigues. Like Trotsky, they too became "opponents."

Early in 1926 Zinoviev and Kamenev entered into negotiations with Trotsky for a bloc. Soon the bloc was consummated. The thoroughly unprincipled character of the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev bloc is revealed in the

way these three leaders unscrupulously bargained away positions which, to the toilers, were of basic importance. The principle of the Permanent Revolution is a case in point. In forming the bloc with Trotsky, the former "Troika" leaders, Zinoviev and Kamenev, were in a very embarrassing position. For several years, as a factional trick against Trotsky, this pair of plotters had been hypocritically raging against the theory of the Permanent Revolution and in general had been vilifying Trotsky in every possible way. When they formed the bloc with him, their rank-and-file followers, who sincerely believed the ravings against Trotsky, were profoundly shocked; these deluded workers could not stomach a bloc with Trotsky. Zinoviev-Kamenev had to save face somehow before their own followers. They got Trotsky to make a public declaration repudiating his theory of the Permanent Revolution. This repudiation of a fundamental Marxist principle was written into the "Platform of the Opposition" issued by Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev. This is how much principles meant to these hardened factional horse-traders!

The other chief "contributions" of the "Opposition Bloc" were three capitulatory declarations (October 1926, August 1927 and December 1927) in which Trotsky and other "opposition" leaders declared they would loyally carry out the political line of Stalin's Central Committee, would disband all "opposition" workers groupings. The Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev opposition stooped so low as to promise they would act as informers against any workers who would try to build an opposition group against the corrupt Stalin machine.

Naturally, this kind of fake opposition was grist to Stalin's mill. His authority and prestige were enhanced by the "opposition's" groveling. Stalin now definitely had the real power. Zinoviev-Kamenev soon got a severe case of "cold feet" for even a sham opposition. They broke the bloc with Trotsky and crawled before Stalin with abject "confessions," the prototype of the later Moscow Trials.

Since Stalin was faced with a

sham opposition, he rapidly gathered really enormous personal power. In 1927 he had Trotsky expelled from the Party. In 1929 Trotsky was kicked out of the Soviet Union. It was only left for Stalin to finish off some of the lesser fry like Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky, which he did in short order in 1929.

* * *

WE now come to the direct answer of why Stalin was triumphant. The answer is that he was faced by a sham opposition, a pack of swindlers who were cut of the same cloth he was, but who were in a far less advantageous position in the bureaucratic hierarchy. There was no Leninist fight against Stalin at any stage -- we exclude Lenin from the picture despite his line to wipe out Stalin, because Lenin was incapacitated by illness, isolated by the intriguers and double-crossed on all sides. The revolutionary anti-Stalin workers were completely hamstrung by the fake opposition. The most energetic and radical workers in the Soviet Union who wanted a fight against Stalin and the whole bureaucratic disease were deceived into mistaking Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev for real oppositionists. These workers were given a line by Trotsky which kept them in Stalin's clutches. Trotsky acted as the channel which drained off the anti-Stalin tendencies amongst the class-conscious workers in the Soviet Union and in all the Parties of the Comintern rendered them harmless to Stalin.

These are the historical reasons for the emergence of Stalin as the foremost leader of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and the Communist International.

* * *

IT is usually difficult even for politically educated workers to grasp the real meaning of bureaucratic fights for power. The workers are fooled by the "oppositional" chatter of the various cliques. Not realizing that the "opposition" noise is only a cover for the basic similarity of all the rotten cliques, not knowing

the real origin of the cliques, excluded from the behind-the-scenes machinations and taking the "opposition" camouflage at its face value, the workers are deceived into imagining that the squabble is really a fight for principles.

The workers following Shachtman and Cannon read the "opposition" writings of Trotsky and fancy that Trotsky was a genuine Leninist opponent of Stalin. But the workers who merely read Trotsky's "opposition" writings come into the picture at a very late stage of the situation. Such workers do not know how the whole business began and developed. They are totally in the dark as to the days of the Troika-Trotsky bloc, the period from the Autumn of 1922 to that of 1923, the period when Trotsky was in direct alliance with Stalin and did not write "oppositional" documents of any sort. There was not even a sham opposition in that critical period. This period gives the real key to the role of Trotsky in the bureaucratic degeneration of the Bolshevik leadership. It reveals him as one of the partners of Stalin in bureaucratizing the Party, a betrayer of Lenin and the workers. If the origin is known, on the other hand, then Trotsky's later "opposition" will be seen in a totally different light. Workers who know the whole story will realize that Trotsky was the first among those who had been double-crossed by Stalin. He was cheated out of the bureaucratic agreement he had with Stalin, and thus became an "oppositionalist." The "opposition" garb will be understood as a self-protective cover assumed by Trotsky in defending his stay in the bureaucracy, in trying to salvage the remnants of his steadily diminishing bureaucratic power originally shared with Stalin.

Trotsky's post-revolutionary (or "oppositional") writings will then be studied critically. What was their essence? Up to 1933 Trotsky called for "oppositional" support to Stalin's "Comintern." Trotsky pretended that the Stalinist leaders —whom he knew to be conscious renegades who hated and feared the workers—were "mistaken revolutionaries" who needed to be taught lessons in Marxism and thus "corrected." Trotsky knew there was

no question of "correcting" Stalin and Company for these people consciously, by virtue of their concrete, anti-workingclass, bureaucratic interests, represented the interests of counter-revolution. Their deliberate intent—as Trotsky well knew from his alliance with them in the old days—was to prevent proletarian revolution in order to preserve their usurped bureaucratic power. The chimera of "correcting" the Stalinist was a trick used by Trotsky to give a rational cloak to his slogan of supporting the Stalinist. Underneath the sham oppositional "correcting" rumpus of Trotsky lay the basic political line, support to Stalinism.

How will Trotsky's "4th International" be viewed by workers who know the true story of Trotsky in the Stalinist epoch? They will realize that after so monstrous a betrayal as that in Germany in 1933 when the Stalinists opened Hitler's path to power, Trotsky could no longer openly call for support to the Stalinist even with a "critical" cover. If Trotsky had mechanically followed the old tactics, his honest followers would have seen his pro-Stalin face and would have attempted to strike out on their own and form a genuine revolutionary movement. Hence he cooked up his "4th International" was concocted when Stalin was using the Popular Front fakery to betray the revolution. Stalin was spreading reformist illusions, giving open support to Social Democracy and all its deceptions. How did Trotsky adapt himself to the then Stalinist line? Trotsky went Stalin one better and sent his followers bodily into the Second International (the "French Turn"). Stalin cried that the issue of the day was "Democracy versus Fascism." Trotsky echoed that the issue of the day was "Democracy versus Fascism." This fraud served to paralyze the masses and clear the road for Fascism. Stalin supported the sabotaging "Loyalist" government openly. Trotsky supported the "Loyalist" government with "criticism." The Stalin-Trotsky bloc continued, not in organizational form, for much water had flowed under the bridge since 1923, but in political essence.

The innumerable twists and turns
(Continued on page 26)

CANNON'S "STRUGGLE FOR A PROLETARIAN PARTY"

In the bitter factional strife which brought the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party to a split, Max Shachtman, the leader of the opposition, charged that Cannon departed from the Marxian course, while Cannon on his part insisted that Shachtman represented a petty-bourgeois tendency.

The history of the proletariat records many instances of strife within parties where one faction actually championed the cause of the proletariat. Such was the case in the First International, with Marx and Engels defending the proletarian line against the representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, Proudhon, Bakunin and others. Another salient example was the struggle in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party between the Mensheviks, who, although claiming to be Marxists, fought for the interests of the exploiters, and the Bolsheviks, advancing the interests of the toilers.

But history knows also many instances of faction fights in which, although every contestant vociferously protested his adherence to Marxism, all in reality served the interests of reaction. A classic example is the Stalinist Comintern. While attracting millions of honest workers who imagined it to be a true Communist organization, the Comintern was a career hunting ground for the lowest type of political demagogues and "revolutionary" bandits seeking posts and power. In the book which is a summation of his fight against the Shachtman opposition, Cannon defines such careerists as "political bandits." As an illustration Cannon brings to the attention of the reader the nature of the infamous Lovestone gang:

"In the terminology of the Marxist movement, unprincipled cliques or groups which begin a struggle without a definite program have been characterized as political bandits. A classic example of such a group, from its beginning to its miserable end in the backwaters of American radicalism, is the group

known as 'Lovestoneites.' This group, which took its name from the characterless adventurer who has been its leader, poisoned and corrupted the American Communist movement for many years by its unprincipled and unscrupulous factional struggles, which were carried on to serve personal aims and personal ambitions, or to satisfy personal grievances. The Lovestoneites were able and talented people, but they had no definite principles. They knew only that they wanted to control the party 'regime.'" (The Struggle For a Proletarian Party, p. 16)

Since we are concerned with placing the Cannon-Shachtman fight into the category where it belongs, the quotation cited is remarkably apropos. It evokes a very interesting chapter of history in which Cannon figured prominently. That chapter represents a chain of extremely illuminating facts which serve as an instructive clue to the underlying nature of Cannon's "Struggle for a Proletarian Party."

It will be observed that Cannon did not name the faction against which the Lovestone gang carried on its fight. Yet he could have cited that other gang with equal force and relevance. That other gang of detestable political bandits was led by Foster, Browder, Bittelman and similar ambitious demagogues, no less unscrupulous, corrupt and self-seeking than the Lovestone gang. They were all very capable writers and speakers. To conceal their rottenness from the workers they, just as the Lovestone gang, covered up their fight for prestige and power by guarded, long-winded "Communist"-phrased theses on American imperialism, on war, on the trade union problems, on the Labor party and on other manufactured "issues" in which they established "differences." Both gangs very ably pointed out each other's outward opportunism, concealing, however, the real motive of the fights. Their downright unprincipledness is denoted by the fact that every one of them gave unconditional support

to the policies of the Soviet bureaucracy headed by Stalin. On that score there were no differences. This is a revealing indication of their actual nature. The results for the masses were tragic indeed. The Russian Soviet bureaucrats, dreading the successful rising of the world proletariat and the consequent introduction of proletarian democracy, laid down ultra-Right and ultra-Left policies to disrupt the struggle of the working class. The Lovestone and the Foster political bandits in the upper reaches of the "Communist Party," seeking favor with the powerful Russian bureaucrats, sold the Stalinist policy of counter-revolution to the Communist workers.

Cannon omits from his book the Foster side of the unprincipled factional war for control of the Stalinist organization. And for a very good reason. It may surprise the uninformed to learn that one of the outstanding chiefs in the Foster camp was James P. Cannon. It was not modesty which caused the author of the book, "The Struggle For a Proletarian Party" to omit even a mention of his own participation in the unprincipled factional fight for power in the Stalinist Party. Cannon united not only with Foster, but also with Lore and Olgin and the only "principle" which guided this combination was the burning desire to control the most important jobs in the organization. There was no real agreement in this combination on the various manufactured issues. Lore and Olgin opposed the orientation on Senator Robert La Follette. Foster and Cannon were for leading the Communist workers into supporting La Follette. On this "issue" Cannon and Foster had no difference with Lovestone who also was for La Follette. On the "Trotsky issue" Lore was not at all toeing the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev line. Cannon and Foster, on the other hand, stood solid with Lovestone on supporting the Stalin-headed "Bolshevik Old Guard" in its intrigues against Trotsky. Thus, politically, Cannon and Foster were infinitely closer to Lovestone than to their factional partner Lore. But that did not matter to Cannon. In the factional combinations such "trifles" as poli-

tical differences were elbowed aside: what counted was agreement for control of the organization. It was only when in 1924 after the Lovestone-Ruthenberg gang denounced Lore to the bureaucratic gods in the Kremlin, and Lore became an object of vicious hounding, that his "comrades" in combination, Cannon and Foster, with alacrity helped the Lovestone crew to cut his throat from ear to ear.

In 1925 the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev clique sent its agent, Gusev, to America with powers to set up a leadership of the Party in accordance with the Kremlin dictates. Foster and Cannon had control of the organization, and in the struggle against the Lovestone-Ruthenberg aspirants for power they secured a majority of the delegates for the national convention. The "democratic" methods used by both camps were much similar to those employed by the rival Democratic Party gangs in the South. Both factions resorted to dishonest manipulations, from offers of posts to threats of actual violence, dividing the party membership and bringing it to an almost open civil war. Naturally the passion for power was invariably camouflaged with big phrases about building a true proletarian party in America.

Cannon knew well that although Foster and he were backed by the majority of the members, the decision as to who should be at the helm of the Party rested not with the membership but with the high bureaucrats in the Kremlin. Sensing that the instructions Gusev brought with him were not too favorable to the Foster political bandits, Cannon, then as today, verbally a champion of democratic centralism, but in fact an ambitious wire-puller, "got next to" Gusev. Needless to say, Cannon's private intrigue went on not only behind the back of the honest rank-and-file of the Party but also behind the back of Cannon's partner, Foster. By this double treachery Cannon imagined he could gain the confidence of Stalin's lackey Gusev and secure substantial remuneration for himself.

The ground was being cut under Foster's feet not only by Cannon's

machinations but also by other factors of Party history. The Lovestone-Ruthenberg clique had beaten Foster to the gun in declaring themselves loyal to the "Old Guard" of Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev. In March 1924 the Lovestone gang had introduced a resolution supporting the Stalin leadership. Foster hedged on this question and introduced a resolution against making any definite stand. This vacillation was to cost him dearly in the near future. Later in 1924, however, Foster went to Moscow, sized up the factional intrigues there, and upon his return came out for Stalin and Company. The bureaucrats in the American Party now had a solid front on the question of backing Stalin. By December 1924, the Foster-Cannon leadership was already prohibiting the printing of Trotsky's writings.

Nevertheless, for the moment, Lovestone-Ruthenberg had stolen a march on Foster. On the basis of Foster's earlier vacillation in regard to supporting Stalin and also because of his former association with Lore the Kremlin rulers lined up behind Lovestone-Ruthenberg.

In a cable the Stalin bureaucrats sent the decision to the effect that the Foster-Cannon caucus was to be deprived of control by mechanically allotting an equal share of power to the Lovestone-Ruthenberg gang by means of establishing a 50-50 Central Committee. The executor of the decision was to be the Comintern representative, Gusev.

Foster, who had behind him the majority of the membership of the Party, flatly refused to accept the decision. A secret caucus meeting of the Foster-Cannon gang was held. At that meeting Cannon, not giving a fig for democratic centralism, did the contemptible job assigned him by Gusev, which was to put over the Gusev line in the Foster caucus. A powerful and convincing demagogue, he delivered sledge-hammer blows at Foster and smashed the Foster caucus by making most of the crew of the Foster bureaucrats believe that in the new situation their bread would be buttered only if they stood by the decision handed down by Gusev, the "representative of the

Communist International." Against Foster's dogged opposition, he convinced them that it was better to hold 50% of the power than not to retain any at all.

Thus Cannon knifed his factional ally Foster, after they had both treacherously knifed Lore. But the dance which the double-faced knaves had to perform to the tune played by Gusev was not over. When the 50-50 Central Committee first met, presided over by Gusev as "impartial" chairman, Gusev sprang another surprise upon Foster and Foster's loyal supporters. Suddenly and unexpectedly he announced that he, the C.I. Representative, had additional instructions from the supreme oligarchs in the Kremlin. As chairman, Gusev was to vote with the Lovestone gang, making the former minority the majority. Control of the Party was handed over to the Ruthenberg-Lovestone faction.

Foster, although as dishonest and unprincipled as the new favorites of Stalin, intent on making a career for himself, rebelled against such unheard-of high-handedness, arbitrariness, disregard of the fact that he, by hook or by crook, had rolled up a majority among the duped rank-and-file of the Party. Foster's followers were in an indignant uproar. It is very likely that at that stage of the Stalinization of the American Communist Party (1925), had the Foster followers, representing a big majority of the Party, stood like a solid phalanx defending their chief on the grounds of democratic-centralism, the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev clique would have been compelled to lean backwards. But in this critical moment for both Foster and Lovestone, Stalin's emissary secured the good offices of a double-dealing ally of Foster. To pin the former Fosterites down, the Gusev-Ruthenberg-Lovestone majority cooked up a "unity resolution" and asked everybody's support on the basis of that document. The loyal Foster bureaucrats continued their rebellion, but two of the most treacherous of Foster's allies, Olgin and Cannon, voted for that resolution and urged all the recalcitrants to line up with the Lovestone bandits. James P. Cannon

plunged another knife into Foster's back. This self-styled "Marxist" who today, with hypocritical asperity flays "unprincipled combinationism," sided with Lovestone and Ruthenberg, naturally hoping for his thrifty pieces of silver from them and from Gusev. But the Ruthenberg-Lovestone gang were wary of this dangerous supporter whose insistent, though not openly expressed aspirations to the highest seat of power in the Party were well-known to them.

Having been cold-shouldered by the ungrateful Lovestone, Cannon, standing almost alone, decided he was not too well equipped for the intra-party factional warfare. Any one who ventured to fight for the highest post in the Stalinist party had to have an army of supporters. Cannon busied himself upbuilding his factional forces. Enlisting certain frustrated elements from the Foster caucus and a few stragglers, Cannon built a group of his own. His most useful and able office boy was Martin Abern. Among his outstanding recruits were the Dunne brothers and Max Shachtman who made up for his youth by his careerist ambitions, the speed with which he learned the Stalinist tricks and the skill with which he could ladle out "Marxist" phrases to cover up the bureaucratic intrigues. A new "tendency" was born in the American Stalinist party - the Cannon Caucus.

"Marxists always begin with a program" writes Cannon in his book. As a matter of historical truth, his Caucus presented no program of any kind to the Stalinist Party membership. In point of fact most members of the Stalinist Party, particularly the newcomers, did not even know that a Cannon Caucus existed. Like the Foster and Lovestone Caucuses, Cannon's Caucus gave complete and unconditional support to the bureaucratic Stalin clique on every policy advanced in the Soviet Union, in Germany, France, China, England and other countries. In the United States the only difference with Stalin was on the question of who should rule the American section of the Stalintern.

The new "tendency" was not suf-

ficiently powerful to challenge Lovestone by its own unaided efforts. Clearly, Cannon had no other choice but a recourse to unprincipled combinationism once more. Making a brazen somersault, he approached Foster proposing to shake hands again on the fight to oust the successful rivals, Ruthenberg and Lovestone. The horse-deal went through. Foster needed aid to combat the Lovestone machine. An unprincipled combinationist himself, he agreed to form an alliance with the Cannon Caucus. Soon, at an appropriate historical moment, the Foster-Cannon team went on a wanton factional rampage against the political bandits in power.

Bearing firmly in mind that the Stalin clique unequivocally pronounced the Lovestone-Ruthenberg crew as standing "closer to its views" than the Foster-Cannon crew, the Foster-Cannon team proceeded to give support to the basic policies of Stalin's American "Communist" satraps, but fought them organizationally. Although the Party under Ruthenberg was very far from the iron-clad bureaucratic regime of today, and in retrospect appeared like a real democratic organization with every member having and often exercising the right of criticizing the leadership, the Foster-Cannon team nevertheless raised a raucous cry about the arbitrariness and bureaucratism of the Party "regime." Cannon became the engineer of a new power plot which consisted of an endeavor to break up the Ruthenberg-Lovestone Caucus by attempting to win away a few leading figures. Cannon in person carried on a new intrigue secret from the followers of all the caucuses. Only later the secret became known in the Party. In the most unprincipled way, Cannon approached Wolfe, Stachel and Weinstone with a lucrative offer. He proposed to these political bandits, particularly to Weinstone whose instability was notorious, to stick a treacherous knife into the back of the Ruthenberg-Lovestone clique by switching to Foster and Cannon thus giving them a majority in the Central Committee. The scheme for a new set-up of power was Foster-Cannon-Weinstone. But behind the confidential talks among all

these plotters there was a general and well-substantiated suspicion and mistrust of each other. Foster clearly saw what Cannon was really after, and Foster himself was craving to be the major leader of the Party. This mistrust was the chief cause for the failure to yield results to Cannon. Meanwhile Lovestone's sensitive, factional nose got a whiff of the revolting stew. The shrewd manipulator saved the situation for himself and Ruthenberg by dissuading Wolfe, Stachel and even Weinstone from combining with Cannon. Thus, the Ruthenberg-Lovestone clique found additional proof fortifying their conviction of Cannon's lack of bureaucratic integrity. Cannon was thwarted again. Quick-thinking, resourceful, always in readiness to knife his closest co-factionalists, Cannon was feared by the leaders of all groups.

Cannon probably began to sense that the road to power in the Stalinist party was barred to him very effectively.

A faint ray of hope was provided by the death of Ruthenberg in March 1927. Even before Ruthenberg's ashes were buried, Cannon and Weinstone immediately got together again and busied themselves working out a scheme for the seizure of the party. However, Lovestone was informed by his spies of Cannon's new attempt. He promptly sought to bribe Weinstone with an offer of a high post. For a moment "Wobbly" Weinstone's mind was divided, unable to decide whether to continue working with Lovestone or proceed with the Cannon arrangements. Weinstone finally resolved to throw in his lot with Cannon. This decision was made not because he regarded Cannon's word weightier than Lovestone's — he was perfectly aware of the fact that both Cannon and Lovestone were political crooks who would stick to a promise only in the event it were expedient to advance one's factional ends. "Wobbly" took a chance on Cannon because he knew that Cannon was in a more desperate situation and might "honestly" cling to the bloc with Weinstone and Foster as a drowning man clings to a straw. After a few weeks of back-and-forth secret bargaining and negotia-

tions a "United Opposition Bloc" headed by Foster, Cannon and Weinstone was formed in May 1927.

Had Lovestone left matters to their course he would have probably lost control of the party overnight. He left nothing to chance and dashed to Moscow, the great center of the bureaucratic degeneration of the Comintern, where favors were being handed out by the usurpers of the Soviet power and where with skillful wire-pulling he could secure his factional aims. The moment Cannon, Foster and Weinstone discovered that Lovestone had departed for Moscow, they packed their valises in haste and followed him, also with the intent of putting themselves in good graces with the Soviet bureaucrats. When they arrived Lovestone had already done much factional work of interviewing powerful lieutenants of Stalin. The leaders of both American gangs proceeded to vie with each other for a chance to lick the boots of those who actually controlled the Comintern. Lovestone was more fortunate than his rivals, for he secured an audience with Stalin himself. The outcome of the audience, which lasted a few hours, was favorable to Lovestone. The fate of the Foster-Cannon-Weinstone bloc was sealed.

Already shaken in hopes and spirit because the organizational decisions were overwhelmingly in favor of Lovestone, the leaders of the "United Opposition Bloc" were further chagrined by receiving a sharp rebuke from the Comintern for their unauthorized factional maneuvers. The bloc soon fell apart. When the Lovestone gang, with Stalin's aid, solidified its grip on the Party, "Wobbly" knifed Cannon and rejoined Lovestone. Grim and gloomy, Cannon continued the factional strife together with Foster. 1928 came around with a new convention of the party but with no prospect of victory whatsoever. As was to be expected, the 1928 convention brought a sweeping victory to the Lovestone machine.

Cannon's active mind, goaded on by his undying ambition, sought a solution of his galling problem. While his partner, Foster, was con-

stantly mollified by the Lovestone gang with some juicy bureaucratic sops, such as the trade union department of the party, Cannon hardly granted anything of value, was merely permitted to continue in charge of the "International Labor Defense," and there was no guarantee that even this situation would last. When the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in the Summer of 1928

confirmed the Lovestone leadership, Cannon reached the end not only of his hopes but of his patience as well. With greater vividness than ever it was brought home to him that he was in a blind alley.

George Marlen

(CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE)

(Continued from page 20)

of history have given the Trotsky movement an appearance of being miles removed from Stalinism. A knowledge of the real essence of the Trotskyite movement from its origin in the bureaucratic degeneration of the Bolshevik leadership reveals it be to an organic

part of the Stalinist system of counter-revolution, with Trotsky as the stirrup-holder for the usurper Stalin.

J. C. Hunter
October 17, 1943

THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION

*The true story of Trotsky's role
in the Stalinist degeneration*

- A SIGNIFICANT PHRASE FROM TROTSKY'S PEN
- THE POLITICAL MORALS OF THE TROTSKYITE LEADERS
- SHACHTMAN'S MAGIC PEN
- TROTSKY AND RADEK'S LINE ON CHINA
- THE POLITICAL NATURE OF THE TROTSKY-ZINOVIEV BLOC
- TROTSKY'S "ADVICE" TO THE RUSSIAN WORKERS
- WHY EASTMAN AND NOT TROTSKY
- MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT TROTSKY'S POSITION ON THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE
- WHEN BUROCRATS QUARREL
- TWO PICTURES OF PIATAKOV
- FROM THE ARSENAL OF STALINISM
- AN HISTORICAL FABLE

ADDRESS: P. O. BOX 67 STATION D NYC

OEHLER SUPPORTS A BETRAYAL

THE most essential need for the proletariat is to know the character of the political forces operating within its midst. The nature of these political forces can best be learned by absorbing the priceless lessons revealed by their behavior particularly during the periods of revolutionary crises.

A historical milestone along these lines was the revolutionary situation in 1923 when the German bourgeoisie faced an economic breakdown, and the aroused working class demonstrated an unmistakable readiness and desire for revolution. The situation ended in a terrible defeat of the German workers due to the policy of the German Communist Party which carried out the line of the Comintern.

Apropos of this defeat, the Revolutionary Workers League (Oehlerites) tells the workers that Leon Trotsky carried the Leninist banner in that period.

"Brandler the German leader of the Communists, was ordered to join a 'Workers and Farmers Government' in Saxony and Thuringia, under capitalism, just as Stalin and Kamenev were in favor in 1917, of giving 'conditional support' to the Provisional Government. Trotsky and a minority fought on Lenin's line against the others. If his line had carried a different story could be told, because the workers in Germany were ready for revolution." ("From Revolution to Reaction; A History of the 3rd International," issued by the Revolutionary Workers League, p. 14. My emphasis - A. B.)

First, it must be made clear that during that revolutionary crisis of 1923, Lenin was completely out of political work due to illness.

What would have been a Leninist line in this situation can be gathered from the chief political lesson drawn from the experience of the Russian revolution and from the revolutionary struggles which took place throughout

the rest of the world. We must also determine from documentary evidence whether Trotsky pursued a Leninist policy.

For one thing, the Russian revolution proved conclusively the thesis that the bourgeoisie could be defeated only under the aegis of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Further, historical development shows that in modern class society there can be either the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Lenin stated:

"In a capitalist society, when it is developing, when it stands solid or is perishing, all alike, there can be only one of two kinds of powers: Either the power of the capitalists or that of the proletariat. Every intermediary power is a dream." (V.I. Lenin, "Collected Works," Vol. XVI, p. 297. Russian Edition.)

Still another lesson which Lenin drew from the October Revolution centered about the coalition of the Bolsheviks and Left S. R.'s formed after the Russian bourgeoisie had been overthrown. On Nov. 28, 1917 the Bolshevik Central Committee extended an invitation to the Left S.R.'s to enter the Soviet Government on the basis of a guaranteed Bolshevik majority. The Left S. R. 's were given four posts in the Council of People's Commissars. Upon the conclusion of peace with Germany, while the imperialists through the White Guardist and Czech armies were attacking the workers State in July 1918, the Left S.R.'s suddenly revolted against the Soviet power. In Moscow they captured the telegraph offices, arrested some Bolshevik leaders, shelled the Kremlin, and to provoke a German imperialist attack on the proletarian State killed the German ambassador Von Mirbach. The Left S.R. Muraviev, commander-in-chief of the Red troops on the Volga front, ordered the army to turn back and march upon Moscow. The Left S. R. revolt almost succeeded in causing a colossal catastrophe to the Soviet toilers.

The costly lesson Lenin derived

from this event was the establishment of the postulate of one party dictatorship:

"When we are reproached for the dictatorship of one party, we are offered, as you have heard, a United Socialist front, we say: 'Yes, dictatorship of one Party.'" (Lenin, Collected Works, Vol XVI, p. 266. Russian Edition.)

Class struggles occurring in the bourgeois world only confirmed the experience of the Bolsheviks. In Hungary, in March 1919, revolutionary developments reached such intensity that the frightened leaders of the Hungarian bourgeoisie literally "dropped" the power into the hands of the Hungarian Communists. Seeing which way the political wind was blowing, the Hungarian Social Democracy took on a revolutionary hue and offered to take power on the basis of a Communist-Socialist Coalition Soviet Government. No sooner was this coalition effected than the Social Democratic leaders began to connive and conspire with the imperialist bandits to invade and crush the Hungarian Soviets, drowning the revolutionary workers in a sea of blood.

The Second Congress of the C.I. in July 1920 took note of this Social Democratic treachery, and the error of the Hungarian Communists, and warned the revolutionary workers accordingly:

"No Communist should forget the lesson of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. The unity between Hungarian Communists and the so-called Left Social Democrats cost the Hungarian proletariat very dearly." (Thesis of the Second Congress of the Comintern.)

To summarize: The October Revolution and the resultant struggles of the world proletariat established these Leninist lessons: (1) Only one of two kinds of powers is possible in modern class society; either the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. (2) The most "left" parties arising out of the peasantry (Left S.R.'s) and of the labor aristocracy (Left Social Democracy) function only in the interests

of the bourgeoisie. (3) The dictatorship of the proletariat can be exercised only by the Bolshevik Party.

THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE 1923 GERMAN BETRAYAL

ALREADY prior to the German revolutionary crisis of October 1923, the leaders of the Russian C.P., controlling the party in Lenin's absence, had become degenerated bureaucrats. They had converted the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International into a hotbed of intrigue and instead of the Leninist policy of revolutionary internationalism pursued a policy which aimed to secure a permanent entrenchment of the bureaucratic power of the leaders. The bureaucratic leaders, now far from being revolutionaries, looked at revolution and mass upsurges as a threat to their personal power. This policy became one of striving to prevent revolution in order to preserve their usurped power.

The Fourth Congress of the C.I. held in Nov-Dec. 1922 laid down a line which marked a departure from the line of the previous Congresses and which was subsequently followed in the revolutionary crisis in Germany in 1923. Lenin, as he declared himself at the time of the Fourth Congress, was unable to participate in the work of this gathering. At that Congress the bureaucratic leaders laid a trap to shunt the workers away from forming a dictatorship of the proletariat. The tactic was to deceive the workers into supporting disguised bourgeois governments labelled Workers Governments composed of their own agents in coalition with other opportunists. At the Fourth Congress this scheme was outlined in the following anti-Leninist theses:

"Under certain circumstances the Communists must be prepared to form a Government jointly with the non-Communist workers' parties and organizations. . . The Communists are prepared, under certain conditions and with certain guarantees, to support a non-Communist Workers' Government." (Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress of

the Communist International, pp. 32-33)

Brandler, one of the agents of the Russian bureaucrats and the leader of the German section of the Comintern, made it plain that the "Workers' Government" was to be organized on the basis of the so-called democratic institutions of the German capitalist state:

"The Workers Government can be established on the basis of EXISTING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. . . " (Communist International, #25, 1923, p. 110. My capitals - A. B.)

With the development of the German revolution in 1923, the bureaucrats in control of the Russian C. P. and the C. I. put their "Workers Government" trap into operation. On October 10 and 17, 1923, the leaders of the German C. P., acting on orders from the bureaucratic gang in Moscow, entered the bourgeois-democratic governments in Saxony and Thuringia forming a coalition with the Left Social Democrats who constituted the majority.

The treacherous ultra-Rightist nature of the line pursued by the Comintern leaders in foisting upon the workers acceptance of the bourgeois government was clearly shown by a declaration of Froehlich, the bourgeois Thuringian Prime Minister:

"Asked about the Communists in the coalition Government, Herr Froehlich said the Communists surprised him by unequivocally accepting a parliamentary and constitutional government." (New York Times, October 22, 1923, p. 2)

With the "Workers Government" noose around their necks the German workers were naturally tied to the capitalist state. The catastrophe was not long in coming. The open agents of the bourgeoisie utilized the breathing spell provided by the Brandler gang and the Social-Democratic leaders to organize their forces. The capitalist "democratic" republic of Germany dispatched an army of 60,000 troops on Oct. 29-30 to crush the Saxon and Thuringian workers. The

general at the head of the imperialist forces outlawed the German C.P. on Nov. 23, 1923 and flung thousands of betrayed workers into prison while the top bureaucrats, their infamous task completed, fled to Moscow.

THE ACTUAL TROTSKY LINE

AMONGST the leading bureaucrats in the Russian party during this period a clique fight was maturing to a critical point. The ruling clique headed by Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenov launched an undercover attack on Trotsky with the purpose of eliminating him from power. Fictitious, principled-sounding issues were introduced to cover up the fact that the fight in progress was a struggle for bureaucratic power. One of these political footballs was kicked about in relation to the question of the leadership of the German C. P.

This squabble went on entirely behind the scenes in the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. Sides were taken on the estimation of the character of the Brandler leadership. At the particular moment the Stalin gang was whooping it up for Brandler and Co. while Trotsky, for his part, was talking against the Brandler leadership. The record of Trotsky's declaration at one of these behind-the-scenes meetings in Sept. 1923 just prior to the height of the German crisis was published years later by the Trotskyites themselves:

". . . Comrade Trotsky, before leaving the session of the Central Committee (Sept. 1923 plenum) made a speech which profoundly disturbed all the members of the Central Committee, and in which he alleged that the leadership of the German Communist Party was worthless and that the Central Committee of the German C. P. was permeated with fatalism, sleepyheadedness, etc. Comrade Trotsky then declared that the German revolution was doomed to failure." (Leon Trotsky, "The Third International After Lenin," p. 94. My emphasis - A. B.)

It is absolutely clear from this that Trotsky was completely aware of

the wretched character of the leaders and that therefore the German party was leading the workers to disaster.

While behind the scenes Trotsky spoke thus, to the uninformed workers out in the open he made an entirely different kind of speech — one which the Trotskyites never published. In this speech he concealed his knowledge of the rottenness of the leaders of the German C. P. and preached confidence in this party which he knew was leading the German revolution to failure, as he himself had declared only a month before — behind the scenes. The speech was delivered by Trotsky during the height of the German crisis before a mass gathering of the Moscow metal workers and was widely published in the press controlled by the Stalin clique. In it Trotsky declared:

"The question is: this party is still young. Will she find in herself the will to effect a revolution, and will she be able to do so? In this respect circumstances favor the working class of Germany. They are ready to struggle and in order to act they must know that at their head stands a party ready to lead them from struggle to struggle and final victory." (Leon Trotsky, Izvestia, Oct. 21, 1923. My emphasis - A. B.)

Obviously Trotsky's line was a conscious deception of the Russian and German proletariat. He knew that circumstances did not favor the German working class for at its head stood a party not "ready to lead the workers from struggle to struggle and to final victory" but ready to betray them to the German bourgeoisie.

At this point we reach the crux of the question raised by the Oehlerites in their statement on Trotsky's line in the German situation of 1923. The Oehlerites castigate, as we remember, the line of Brandler who joined a fake Workers and Farmers government

under capitalism. Had Trotsky's line been followed, say the Oehlerites, the story of Germany would have been different. What was Trotsky's line on Brandler's entry into the fake Workers Government? Did Trotsky, as the Oehlerites imply, expose this opportunist policy? Did Trotsky explain to the masses that this so-called Workers and Farmers government was a disguised capitalist government? Trotsky did nothing of the sort. On the contrary, in this same speech at the mass meeting of the Moscow metal workers Trotsky treacherously painted this fake Workers and Farmers government in Saxony and Thuringia with the color of the genuine proletarian dictatorship after the overthrow of the capitalist state:

"At the present time the situation is clear. The coalition of Communists with the Social Democrats in the government of Saxony and Thuringia is comparable to the coalition of the Communists and Left Social Revolutionaries in Russia."

Clearly, then, contrary to Oehler's fabrications Trotsky did not pursue a Leninist line but stood on the same political ground as the Stalin clique in betraying the German proletariat. It must be remembered that at this period Trotsky's prestige among the workers was of enormous proportions and therefore he succeeded in deceiving the workers with an effectiveness which no other leader could match.

Oehler is not simply distorting history. In palming off Trotsky's line in the German revolution in 1923 as Leninist, Oehler is thereby defending and supporting Trotsky's leading participation in an epoch-making Stalinist betrayal of the workers.

Arthur Burke
September 4, 1943

P O L I T I C A L J U G G L E R Y

WHEN in 1933 the Trotskyites first came out for a Fourth International, many of the most advanced radical workers heaved a sigh of relief. These workers felt that finally a wonderful opportunity had arisen to free themselves of entanglements with Stalinism and Social Democracy. They believed that an instrument was about to be forged for a clear-cut struggle against the whole rotten structure of opportunism personified by the Second and Third Internationals. The idea of being a "faction of the Comintern" had become repulsive to these workers. Needless to say, insofar as the Second International was concerned Lenin's ringing phrase "Never again along the lines of the Second International" was indelibly impressed upon their consciousness. If these advanced workers considered themselves finished with the Third International, not even in their wildest nightmares could they picture themselves ever a part of the Second International.

The impossibility of reforming or renewing the Second International was proclaimed by the Trotskyites time and again:

"Is it possible to reform or renew the Second International, pervaded by crimes and treacheries? The war and all past war events answer: 'No!'" (The Militant, March 31, 1934, p. 1)

However, less than four months after the above declaration, Trotsky in a letter dated July 24, 1934 suddenly proposed that the French Trotskyites enter the S.F.I.O. (Socialist Party of France). Proposals for entry into the parties of the Second International were soon extended into one country after another.

In the United States the Trotskyite leaders, Cannon and Shachtman, gave wholehearted support to Trotsky's new line, which was eventually to bring the American Trotskyite group

into the Socialist Party. However, the presence of a large and vociferous opposition (Oehlerites) called for some maneuvering on the part of Cannon and Shachtman. To allay any suspicion, they vigorously and periodically proclaimed the impossibility of reforming the Second International:

"The Second and the Third International are outlived and have become obstacles on the revolutionary road. It is impossible to 'reform' them, because the whole composition of their leadership is radically hostile to the tasks and the methods of the proletarian revolution." (New Militant, Sept. 7, 1935, p. 3)

Rumors that they intended to enter the American Socialist party were of course persistently and scathingly denounced by Cannon and Shachtman:

"The June Plenum of the National Committee of the W.P. took note of rumors to the effect that there are leaders and members of the W.P. who advocate that the W.P. should join or merge with the Socialist Party. Occasionally it is necessary to take account of rumor and gossip, no matter how absurd and irresponsible it may be simply because it is so persistent. Solely on this ground, the Plenum hereby states that all such reports are absolutely without foundation, that no leaders or members of the W. P. advocate or have advocated any such program." (New Militant, July 6, 1935, p. 2. Emphasis in original.)

Only several weeks before the Trotskyite leaders actually took their Workers Party into the American Socialist Party, their press was still writing reassuring words about the necessity to break sharply with Social Democracy:

"It is necessary not merely to understand that social-democratic reformism is bankrupt; but posi-

tively to break sharply from Social Democracy; and this sharp break can be decisively accomplished only by embracing and adhering firmly to the principles of revolutionary Marxism." (New Militant, April 18, 1936, p. 1)

One can readily see the insincerity and unprincipledness of these leaders in their declarations about the necessity for breaking sharply from the social democracy, and of the impossibility of reforming the parties of the Second International. The unprincipledness of the Trotskyite leaders becomes even more glaringly apparent when one reads that they proposed not only to enter into the Socialist Party but promised to build the S.P. into a revolutionary organization:

"On the basis of equal duties and equal rights we obligate ourselves to work loyally and devotedly to build the Socialist Party into a powerful, united organization in the revolutionary struggle for socialism." (Statement of the National Committee, New Militant, June 6, 1936)

To satisfy the revolutionary sentiments of their honest followers, however, Cannon and Shachtman had to advance some plausible explanation for their reversal and the decision to enter the Socialist Party. These adroit political acrobats suddenly "discovered" that the Detroit Convention of the Socialist Party, held in May-June 1934, marked a decisive turning point in the history of the movement. This convention, asserted the Trotskyite leaders, had made a sharp break with the classic reformism of post-war Social Democracy and had given evidence of a determination not to repeat the crimes of their political brothers in Germany and Austria which led to the victory of fascism:

"The Detroit Convention of the Socialist Party in 1934 marked a decisive turning point in the history of the movement. The declaration of Principles then adopted, despite the ambiguity and confusion of its principles, made a sharp break with the classical reformism

of the post-war Social-Democracy, and gave evidence of a determination not to repeat the terrible mistakes and crimes of the parties which has led the Austrian and German masses to the yoke of Fascism." ("Workers Party Calls All Revolutionary Workers to Join the Socialist Party," New Militant, June 6, 1936, p. 1)

Let us therefore turn to what the Trotskyite leaders previously said about this Detroit Convention of the Socialist Party in 1934.

The New International, then the theoretical organ of the Trotskyites, carried an article in its November 1934 issue signed M.S., analyzing this very Convention. This analysis exposed this S.P. Convention as a miserable affair at which the "Militant" leaders (Norman Thomas et al.) gave every indication of a readiness to capitulate to the Old Guard Socialists:

"The results do show, however, that in the principal centers the Right Wing bureaucracy and its petty-bourgeois adherents are far stronger than many would like to believe. Nor was its strength properly challenged in view of the fact that the Militants at all times pursued a pusillanimous course where a bold one was required, opposed a policy of confusion to the clear cut Right Wing policy of its opponents, and gave every indication of its readiness to capitulate under vigorous pressure." ("What Next in the Socialist Party," p. 99)

Furthermore, this Trotskyite writer stated that the Detroit Declaration not only did not merit the term revolutionary but was not even meant seriously:

"Neither the document nor its advocates merit the adjective 'revolutionary.' But timid and muddled as it is, it might be imagined that it is meant seriously. Far from it. The very first act of the new leadership of the party, following the announcement of its victory, was to rush into print

with an abject exhortation to the Right Wingers to remain inside the party with full rights to propagate their anti-socialist doctrines." (Ibid.)

However, in 1936 this analysis was conveniently "forgotten" by the Trotskyite leaders and the S.P. Detroit Convention was suddenly and quite dishonestly palmed off as a decisive turning point in the American Socialist Party. To justify the turn toward the Socialist Party the Trotskyite leaders pictured the miserable Detroit Convention of the thoroughly opportunist Socialist Party as evidencing a break with the classical reformism of the post-war Social Democracy. The Trotskyite leaders invented evidence of "a determination not to repeat the terrible mistakes and crimes of the parties which has led the Austrian and German masses to the yoke of Fascism."

The real intent of the Detroit Declaration of the S.P. in 1934 which spun a lot of radical sounding demagoguery was to channel off the growing desire of the militant workers in the S. P. to break with the old line reformism. This was recognized by the Trotskyite leaders in 1934.

"The growing desire of the militant (without the capital M!) workers in the party for a break with bankrupt reformism, a desire enhanced by the tragic defeats in Europe, had to be satisfied before it developed to a logical and consistent conclusion. The Militant leaders, most of whom had lived in perfect ease and harmony with Waldman and Co. up to yesterday, threw these workers a sop in the form of the Detroit Declaration." (Ibid.)

This analysis of the intent of the Detroit Declaration was not restricted to M.S. in The New International. The leader of the Workers Party, J. P. Cannon, reached similar conclusions in his series of articles blasting this convention along the same lines:

"A change in front has become an imperative necessity in order to hold the organizations together and regain the confidence of the work-

ers. This is the role of Centrism. The revolutionary impulses of the workers are met with general formulations which sound extremely radical but which do not mean anything specifically. The Detroit declaration abounds in these treacherous and deceptive formulations." (The Militant, June 9, 1934, p. 3)

However, in 1936 Cannon and Shachtman played up the deceptive and treacherous formulations of the Detroit Declaration as evidencing a determination not to repeat the crimes of the Social Democrats in Austria and Germany.

Politically advanced workers must be beguiled by the concrete actions of their leaders and not by abstract theoretical hocus-pocus. In maneuvering the Trotskyite rank-and-file into the S.P. Cannon and Shachtman resorted to the treacherous tactics of concealing their former position on Social Democracy and issuing fake reevaluations.

What was the real political meaning of the Trotskyite dive into the S.P.?

The French Turn period coincided generally with the swing toward the ultra-Rightist policy of Stalin's Comintern begun in 1934 and officially sanctioned at the Seventh Congress of the C.I. in July 1935. In the ultra-Rightist swing of Stalin's C.I. the Comintern bureaucrats re-evaluated the role of Social Democracy. The "third period" fraud of "social fascism" and "united fronts from below" against the socialist leaders was dropped and in its stead a line promoting the strengthening of Socialist Parties with whose leaders united fronts were to be made, was now put forward. The "French Turn" was the Trotskyite version of the Stalinist noise about "organic unity" with Social Democracy. Thus, the Trotsky line of regenerating and rebuilding the parties of the Second International, black with crimes and treachery against the workers, served ingeniously to tie the Trotskyite workers to the Stalinist Rightist line.

* * *

AT the present time the Trotsky-
its leaders in writing history
say that in 1933 when they proclaimed
the need for the Fourth International
it implied a recognition that the
Third International like the Second
which preceded it had become too ossi-
fied to permit of regeneration:

"In 1933, in proclaiming the ne-
cessity for the Fourth Interna-
tional we, and our co-thinkers
throughout the world, declared that
the Comintern was dead as a revolu-
tionary body, by which we meant
that there could be no longer any
hope of halting its degeneration
and turning it back to its revolu-
tionary origins. Like the Second
International which preceded it,
the Third International had become
too ossified to permit of regenera-
tion." (Fourth International, June
1943, p. 173. My emphasis - A. B.)

This is a patent concealment of
the whole sordid history of the French
Turn politics of 1934-37 with all its
fake evaluations of the Socialist

Party and its fraudulent promises "to
make it a party of consistent revolu-
tionary Marxism."

The Trotsky leaders function
along a certain systematic pattern.
Just as they left their pre-French
Turn evaluations of Social Democracy
unrepudiated so they now leave
unacknowledged their French Turn somer-
sault with its "theoretical" story of
the possibility of making revolu-
tionary parties out of the hopelessly
ossified Second International.

It is clear that the Trotsky
"Fourth International" movement is
just a snare to trap the revolutionary
anti-Stalinist workers. The building
of a real and genuine Fourth Interna-
tional means, therefore, in the first
instance, a break from the treacherous
leadership of the Cannons and Shacht-
mans, and the exposure of these un-
principled jugglers of fraudulent
"theories."

Arthur Burke
October 5, 1943

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SOVIET DIPLOMACY: LENINIST VERSUS STALINIST

FOLLOWING the founding of the Soviet State, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party established the fundamental principles governing the diplomatic relations between the Soviet Republic and the various imperialist powers. The outstanding feature of Lenin's diplomacy was the line of fostering world proletarian revolution as the real defense of the Workers State. With the ascendance of Stalinism this line was completely abandoned and buried by the bureaucratic usurpers of power. The bureaucracy sought to win "friends" among the imperialist powers. When the teachings of the revolutionary leadership grew dim in the mind of the Communist workers, the Stalinist Comintern began to spread skillfully-phrased distortions of Lenin's diplomatic policy. One of these distortions was an article written by Radek in 1932 after he had ceased being an "oppositionist" and became one of the outstanding flunkies of Stalin.

At the time Radek's article appeared a move ominous to the Soviet Union was made by the Japanese imperialists. Japan occupied Manchuria, giving her a contiguous border with Siberia. Expressing the feats of the Soviet bureaucracy, Karl Radek publicly hinted at a possible alliance between the United States and the Stalin-ruled Soviet Union directed against Japan.

The Trotskyite leaders wrote in outraged tones at such monstrous unprincipledness and accused Radek of criminal violation of Lenin's position against alliance with one imperialist power against another.

"What does exist is an unprecedented, reactionary unprincipled, 'diplomatic' proposal which spits right in the face of what Lenin wrote expressly on the question of the impermissibility for the Soviets to join hands with one imperialist power for the struggle against another." (The Militant

April 16, 1932. My emphasis-D.S.)

It was not difficult for Cannon-Shachtman to prove conclusively that the Stalinist policy, as voiced by Radek, was a reactionary departure from the principles advanced by Lenin in 1918. All they had to do was to go to the records of the pre-Stalin days and show black on white how all the Bolshevik leaders, Stalin included, stood on the matter of alliances with imperialist powers. Since Lenin had formulated the specific principle in words easy to understand, Cannon and Shachtman seized upon them with both hands, to prove Stalin's opportunism:

"Our policy must be based not on a choice between two imperialisms but on the possibility of strengthening the socialist revolution or at least on the necessity of enabling it to offer resistance until the other countries join the revolutionary movement... Omission in original We have always fought our own imperialism, but the overthrow of the imperialism of one country by means of an alliance with the imperialism of another, is a line of action that we reject both on reasons of principle and because we consider it inadmissible." (The Militant, April 16, 1932)

The Militant pointed out that Lenin adopted this position at a time when the starving Soviet Republic had no army, no munitions, no guns with which to hold back the German imperialist forces marching into the country. Despite such a desperate situation Lenin clung tenaciously to the line of rejecting any alliances with any of the imperialists and accepted rather the rapacious Brest-Litovsk Treaty. The Militant wrote:

"Let us remember that this was written at a time when Russia's need for 'Allies' was infinitely more acute than today, at a time when there was no Red army and when

(unlike the situation in Manchuria) the German forces had already advanced upon Russian territory into the very heart of the country. In spite of this Lenin offered objections in principle to the proposals for an alliance with the Anglo-French imperialists. He did not withdraw them even when Kamkov, leader of the Social Revolutionists announced to the Soviet Congress the withdrawal of that party's support of the Bolshevik government because Lenin preferred to sign the humiliating treaty of Brest-Litovsk." (April 30, 1932)

Although the Stalinist trampling upon the principle came fourteen years after it had been enunciated by Lenin, Cannon and Shachtman made a special point of stressing the old position as inviolable. They showed thereby that they were perfectly clear that the principle was the cornerstone of a revolutionary foreign policy and could not be rejected or cancelled at any time, no matter in what difficulty the Soviet Union might find itself.

The Trotskyite leaders gave every outward appearance that they would cling tenaciously to the principled position of Lenin on the impermissibility of a workers' state making a military alliance with an imperialist country.

* * *

A FEW years after Radek so cautiously broached the subject of military alliances, the Stalin gang actually passed from the talking stage to deeds and formed a military "alliance" with the financial oligarchy of France. No longer were Trotsky and his followers faced with merely a distant hint but with a naked opportunist policy concretely applied. How did Trotsky react now? The topic came up during the hearings of the Dewey Commission. Trotsky was asked the following question:

"What is your general attitude towards making alliances for war purposes or other purposes between the Soviet Union and a capitalist country?" (The Case of Leon Trotsky, pp. 314-315)

Trotsky, who knew the Leninist principled reply to this question, replied:

"In so far as it can serve to preserve the Soviet Union an alliance becomes a necessity. It is only a question of not hindering by this alliance the workers' movement abroad. But in principle I admit it — the necessity of an alliance to preserve the Soviet Union." (Ibid. My emphasis - D.S.)

We can observe from Trotsky's answer that in place of the revolutionary principle enunciated by Lenin in 1918, Trotsky now upheld a new "principle." This newly-concocted "principle" was no other than the opportunist line of Stalin and his Comintern. It was support with "criticism," as usual!

Pseudo-Marxists always mask their betrayal of proletarian principles with revolutionary-sounding sophistry, so as to prevent the advanced workers from detecting that betrayal. The treacherous bureaucrats of the Comintern told the workers that the Stalin-Laval alliance would aid in the defense of the workers State. Strikingly enough, Trotsky fundamentally took up the same line. He gave as a reason for the permissibility in principle of military alliances the preservation of the Soviet Union. One can cite no graver time when the Soviets needed aid for the preservation of the newly formed Soviet state than 1918 when the German imperialist forces were marching toward Petrograd and the Soviets were completely destitute. Yet, as The Militant stated in April 1932, "In spite of this, Lenin offered objections in principle to the proposals for an alliance with the Anglo-French imperialists."

When revolutionists insist upon adherence to principles they do not proceed from the blind worship of abstract formulations but from the angle of defending the interests of the proletariat. It is clear why Lenin, and Trotsky when the latter was still a revolutionist, rejected the line of military alliances with imperialist powers. Such alliances would only serve to spread illusions among the

workers, since the basic interests of imperialism and the proletarian State are irreconcilable.

In 1918 the Anglo-French imperialists proposed an alliance with the Bolshevik government to continue the war against Kaiser Germany. On this line the Anglo-French rulers promised aid to the Soviet Republic. Lenin saw through the scheme and warned the workers that behind the shield of such an "alliance" the Anglo-French and the German imperialists would maneuver in common to defeat the Soviet State. Lenin rejected the proposed military alliance. On the basis of a Marxist analysis of the irreconcilable conflict between a workers State and the imperialist world, Lenin enunciated the impermissibility of a Soviet-imperialist military alliance as a basic Marxist principle.

History in a negative way proved the correctness of this old-established principle. Stalin's "military alliance" with the French imperialists deceived both the Soviet and the world masses into believing that if the Nazis had opened an attack upon the Soviet Union, France would immediately have come to its assistance. In reality the French imperialists never meant to aid the Soviet Union. Stalin's "Franco-Soviet alliance" was an added propaganda weapon in the hands of the Hitler gang to have the German masses accept the starvation conditions in order to intensify the rearming of Germany, which incidentally was foisted by Stalin's "allies," the French bankers. Not only are Stalinist "alliances" deceptions of the masses but also the Stalinist "non-aggression pacts." The best example is the Hitler-Stalin pact. It gave the Soviet masses the illusion that Hitler would not attack them. This paralyzing illusion aided in the destruction of millions of lives of the Soviet masses.

* * *

THE Trotskyite stock-in-trade is a pretense of "opposition" to Stalin which serves to conceal the underlying policy of support of Stalinism. While Trotsky supported Stalin in betrayals, he always cloaked this

support with "criticism." Such was the case also with the violation of the Leninist principle of the impermissibility of forming military alliances with an imperialist country. In the Dewey hearings Goldman paraphrased Trotsky's reply to make certain that Trotsky's statement could in no way be misunderstood:

"In other words, in principle you admit that under certain circumstances it is necessary to make an alliance with a capitalist country."

Trotsky's answer to this was as follows:

"Under the condition that the Communist Party of the allied country is not obliged to support its Government, and that the Communist Party remains free in its opposition against the Government." (Ibid.)

This is the "criticism" which Trotsky offers as a blind for his whitewash of Stalin's opportunism. Military alliances, said Trotsky, are in principle permissible, but the Communist Party must remain free. In other words, military alliances are all right, but Stalin does not make them correctly. Let us, however, examine this "criticism" to see whether it holds water, and whether it is a bona fide condition upon which the principle of military alliances or no military alliances depends.

Trotsky states that an alliance between an imperialist power and a workers' State is acceptable in principle if "the Communist Party of the allied country is not obliged to support its Government," and "remains free in its opposition against the Government." But Trotsky knew that early in 1918 when the question of an alliance with Anglo-French imperialism against German imperialism arose there were no Communist Parties in France and England, nor was there a Communist International. Yet Lenin ruled out an alliance with imperialist countries. Therefore, the condition which Trotsky advanced for the permissibility of forming a military alliance played no part

in Lenin's principle against such an alliance. What Lenin rejected as unprincipled was a military alliance as such. Trotsky concocted his condition to cover his own violation of the Leninist principle.

recently as August of this year:

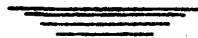
"While such alliances are sometimes necessary and not wrong in themselves, they must always be recognized as unstable and subordinate instruments for aiding the workers' state." (The Militant, Editorial, August 28, 1943. My emphasis - D. S.)

* * *
T HROUGHOUT the degeneration of the Soviet Union, Stalin with the aid of Trotsky's support, white-wash and "criticism" has succeeded in burying the Marxist-Leninist principles attained through the vast and costly experiences of the proletariat. That principle is only one of the many which have been trampled into the mud by the Stalinist degeneration. As the years of betrayal and deceit continue these principles become more and more blurred in the mind of the deluded workers who believe that their leaders are still adhering to Leninism.

One vivid manifestation of the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern is the way the lickspittles of the Big Boss unhesitatingly accept the frauds handed down to them from above. When Stalin's Radek came out with the proposals of a military alliance, Cannon and Co. worked themselves up into a lather exposing the perversion of Lenin's principle, while Browder gave Radek's proposal prominent support. But when Trotsky himself openly abandoned the same principle, Cannon not only did not utter a syllable of criticism but actually accepted the new piece of Trotsky's opportunism as a gospel of Marxism.

If any one doubts that Trotsky's statement at the Dewey Commission represents the official Trotskyist line of today we refer him to the editorial statement of the Trotskyite paper, as

D. Simms
October 1943



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