

THE BULLETIN

ANOTHER COMINTERN ZIGZAG IN THE MAKING

—J. C. HUNTER

SEVENTEEN YEARS OF SELLOUTS:

**THE WORK OF CANNON AND
SHACHTMAN IN THE TRADE UNIONS**

Part One

—ARTHUR BURKE

ELECTIONEERING FOR STALINISM

(The S.W.P. and the W.P. in the Los Angeles Elections)

—D. SIMMS

A "LABOR" PROTECTOR OF WAR PROFITS

—A. JAMES

THE R.W.L.'S PERSISTENT DISTORTION

THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION

An Early Symptom of Bureaucratic Corruption

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THE BULLETIN and its PURPOSE

THE BULLETIN is devoted to crystallizing the programmatic foundation for a new proletarian party in America and a Marxist International. On the basis of the lessons of the October Revolution, of a struggle against the betrayals resulting from the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern, against the workings of Social-democracy, as well as against the policies of imperialism in the present epoch, THE BULLETIN presents a system of ideas for the fight against capitalism.

The immediate aim of THE BULLETIN is to arm the revolutionary workers with an understanding of the pseudo-Marxist organizations now controlling the proletarian vanguard and to organize these workers into a new Marxist Party.

The rôle of Stalinism as the chief betrayer within the ranks of the proletariat and of the Trotsky tendency as a loyal "opposition" and main prop of Stalinism among the revolutionary anti-Stalinist workers has been established in THE BULLETIN with documentary evidence. THE BULLETIN contains the only Marxist exposure of the so-called "ultra-left" tendencies which spread the confusion that the Stalinist bureaucratic apparatus operating the state issuing out of a proletarian revolution, is a new class.

To rally the proletarian vanguard around the program of Marxism for the struggle to liberate the toiling masses from every form of oppression - this is the purpose for which THE BULLETIN has fought from its foundation and which differentiates it from all other publications.

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ANOTHER COMINTERN ZIGZAG IN THE MAKING

THE FOSTER LETTER AND THE DUCLOS ARTICLE

The furious "discussion" occurring in the American Stalinist organization is easily recognized as heralding another turn in the Stalinist line. What is not so readily discernible, but of fundamental importance nevertheless, is the unique political methodology concealed beneath the mountain of "self-critical" verbiage emanating from the leading lights of American Stalinism.

Superficial observers imagine that the "discussion" was initiated quite spontaneously by the appearance of Jacques Duclos' article of April 1945. Indeed, the Stalinist tops foster this idea assiduously, pretending that the Duclos article is a veritable turning point in history, a great beacon which through its inspiring light ushers in a new epoch. Thus, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn in a speech to the National Committee of the C.P.A. exclaimed: "For a long time I didn't see these things clearly and all of a sudden I feel I came out of a fog, thanks to Comrade Duclos holding a mirror up to us and forcing us to examine ourselves." (Political Affairs, July 1945, p. 616) Gilbert Green declares "we owe a real debt of gratitude to Comrade Duclos." Everything was utter darkness, says Roy Hudson, until "we began to do some serious thinking as a result of Comrade Duclos' article." And so on ad infinitum. With machine-like monotony every Stalinist leader pays homage to Duclos' article. What is the real story behind this most recent development in the American Stalinist organization?

The Duclos article plays a certain role in this situation, but one entirely different from the popular conception. The Duclos article is but a link in a long chain whose origin lies in the secret chambers of the Stalinist bureaucrats.

The real starting point of the present Stalinist "discussion" is not Duclos' article at all, but a letter by William Z. Foster to the National Committee of the Communist Party, U.S.A., dated January 20, 1944, more than a year before the Duclos article. It is a fact readily verifiable by anyone who takes the trouble to read the July 1945 issue of Political Affairs that the Duclos article is nothing but a mechanical repetition of Foster's letter of more than a year before. The objections to Browder's utterances raised by Duclos are simply parrottings of Foster's letter, indeed, supported by quotations from it. The only point covered in Duclos' article and not occurring in Foster's letter is that of the "dissolution" of the American C.P., and even that, according to a note by Foster, was opposed and voted against by him in January 1944.

According to Foster's recent statement (Political Affairs, July 1945, p. 655) his letter of January 20, 1944 was discussed and rejected by an enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the C.P. on February 8, 1944. Only Foster and Darcy voted against its rejection. With Foster's consent, his letter was kept secret from the C.P. rank-and-file. Nothing was heard of it in the Stalinist organization until the appearance of the article by Duclos more than a year later, who in arguing against Browder based himself on Foster's letter.

How is it, then, that Foster's letter was kept secret for over a year and that the "discussion" was officially set off by the appearance of the Duclos article? What is the meaning of the Foster letter, the real parent of this whole affair? Why were the National Committee members not "inspired" by Foster's

letter when it was written but were plunged with machine-like precision into a veritable frenzy of "Marxist re-evaluation" by Duclos' phonograph performance?

The circumstances in which Foster's letter was written are of the utmost importance for an understanding of the whole episode. Foster's letter is dated nine days after the January 11, 1944 meeting of the National Committee of the C.P. which voted to "dissolve" the C.P. Foster claims that from the start he opposed the "dissolution." That "dissolution" represents the most extreme stage of the ultra-Rightist zigzag of the Stalintern as it manifested itself in this country. In other words, at the same time that the Stalinist leaders were carrying the ultra-Rightist zigzag to its farthest point, the basis was being laid in secret for a future swing to the Leftist zigzag!

As is well known, no Stalinist bureaucrat has an independent policy. All fundamental lines in the Stalintern are laid down in Moscow. Both Browder, in carrying the ultra-Rightist zigzag to its extreme, and Foster in planting the seeds for the eventual turn to a Leftist zigzag, were given their lines by their boss in the Kremlin. Foster, of course, knows perfectly well that the ultra-Rightist line of the Stalintern these past several years was not invented by Browder, but is Stalin's line. Foster on his own would no more raise objections to Stalin's line than he would try to jump over the moon. The only conceivable basis for Foster's taking issue early in 1944 with the official ultra-Rightist policies is instructions from Moscow where preparations were being made for slanting the Stalintern again to a Leftist course. The Stalinist bureaucrats live in a veritable terror of differing with Stalin. They may pose before the workers as independent leaders, but in the Stalinist bureaucratic system they are just obedient dogs. One syllable from Stalin that Browder or Foster is an opportunist, and these "leaders" are wiped out overnight, their "glory" in the gutter and their name a curse on the lips of the same misled workers who the day before mechanically swallowed these "leaders" every utterance.

Why, then, was Foster's letter of January 20, 1944 "rejected" and kept secret by the Political Bureau? Evidently Foster's letter was not meant to launch the Leftist zigzag immediately. The ultra-Rightist line had to run its full course. There is always a transition period in switching from one zigzag to the other. Foster's letter was left in the record for a subsequent use. With this letter it was made clear to all members of the Political Bureau that the Kremlin had decided eventually to change the line and with it to set Browder aside and to establish Foster as the engineer in this country of a Leftist zigzag, with the subsequent handing over of Party control to him. At the appropriate moment, after the necessary back-stage rehearsals, the unfolding of the Leftist zigzag would be made a public matter.

At this point, Duclos performed his particular role. In order to conceal from the rank-and-file the real course of these machinations on the inside, the "discussion" was given the appearance of starting far from the American scene. The Duclos article appears before the rank-and-file as a very objective, bona fide criticism from an "eminent French comrade" who has been seriously worrying about "Browder's opportunism." Stalin wants this shift in line and leaders to take place smoothly, with a minimum of shock and the absence of any "factional" atmosphere. Naturally, Duclos had to bring up Foster's letter so as to establish that it was Foster who first saw "Browder's opportunism," way back in January 1944. But the bureaucrats take great care, after this initial revelation of a bit of the behind-the-scene doings, to distract attention from Foster's letter and to concentrate the workers' mind on the Duclos article. Hence, the well-rehearsed, automaton-like ritual of praises by the National Committee members for Duclos' article which they pretend first showed them the light. Every one of these swindlers knows perfectly well that Foster's letter was the

beginning of this particular machination, that each one was given complete instructions on what role to play. Their smooth performance is the result of many years of experience in these maneuvers.

Browder's best hope is that after being set aside, he may be brought back some day into the limelight. He has seen such ups and downs many times before, how Party bureaucrats were built up to big figures and then in a certain exigency put in cold storage only to be brought to the fore again in some subsequent machination. However, if Stalin's instruction is to expel him, then he will be out.

There is a special reason why it is necessary to grasp the exact course of the behind-the-scenes machinations involved in this initiation of the turn to a Leftist zigzag. If one imagines that it started, as the bureaucrats pretend, with the appearance of Duclos' article in April 1945, then one will automatically seek in the world situation at that time the reason for the shift in line. But if one knows the facts about Foster's letter of January 20, 1944, then one's attention will be turned back to that period, to determine the reason why the laying of the basis of the switch to a Leftist zigzag was considered necessary by Stalin at least a year and a half ago, in January 1944. It is quite safe to say that even before January 1944, i.e., some time in 1943, the ruler in the Kremlin already foresaw a future need to shunt his "International" onto a Leftist course. When the Kremlin gave Foster his instructions, resulting in the letter of January 1944, the need for a future change to a Leftist course had obviously already been thought out and decided upon. What instructions in this matter were given by the Kremlin at the end of 1943 and beginning of 1944 to other sections of the Stalintern, of course, are not known to us. Distinct evidence is available only in the case of the American section, but it would be foolish to imagine that the same work was not carried out elsewhere in different and appropriate forms.

Thus, we see that at least as far back as the end of 1943 and beginning of 1944, the Kremlin decided that a change to a Leftist Stalintern zigzag would be necessary some time in the future. This basic fact, orienting the analysis of the development, is absolutely essential to a correct understanding.

* * * *

THE STALINIST ZIGZAG SYSTEM

Such is the immediate background of the unfolding of the new Leftist zigzag. Its historical background is a whole system of counter-revolution which must not be lost sight of if an understanding of the misleading forces in the ranks of the workers is to be formed.

Since the time when the Soviet bureaucracy received a conscious direction in the person of the renegade leaders of the former Bolshevik Party, i.e., since the origins of Stalinism, the Soviet leadership has been a veritable fountain-head of counter-revolution basing itself on the revolutionary-minded, but deceived workers. The bureaucratic usurpers very early recognized that the revolutionary impulses of the workers were a danger to the centralized bureaucratic rule, the privilege, careerism, stolen wealth and administrative abuses which constitute the essence of Stalinism. Hence, the renegade leaders established policies designed to thwart any effort of the toilers to liberate themselves from oppression. To the bureaucrats it made no difference where the revolutionary initiative might arise, whether in the Soviet Union itself or in one of the capitalist countries. Even if it appeared outside the Soviet Union, the renegades understood that eventually the revolutionary tide would topple them from their seats of usurped power in the Soviet State. Not only within the Soviet Union, therefore, but also in the countries of capitalist structure, the

leading bureaucrats laid down policies to prevent a proletarian upheaval. In a word, the Comintern was transformed into an engine of counter-revolution to guard the usurped power of the Soviet bureaucracy.

In 1921-22, the Stalinist leaders established the first zigzag of the bureaucratized "Comintern." At the Fourth Congress of the Stalinized "Comintern," (November 1922) the renegades, behind the back of the ailing Lenin, officially adopted a platform for an ultra-Rightist zigzag, a policy of support to bourgeois-democratic governments. In Germany in 1923, the renegades betrayed the workers through this line.

To conceal the betrayal, the bureaucrats engineered a Leftist putsch in Hamburg and subsequently in several other places. For a while in 1924, ultra-Leftism served to cover up the Rightist betrayal of the year before.

The Rightist betrayal in Germany in 1923, however, did not yet exhaust the usefulness of the Rightist zigzag to the bureaucrats in power in Moscow. The Rightist line was continued and used to effect enormous betrayals in England (General Strike, 1926) and in China (Chinese Revolution, 1925-27).

For the ensuing period the Rightist zigzag was finished in so far as being of use to the bureaucrats was concerned. If they kept up the same line indefinitely, the dissatisfied and resentful workers would have broken away from their influence. In order to safeguard their strangle-hold on the workers, the Stalinist leaders always have to switch to a "new" line, to cover up their previous treachery. For this purpose after 1927 they turned on an ultra-Leftist zigzag which came to be known as the "Third Period" line. The Leftist line, just as the Rightist, was used to paralyze the workers and keep them bound to their oppressors. Instead of open blocs with various "democratic," "Socialist" and "liberal" swindlers, the Stalinist bureaucrats pursued a policy of hurling the workers into adventurist strikes, putsches, insane "activities" of all sorts. This looked very "revolutionary," but it culminated in one of the most enormous betrayals in history, the sell-out by Stalinism to the Nazis in 1933. Stalinism left the workers hamstrung and Hitler came to power without a finger being lifted against him.

After such a colossal disaster for the workers, the ultra-Leftist line was no longer of use to the Stalinist bureaucrats. Again they had to cover up their treachery and ward off the resentment of the workers by some "new" line. The influence of Stalinism was protected by turning on a new zigzag, an ultra-Rightist one, which came eventually to be known as the "Popular Front."

* * * * *

THE QUESTION OF FOREIGN POLICY UP TO JUNE 1941

At this point it is necessary to indicate the real facts concerning the relation of Stalin's "Comintern" line to his foreign policy. A great deal of fakery has been spread on this point by the sham anti-Stalinist tendencies.

From the Fourth Congress (1922) up to 1933, the bureaucratic Soviet regime had "friendly" relations with Weimar Germany. Toward the British, American and French powers, the Stalinist regime had to maintain a front of mistrust and animosity, mainly for the reason that the British, French and American rulers acted very hostile toward the Stalinist Government (refusal of U.S. recognition, stubbornness on the question of trade pacts, threats of attack, etc.). The Soviet foreign policy from 1922 to 1933 was more or less constant, centering around "friendly" relations with the Weimar Republic as the "buffer" against the other big powers. Nevertheless, during that period of basically uniform foreign policy

of German orientation, the Stalinern had three changes of zigzag, from Rightist to Leftist (1923-24), from Leftist to Rightist (1924-25), from Rightist to Leftist (1927-28). The basis of each switch in Stalinern zigzag was the need of the bureaucrats to cover up the betrayal effected by the previous zigzag and to retain the bureaucratic grip on the workers. Stalinist foreign policy played no causative role whatever in the alternations of Stalinern zigzag.

When the Nazis came to power in 1933 it was an open question whether Stalin would be able to continue his "friendly" relations with German imperialism. During the year 1933, Stalin sought a "friendship" pact with the Hitler Government. Yet it was precisely during this period that the new ultra-Rightist line (later called "Popular Front") was unfolding. The Stalinist bureaucrats, who only yesterday had been screaming that every Social Democrat, from Kautsky down to the last man, woman and child in the Social-democratic movement, was a fascist and social-fascist, in March 1933 offered to refrain from attacks on the Social Democracy. This was made a keynote of the unfolding ultra-Rightist line. And all the while the Stalinist leaders were seeking a pact with the Hitler Government! It is plain that the unfolding Stalinern zigzag which came to be known as the "Popular Front" was not in any way caused by Stalin's foreign policy maneuvers. Had Stalin in 1933 or 1934 succeeded in getting a pact with Hitler, then the whole "Popular Front" line would have developed with the existence of a Hitler-Stalin Pact. Naturally, the bureaucrats would have justified such a foreign policy, as they justified all of Stalin's fakery. They justify Stalin's foreign policy regardless of the color of the Stalinern zigzag. Stalin, however, was unable at that juncture to get a pact with Hitler, and so turned to the French imperialists. By coincidence, therefore, and through no causative relation whatever, the "Popular Front" zigzag unfolded to the accompaniment of a Franco-Soviet Pact. The pseudo-anti-Stalinist opportunists immediately took the cue to falsify the real relationship of factors, and spread the deception that the Franco-Soviet Pact was the mainspring of the "Popular Front" zigzag. The real cause of that Rightist line was, as we have indicated above, the need to cover up the betrayal of the "Third Period."

The "Popular Front" zigzag culminated in the Stalinist betrayal of the Spanish Civil War (ended March 1939). Again the bureaucrats were faced by the need to cover their treacherous tracks, to hold off a shift of the radical workers away from the influence of Stalinism. Immediately, the Stalinist bandits began to make scapegoats of their partners of yesterday, the Social-Democratic leaders, who hand-in-hand with Stalinism had betrayed the Spanish toilers. The Social Democrats were blamed for the disaster of the Spanish workers. The Stalinist leaders again began to take up Leftist talk in order to cover up the previous Rightist sell-out. Another Leftist zigzag was in the making and was unfolding slowly after the end of the Spanish Civil War through the year 1939. While this Leftist zigzag was in its initial stages, Stalin continued his pact with French imperialism and with Czechoslovakia.

In August 1939 a pact was engineered between Stalin and Hitler, isolating the Soviet Union from the masses of Europe, and particularly from the French masses who were soon to be brought under the Hitler ax by the "democratic" rulers (May 1940). The Leftist zigzag which had been unfolding since the end of the Spanish Civil War continued. The bureaucrats of the Stalinern with their usual sophistry harmonized the Hitler-Stalin Pact with the Leftist line. When Chamberlain and Daladier declared "war" on Hitler, to conceal the free hand they were giving him to the East, the Stalinist leaders, having no particular reason to change the unfolding Leftist zigzag, applied another smear of "Left" paint to their treacherous countenance and applied the label, "Second World Imperialist War" for the division of the world among the capitalist powers. This definition of the "Second World War" was officially laid down by Stalinism in the un-

folding of the Leftist zigzag and was adopted by the various pseudo-Marxist tendencies. Like all the ultra-Leftist tactics of Stalinism, this definition blinded the workers to the fact that secretly the imperialists were not at war but in collaboration, at that particular time in the specific process of turning France and the Balkans over to Hitler as preparation for the attack on the Soviet Union.

* * * *

JUNE 1941: STALIN HITCHES THE "COMINTERN" LINE TO HIS FOREIGN POLICY

When the Nazis attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, Stalin overnight switched back to the ultra-Rightist zigzag. For the first time in the history of Stalinism, the switch in zigzag was specifically caused by the change in Stalin's foreign relations.

In the particular situation of invasion Stalin had nothing to maneuver with but his fake alliance with the "democracies." He had to have something to dangle before the workers to conceal the fact that his counter-revolutionary policies had isolated the Soviet Union and left it with nothing but the sheer outpouring of the blood of the Soviet workers and peasants as the means of defense against the Nazi attack. His "alliance" with the "democracies" was the only bait he had to cheat the workers with. Naturally, he could not continue the Leftist zigzag which made a lot of noise against "democracy." Nor could he have his bribed "Comintern" flunkoys continue their howl that the "Second World War" was an inter-imperialist war. He only changed the form of his concealment of the fact that the whole imperialist world was behind the Nazi army in its attack on the Soviet Union. During the Leftist zigzag of 1939 to June 1941 the concealment of the preparations for the attack took the form of pretending that the imperialists were at war amongst themselves. This swindle was a cover of the fact that all the imperialists were paving Hitler's path against the Soviet Union by turning over to him country after country in Europe. After June 1941 Stalin covered up the real policy of world imperialism by pretending that the "democracies" were really his allies. This fakery, as we have said, was simply bait that Stalin gave the workers to hide the real isolation of the Soviet Union brought about by Stalinism's counter-revolutionary policies. Stalin's treacherous policies actually facilitated the imperialist attack on the Soviet Union; they could do nothing else. It took the blood of perhaps twenty million toilers of the Soviet Union to defeat the Nazi attack, an attack which would never have occurred in the first place but for the treachery of Stalinism.

* * * *

THE PRESENT NEW ZIGZAG

The ultra-Rightist line precipitately switched on again in June 1941 still continues in operation to the present day in its basic forms, and may continue for some time. The new Leftist line is only in preparatory, transitional stages. Only the merest beginnings of a Leftist line have been made.

What are the circumstances of the unfolding of this latest Leftist zigzag?

As we have seen, the basis was laid at the end of 1943 and beginning of 1944. At that time, the general situation was this: Stalin's army had already driven back the Nazis from the Volga to the Dnieper; the siege of Leningrad was just about to be lifted. In a word, there could be no doubt that the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union had been defeated, for it was inconceivable that after the Herculean efforts already spent, after such enormous offensives as those

which had carried the Nazis to the Volga, Hitler's army could again mobilize sufficient forces to give any promise whatsoever of success. The prospect was the continued withdrawal of the Nazi Army. Stalin knew perfectly well what this meant ultimately for the Nazi regime and for the masses of Europe, as well as for his foreign relations. The concrete situation unfolding had two features: (1) the inevitable turbulence and tenseness of the masses in the face of the progressive collapse of the Nazi power. (2) the emergence of the Anglo-American imperialists standing not as his "Allies" but as direct opponents with forces right in Stalin's front yard. Each of these factors created needs which are served by a "Leftist" zigzag.

In so far as the masses are concerned, Stalin knew way back that the Rightist line could not be continued forever. The defeat of the Nazis, the inevitable elimination of the Nazi regime removed the whole system of rationalizations created by the bureaucrats for the Rightist line. Hitler as the big bogey man of Europe was the spectre used by the Stalinist bureaucrats to justify support to bourgeois democracy. "Defeat the Nazis first, then we'll have to fight for Socialism," — this was the demagogy of the Stalin bureaucrats to make the Rightist line acceptable to the workers. But with the Nazis on the retreat or out of power altogether, the revolutionary aspirations of the masses were bound to come to the fore, and the old Stalinist song-and-dance — Beware of Hitler — was becoming worn out and useless. The inevitable rise of mass discontent, the results of the betrayals effected through the Rightist line, compel Stalin to introduce a change in zigzag sooner or later.

At the same time, the elimination of the Nazi Army, as we have said, made Stalin view the Anglo-American forces as the new possible threat on his borders. A Rightist line in support of "democracy" is unworkable also in the context of open hostility between Stalin and the "democratic" powers. A Leftist line, on the other hand, fits in very well with antagonism between the Anglo-American powers and the Stalinized Soviet Union.

From every angle the stage was set in the Stalinist bureaucrats' mind at the end of 1943 for laying the basis of a Leftist zigzag. The engineering of the Foster letter of January 1944 was the outcome of this complex of circumstances.

* * * *

THE PSEUDO-MARXISTS

It is significant that ours is the only tendency which points out the real role of Foster's letter of January 20, 1944. As we have shown, the Stalinist bureaucrats work hard to cast a dense cloud of obscurity over the part that document performed, laying a totally false emphasis on Duclos' article of April 1945. The other pseudo-Marxist tendencies follow suit. The Militant and Labor Action have had several issues since the information on the new turn has become available. The line of these papers is to disregard the Foster letter and its role and to harp on Duclos' article.

In connection with the Shachtmanites, there is a very interesting angle to the new turn in the Stalinist line. Shachtman's story is that the Stalinist bureaucracy is not a labor bureaucracy but a new class. It would seem logical to expect, according to Marxism, that a new class would introduce politics quite different from the labor bureaucracy which, according to Shachtman, was overthrown by a civil war in 1936-38. But the Stalinist system continues merrily along with its old zigzag methods despite Shachtman's efforts to transform it into a "new class." The old zigzag system of Stalinism still continues to function in full force. How does Shachtman make the inauguration of an ultra-Leftist zigzag fit in with his definition of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a "new class?"

While the Stalintern was pursuing the ultra-Rightist line, Shachtman's yarn of a "new class" may have had some semblance of plausibility despite its utter falseness. With the unfolding of an ultra-Leftist line, however, the hokum about a "new class" will be exploded to bits.

Another pseudo-Marxist definition of Stalinism which will be in very hot water is the Oehlerite R.W.L. definition of Stalinism as Reformism. This drivel also sounded plausible during the ultra-Rightist zigzag of the Stalintern. Quite consistently the R.W.L. definition of Stalinism as Reformism excluded a turn to the ultra-Left because Reformism never did and never does resort to ultra-Leftist tactics. The most that happens in the Reformist camp which includes Social Democracy, is that a section of it talks a bit to the left of the main base of the movement. Social Democracy as a whole pursues at all times a Rightist line. Only Stalinism has a zigzagging tactic, now ultra-Right, now ultra-Left. The leaders of the R.W.L. completely deceive the workers on the nature of Stalinism. Reformism is a political tendency arising in capitalist countries; it grows out of capitalism. Stalinism originated in and is based on a Workers State. The two tendencies are totally different historical entities, and to put them in the same pot is to confuse the workers on the nature not only of Stalinism but also of Reformism.

The R. W.L., of course, simply took over the Trotskyite baggage when they termed Stalinism Reformism. Trotsky in the old days used to define Stalinism as Bureaucratic Centrism. Trotsky pretended that there were three tendencies in the Soviet Union and in the Comintern; (1) a Right deviationist tendency (Rykov-Tomsky-Brandler-Levestone) which he and later Stalin said was working for a restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union; (2) a Centrist tendency (Stalin-Thaelmann-Browder-Foster); and (3) a Marxist tendency (Trotsky). In actuality, all three tendencies were the same. Rykov-Tomsky and Co. were Stalin's flunkies having no policy whatever outside of Stalin's, and Trotsky was a concealed supporter of Stalin. Incidentally, in the Moscow Trials, Stalin simply borrowed verbatim Trotsky's fabrication that Rykov-Tomsky were Right deviationists working for the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, turned it into a legal indictment and with this as a cover murdered his two former partners-in-crime.

The R.W.L. parroted Trotsky that Stalinism was Bureaucratic Centrism and as the Rightist zigzag gained momentum, added the catch-phrase that it had evolved to Reformism. From the official Trotskyites nothing has been heard about "Bureaucratic Centrism" these last few years.

Stalinism is the bureaucratic centralization of power in the Workers State. The leaders of the Bolshevik Party, corrupted along bureaucratic lines, usurped power, creating a huge labor bureaucracy as their mass base. This is the essence of Stalinism, and all other definitions are fakery and deception. Our tendency is the only one which has consistently from its foundation advanced that Marxist understanding of Stalinism.

The new Leftist zigzag launched by Stalinism completely confirms our definition of Stalinism. It exposes the utter falseness of all other definitions.

J. C. Hunter
July 24, 1945

ELECTIONEERING FOR STALINISM
(The S.W.P. and the W. P. in the
Los Angeles Elections)

The policy of Marxism is a consistent one; it does not turn itself inside out and become its opposite for special occasions. Election Day is certainly not an occasion for Marxism to betray its policy and come to the support of reactionary forces. For three hundred and sixty four days of the year, Marxism struggles to win the workers away from support in thought and action to the bourgeoisie and the opportunists. During Election periods, Marxism pursues the same policy. Its exposure of the capitalists and opportunists throughout the year is consistently translated on Election Day into a specific act — a vote against the capitalists and opportunists. It is for this purpose, amongst others, that Marxist forces participate in the elections held under capitalist rule. Not only to bring its program before the workers whose interest in politics is somewhat heightened during election periods, but also to bring the workers to act in the election in accordance with Marxism's struggle against all the reactionary forces — to vote against all the representatives of reaction and for the fighters of Marxism.

At times the workers overwhelmingly will not vote against the candidates of the reactionary forces. This is no excuse for Marxism to fall in with the political backwardness of the toilers and condone their support to the bourgeois and opportunist candidates. In such periods of working class political backwardness, the Marxist policy is to teach and explain, to expose all camps of reaction consistently in word and deed and thus to enlighten the workers.

* * * *

THE RECENT LOS ANGELES ELECTIONS

The policy of Marxism is often well illustrated by contrast with its opposite.

In April of this year municipal elections were held in Los Angeles. Among the many candidates before the workers were two, Myra Tanner Weiss and Charlotta A. Bass. Myra Tanner Weiss was the candidate for Mayor on the platform of the Socialist Workers Party, and according to the S. W. P. represented Marxism in the Los Angeles elections. Part of Weiss's electioneering was the advocacy of Charlotta A. Bass for councilwoman from District 7.

On April 7, 1945 the Trotskyite paper, The Militant, announced the endorsement of Bass by the S. W. P. of Los Angeles in its election campaign.

"In the final, crucial week of the local municipal election campaign, the Los Angeles section of the Socialist Workers Party and its candidate for Mayor, Myra Tanner Weiss, have announced their endorsement of the candidacy of Charlotta A. Bass, independent Negro candidate for councilwoman from the 7th district." (My emphasis - D.S.)

Following this endorsement Myra Tanner Weiss was electioneering both for herself and for the "independent Negro candidate," Charlotta A. Bass.

The appellation "independent" is used by the capitalist politicians to define a candidate who stands, presumably, outside the fold of the two major

bourgeois parties. In the terms of Marxism independent can mean only one thing, however; it can mean only independent of the bourgeois parties of all stripes, independent of the supporters of capitalism, no matter what form the support takes; independent can mean only serving in the interests of the workers. It can mean, then, only one thing — Marxist. A Social-democratic candidate is not an independent candidate. Notwithstanding his "Left" cover he supports and maintains capitalism. A Stalinist candidate, likewise, is not an independent candidate. He serves the Stalinist bureaucracy whose policy is to chain the workers to the bourgeoisie, now by a Rightist line, now by a Leftist swing. Browder, Thorez, Gallacher, Thomas, Blum, Morrison, are not independent candidates. While arising from different social sources, they all work to save capitalism from the onslaught of the workers and their interests are in every way inimical to those of the proletariat. When the Stalinist and Socialist betrayers get sufficient support of the misled workers to acquire office in bourgeois governments and seats in parliaments, they utilize these positions to strengthen the capitalist death grip on the proletariat.

Charlotta A. Bass, whom the S.W.P. endorsed was described as an independent candidate. What does "independent" mean in the language of the S.W.P.? Does it mean that Bass represented the interests of the workers and was independent of the bourgeoisie and of all the supporters of the bourgeoisie? The Militant tells us something of the program of the "independent" Bass:

"1. Her program is the program of the corrupt Communist Political Association (Stalinists) which is one of craven submission to the Big Business capitalists and their political representatives, who are the real authors of all the injustices which Negroes suffer."

As we see, the "independent" candidate is nothing more than a Stalinist stooge! Her program, the Trotskyite endorsers admit, is "craven submission to the Big Business capitalists"! What, then, is independent about a Stalinist flunko who is tied to a brutal, bureaucratic gang which has caused the slaughter of millions of toilers throughout the world! It was precisely because the workers voted for, and supported, the Charlotta A. Basses that the Stalinists were able to place the neck of the Chinese workers on Chiang Kai Shek's chopping block, the German workers under the Nazi heel, the Spanish toilers before Franco's machine guns. Charlotta A. Bass represents the most vicious enemy of the workers within their own ranks. And this Stalinist creature the S.W.P. endorses as an independent candidate!

* * * *

THE EXCUSE

This is not the first instance in which the Trotskyite leaders have supported Stalin's political agents. Just as the Stalinist and Social Democrats twist and turn in their support of capitalism and capitalist representatives, so the Trotskyite leadership always comes forth with a "reason" for its support of Stalinist stooges. In this case the word "independent" is used to sugar-coat the odiousness of supporting the representative of the sinister betrayers of the workers. The Trotskyites must make it seem that this support to a Stalinist is in some way in the interests of the workers. The biggest scoundrels and the most criminal betrayers of the workers, can be, and are, supported by the Trotskyites under the guise of "independence," of being in the "interests of the workers," or "progressive." This excuse for supporting the betrayers of the workers is not a characteristic attributable solely to the Trotskyites. In the Rightist zigzag, the workers are told by the Stalinists that support to bourgeois democracy is really for the subtle interests of furthering Marxism. On occasion even the Nazis were supported by Stalinism in the interests of the workers. When the Stalinists support bourgeois-democratic stooges, or Greek and Italian monarchies, or Social Democracy, it is all presumably in the "inter-

ests of the workers." The Stalinists always have a cover to disguise their treachery to the toiling masses.

The Trotskyites in addition to disguising the Stalinist Charlotta A. Bass as an "independent" went further to cloak their endorsement of the deceivers of the workers. Apparently the Trotskyites could not well conceal the identity of C.A. Bass as a Stalinist and that there were many Negroes who condemned the reactionary politics of the Stalinist stooge. So the Trotskyites urged them to vote for her on the pretense that this would be a "progressive step."

"The Trotskyites agree with the many Negroes who condemn the false politics of Charlotta Bass, but who intend to vote for her election to the City Council because this will be a progressive step toward independent Negro political action." (The Militant, April 7, 1945. Emphasis in original.)

This is the Trotskyite camouflage of their policy of support to various betrayers. Do the Trotskyite leaders really expect such a result from the election of Charlotta A. Bass? Not at all!

"2. Charlotta Bass supports the capitalist government in Washington and holds up Roosevelt as a 'friend' of the Negro people. She tells the Negro people to place reliance upon Roosevelt in their struggle for equality, despite the fact that Roosevelt and his henchmen, above all his supporters in the 'solid Democratic South,' are the main guardians of the vile system of jimcrow." (Ibid.)

In plain words, Charlotta Bass works to perpetuate capitalism which itself maintains with all its strength the system of jimcrow. There is no doubt in the minds of the Trotskyite leaders as to the role she plays among the Negro workers. They know that she can only betray them. Far from being a progressive step, her election would indicate that the workers of Los Angeles had fallen into the death grip of Stalinism.

What do the Trotskyites tell those Negro workers who condemn the false policies of the Stalinist Bass? They tell them to get back into the quicksand and look for some "progress" to come out of the election of their own betrayer. They tell them that this is a step "toward independent Negro political action" when in reality it is a vote to maintain jimcrow.

For a genuine Marxist force there is only one thing to tell the Negro masses about Charlotta A. Bass; that she represents the betrayal of the workers of all races; that her election can only put her in a more advantageous position to tie the militant Negro workers to the oppressors and their system of jimcrow. A vote for Bass is a vote for jimcrow! — this is the truthful slogan.

The safest way for one swindler to support another is with criticism. When the accusation is made that he supported a swindler, the reply comes back: But I criticized him! This lame excuse is supposed to be a justification for palming off a treacherous tendency as being somehow in the interests of the workers. All the labor fakers use this technique. Pick up any issue of the arch-reactionary Social-democratic New Leader, a skilled and perennial supporter of the bourgeois government, and it will be found full of criticism of the administration. Much of this criticism is quite factual in itself and some of it very powerful, as for example, the material in the New Leader proving that the United States Government was actually facilitating the shipment of supplies to the fascist powers in Europe. Such criticism is merely a cover for the New

Leader's support to the Washington ruling gang. The Stalinist press also is constantly sprinkled with criticism of the reactionary powers and groups it supports. Who does not remember how vociferously the Stalinists during the "Third Period" were screaming against the capitalists all over the world! This rumpus was a very effective screen for, amongst other pieces of criminality, one of the greatest betrayals of all times, the Stalinist sell-out of the workers to Hitler in 1933. Even now the labor fakers from Green through Murray to Lewis are criticizing the "labor" policies of the Washington administration. Does this make these old-time sell-out artists any the less the agents of American imperialism? "Critical support" to reaction is the last refuge of every labor faker who poses as a leader of the workers.

The Trotskyites can become very critical of the Stalinists in words. However, the policy in action is to support Stalinism, elections being only a crasser instance of this support. And the cover is always — we are criticizing, In action — support to Stalinism. In words — what appears to be criticism. The "criticism" always is the excuse for the action of support.

* * * *

THE WORKERS PARTY IN THE LOS ANGELES ELECTIONS

The Shachtmanite Workers Party (dissident Trotskyites) has on many occasions piled "criticism" upon the heads of the Cannonites, going so far as to describe the S.W.P. as permeated with the germs of Stalinism, germs which have multiplied and grown more virulent (M. Shachtman, The New International, November 1944, p. 382). Shachtman labels the S.W.P. a "bureaucratic jungle" and refers to the S.W.P.'s position on the Russian question as "semi-Stalinist."

The disease of opportunism has become so virulent that it is possible for Shachtman, on the one hand, to call the S.W.P. a carrier of Stalinist germs and on the other, to deceive the workers that the platform of its candidate represents the interests of the working class. In the Los Angeles elections the Workers Party urged the workers to vote for a virulent germ of Stalinism under the guise that this would represent the interests of the working class:

"Labor Action and the Workers Party urge all the workers in Los Angeles to vote for Myra Tanner Weiss, to record themselves in favor of militant unionism in Los Angeles and against the brutal and ghastly world imperialist slaughter. Don't throw your vote away on a capitalist politician! Vote for the only candidate of a working class party. Vote for Myra Tanner Weiss, whose platform represents the interests of the working class." (Labor Action, March 19, 1945, p. 4. Emphasis in original.)

From Tinkers, to Evers, to Chance! Myra Tanner Weiss whose opportunist platform Labor Action termed in the interest of the working class, subsequently endorsed the Browder-Foster candidate Charlotta A. Bass. Shachtman can bellow like a mad bull about the Stalinist-like character of the S.W.P., but when it comes to political action he turns into a gentle Ferdinand and supports the S.W.P. which in turn supports Stalinism. Labor Action's endorsement of Myra Tanner Weiss's platform thereby supported the endorsement of Charlotta A. Bass. Shachtman's words of "struggle" against the S.W.P. are presented to his followers as a policy pursued by his organization. These words he uses as bait to trap them into supporting the very Cannon clique from whom they imagine they have parted company, both organizationally and politically. Via the indirect bridge of supporting Myra Tanner Weiss they are aiding the Stalinist candidates and Stalinism from which they think they are separated by an unbridgeable gulf.

* * * *

ELECTIONS

Election eve policies or tactics are an outgrowth and continuation of the politics of the organization the year round. Norman Thomas may use a little more radical language while electioneering to perpetuate the illusion among many workers that he is for socialism, but his role remains that of a flunkie and propro American imperialism. The Stalinists on the election platform are the same betrayers they were the day before.

The Trotskyites, too, do not change their everyday politics just because a day of polling has come around. They pursue the same political line day in and day out, including election day. An election program is the political line of an organization. The Trotskyite movement's support to Stalinism during elections is only a more open manifestation of a continuous support to Stalinism at all times.

D. Simms
July 17, 1945

AN EXPOSURE OF THE REAL POLICY
OF THE IMPERIALISTS IN THE
"SECOND WORLD WAR"

THE CASE OF HOLLAND, BELGIUM AND
FRANCE

THE SECOND "BATTLE" OF FRANCE

THE SECOND "BATTLE" OF THE
PHILIPPINES

APOLOGISTS FOR IMPERIALISM

FROM THE MUNICH PACT TO UNCONDITION-
AL SURRENDER

ON THE CLASS NATURE OF THE
RUSSIAN STATE

A Study of the New Analysis pre-
sented by Max Shachtman of the Work-
ers Party, and of the Position held
by the Cannonite Socialist Workers
Party in the Light of Marxian Teach-
ings on the Class Character of a
State.

by
George Marlon

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New York City

A "LABOR" PROTECTOR OF WAR PROFITS

With the collapse of the "war boom," millions of workers who were temporarily absorbed by artificially stimulated industry now face the spectre of unemployment. Already cutbacks and plant closures have thrown hundreds of thousands out of work and the trend will increase sharply.

The propaganda which the ideologists of the bourgeoisie are feeding the masses is that in the "post war" era some sort of Utopia will be created by planning capitalist economy in such a way as to provide full employment, a guaranteed income, broad social security, or to use the propaganda catch-phrase, "freedom from want" to each and every individual.

Marxism recognizes that capitalism is a system in which economic chaos and crises are inherent, which breeds forced scarcity, periodic destruction of commodities, sharp decline of production and inevitable and inescapable unemployment and misery for the proletariat. The task of Marxists is to point out these facts to the working class, to show that security for the masses can exist only after the overthrow of capitalism under a socialist system where there is production for use and in which the profit motive is completely eliminated.

The task of the bourgeoisie and all the opportunists who support capitalism is to keep these facts out of the workers' consciousness. During crises a good portion of the energies of the watchdogs of capitalism is devoted to the painting of rosy mirages of the immediate future achieved through some drastic inroads upon the ruling class. Before the workers' eye are dangled some attractively high figures of guaranteed annual wages, heavy taxation on the capitalist incomes — mirages of proletarian paradise under the system of wage slavery.

Revolutionary workers quite easily see through a mirage when it is painted by such out-and-out imperialist demagogues as Hoover or Wallace or La Guardia or the trade union bureaucrats. The difficulty for the advanced workers arises when the same deceptive visionary "program" is drawn up in "red" ink by the organizations which profess to fight for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of socialism. The "red" feature which possesses an almost irresistible magnetic force is that the "platform" is to be carried out by an alleged anti-capitalist government — a workers government.

An example of a bourgeois reformist scheme covered with the "red" plank is presented by the platform of the Workers Party led by Max Shachtman. Point 10 of this platform, printed in Labor Action, June 25, 1945, informs the reader that this program is to be carried out by "an independent labor party and a Workers Government." It would be an obvious fact to state that a workers government is one which introduces and carries out a policy only for the toiling masses. It is a government which will carry out a revolutionary policy, doing away with every phase of the bourgeois profit system. We are speaking, of course, not of a bureaucratically degenerated workers government, such as the Stalin Government, which, though based on the proletarian form of state, has been carrying on a counter-revolutionary policy for over two decades. The only kind of workers government which actually fights for the interests of the toiling people is a democratically-constituted proletarian regime formed on the basis of the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a workers state. Such a government functions not through the capitalist parliamentary system but through workers councils, being thus in class character a true workers power.

In Marxist terminology the phrase "Workers Government" or "Workers and

Peasants Government" is a popular designation for such a proletarian power. The phrase was used in that sense, and only in that sense, by Lenin. Following the establishment of the proletarian state in Russia, Lenin proclaimed the principle, that in the present epoch there can exist either a capitalist state or a proletarian state. There can be no in-between form of state. All "intermediate" types within the framework of capitalism are nothing but different forms of capitalist rule. Any government, whether it is called "Workers Government" or "Socialist Government" or "People's Front Government" or "Labor Government," because it is based on a capitalist state, and not on a workers state following the overthrow of the capitalist class, is a capitalist government. History has proved it so many times since the Russian Revolution that to a politically enlightened, advanced worker this is an axiom. Those sham "workers" governments, assuming office on the pretense of serving the interests of all the people in reality serve the bourgeoisie. They usually come to life as shock absorbers during severe crises which rock the capitalist system and imperil the power of the exploiters.

With this yardstick, let us look at point 8 of the W.P. program and see whether it is a program that would be carried out by a real Workers Government or by one actually serving the bourgeoisie:

"8 - A 100 percent tax on all war profits above a five percent maximum on invested capital; a \$25,000 ceiling on total individual income, and a graduated capital levy on all accumulated wealth over \$50,000 to cover war costs and provide postwar security for labor." (Ibid. My emphasis - A.J.)

What are these "war costs" that a Government supposedly representing labor should collect funds by any device to pay them? War costs are the debts accruing to the bourgeoisie for the bloody crimes they have been committing on a world scale these last few years. Does a government representing the interests of the toilers pay the bourgeoisie their billions for their crimes? When the Russian workers put the Bolshevik Government in power one of the basic points in the program of that workers government was the repudiation of the debts of the imperialist war. Debts to banks, to industrialists, even to foreign governments and individuals were all repudiated. Lenin's workers government would not pay for the war costs of the bourgeoisie. The Bolsheviks refused to squeeze toil from the workers in the form of profits to the capitalists and then resort to the fakery of taxing the worker-produced profits to pay the capitalists their "war costs." Had the Bolsheviks stooped to such a policy as paying the war costs and let the munitions manufacturers keep any percentage of their blood-soaked profits under the "left" cover of a tax on "accumulated wealth over \$50,000," they would have been contemptible swindlers and agents of the imperialists and not Marxist revolutionaries.

The Workers Party in advancing its program does not say that its "Workers Government" would be a government based on a proletarian state. The policy which its "Workers Government" would carry out is glaringly different from that carried out by the workers government founded after the overthrow of the Russian bourgeoisie. Shachtman's "Workers Government" would guarantee the bankers and munition magnats their war profits coined out of the exploitation of the workers. The "Workers Government" would allow them to retain "only" 5 per cent on their invested capital — which, naturally, amounts to billions!

If a workers government based upon the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie can become anti-workingclass in its policies, surely a government formed on the basis of the capitalist state is inevitably anti-workingclass, no matter what "working class" name it may assume. Shachtman's "Workers Government" is not a workers government but a profit-collecting agency for Wall Street and

a safeguard for the capitalist system in the period of growing economic and social crisis. The Workers Party program contains some demagogic figures about limiting the size of capitalist fortunes, of "post war security for labor." It was through similar promises that the Socialist Government of Germany, formed in 1918 on the basis of retaining capitalism, prevented the establishment of a true workers government and prepared the ground for Hitler. It was through "pro-working class" demagoguery that MacDonald formed a "Labor Government" in England in 1924 and again in 1929 and stabilized the tottering British Empire. Shachtman's "Workers Government" is no more a workers government than MacDonald's "Labor Government" was a labor government or than the present Attlee-Bevin government is a "Labor" regime. These are imperialist governments! The attractive "proletarian" labels are only used to deceive the workers. Without such verbal camouflage the workers would easily detect the class nature of these governments and would seek to put in power a government which by its class nature would be their own. A workers government, they would realize, can be established only on the basis of the overthrow of the capitalist class.

Shachtman's program, as all the other similar attractive-looking concoctions, with or without the label "workers government," perform an excellent service for the bourgeoisie. They act to divert the workers from the struggle for a true workers government which would remove the capitalist class from the ownership and control of industry and would thus release the workers from the coils of wage slavery.

A. James
July 1945

A NOTE ON THE BRITISH ELECTIONS

The present issue of THE BULLETIN was brought to completion too late to discuss at length the momentous British elections.

The tremendous landslide which establishes the Labor Party as the majority group in Parliament makes it clear that the stranglehold of the old-time labor fakers, Attlee, Bevin, Morrison and Company, is stronger than ever on the throat of the British workers. There was no Marxist force in England to break the workers away from the Labor Party trap, for every tendency of any significance in the working class ranks of England had the line of urging the workers to vote for the labor faker candidates. This holds for the Stalin Party, the "Independent" Labor Party and the Trotsky organization.

The so-called Labor Party Government of Attlee-Bevin is an imperialist Government, not a government of the working class in any sense whatever. The Labor Party Government has no policy in the interests of the masses, but continues the policies of British imperialism in different words from Churchill and to different music. This Government, like that of Churchill, can lead the workers only to the strengthening of the capitalist class and eventually to disaster.

In the next issue of THE BULLETIN there will be an extended discussion of the British elections, of the policy of the various opportunists and the Marxist line for the workers.

SEVENTEEN YEARS OF SELLOUTS

THE WORK OF CANNON AND SHACHTMAN
IN THE TRADE UNIONS

PART I -- The Period of Dual Unionism
(1928-1932)

When in 1928 the leaders of the Cannon caucus and many of their followers in the American Stalinist Party were expelled for "Trotskyism," there unfolded a political development which by now has become immensely complex. The advanced workers in the past seventeen years have been attracted to the Trotsky movement in America fundamentally on the basis of the fight it claims to put up against Stalinism as a powerful structure of betrayal within the workingclass. Upon their emergence as a separate group, Cannon and Shachtman labelled themselves a "faction of the Comintern" and held before the workers the prospect of reforming the Stalinist movement, of putting it on the Marxist track. The policies of the Trotsky group revolved closely about the official Stalinist movement. It is therefore necessary, in examining the history of the Trotskyite trade union work, to review at least briefly the phase of degeneration reached by the Stalinized Comintern at the time when the Trotsky group came upon the stage in this country.

The bureaucratic centralization of the workers state and the Comintern had already reached the stage of a definitive usurpation of power by the degenerated leaders. In order to protect their stolen power, the leading bureaucrats had developed an elaborate system of betrayal of the masses, to keep them in subjection and prevent any overthrow of the forces of reaction. Within the Soviet Union, the top bureaucrats had built a hardened crust of privileged careerists entrenching themselves in Party, State and economic organizations. This had been accomplished along the line of distorting and suppressing the work of Lenin and of crushing the militant, anti-Stalinist workers by police terror and assassination. In 1924 the leading bureaucrats had packed the former Bolshevik Party with more than 200,000 hand-picked job-hunters ("Leninist Levy"), thus wiping out in a torrent of corruption the original Bolshevik mass base of the Party. According to an unequivocal hint by Trotsky more than sixteen years after the event, Stalin had organized and carried out the assassination of Lenin through poisoning. The prisons and places of exile were filled with thousands of revolutionary workers who sought to oust the bureaucracy. The assassination of Lenin hinted at by Trotsky was only a symbol of the criminal turn taken by the corrupted, power-mad leaders.

On the international scene, the bureaucrats had the policy of preventing the overthrow of capitalism in order to keep in restraint the revolutionary impulses of the masses. Any uprising of the toilers was understood by the bureaucrats to be ultimately a threat to the bureaucracy. The tactic used by the Stalinist leaders to prevent revolution was to shunt the workers onto ultra-Rightist and ultra-Leftist paths. At the Fourth Congress of the Comintern (1922) behind the back of the sick Lenin, the top bureaucrats had laid the official programmatic basis of the first ultra-Rightist zigzag. This took the form of urging the workers to support bourgeois-democratic governments disguised under the title "Workers Government." This treachery was concretized in Germany in 1923 where Stalinism effected an epoch-making betrayal leading in subsequent years to the victory of Hitler. The ultra-Rightist Stalinist line was applied to China in the form of giving support to the bourgeois Kuomintang. In 1925-27,

the Chinese workers went down to a horrible blood-bath as a result of Stalinist betrayal. In England in 1926, Stalinism assisted the trade union fakers to sell-out the historic General Strike. By 1928, Stalinism was unfolding an ultra-Leftist zigzag ("Third Period") to cover up its betrayals of the previous ultra-Rightist zigzag.

Such, briefly, was the political anatomy of the Stalinized "Comintern" of which Cannon-Shachtman, now "Trotskyites," proclaimed themselves a faction designed to convert this "Comintern" to Marxism.

* * * * *

Wherever Stalinism gains a foothold in the unions the current Stalinist zigzag is translated into union terminology. Ultra-Leftism in its most pronounced Stalinist stage to date (1928-32) was featured by dual unionism, adventurist strikes and a never-ending stream of vituperation levelled at the unions outside the orbit of the Stalinist bureaucrats. Ultra-Rightism is expressed in blocs and deals with all sorts of labor fakers and open bourgeois organizations and individuals.

Whatever the nature of the particular zigzag, Stalinism lends support to the continued rule of the labor fakers propping them up openly with all sorts of blocs in the Rightist period and indirectly bolstering their hold by the suicidal adventures in the dual union Leftist period. Since the struggle to cleanse the unions from the death grip of the labor fakers can be conducted only by the revolutionary-minded workers who have already subjectively broken from bourgeois and Social-Democratic ideology, the historical task automatically posed in the unions since the inception of the Stalinist virus is in the first instance to break the workers from the Stalinist misleaders. These workers can proceed to the task of cleansing the unions only when their hands are freed from the Stalinist shackles.

In order to create the possibility of organizing the revolutionary-minded workers for a struggle against the Stalinist-led structure of opportunism in the unions, it was essential for a Marxist organization to come into existence. Only a Marxist center leading an organized struggle can give the necessary direction to the workers in the unions as in the political sphere. The Trotsky group appearing in 1928 made the claim of fulfilling the function of Marxism. How has it reacted to the necessary historical task of combatting and defeating the misleaders in the unions? What has its attitude been toward the Stalinist agents who corralled and betrayed the leftward moving workers that subjectively broke with the open labor lieutenants of capitalism in the unions?

The formation of the Trotsky tendency in October 1928 came directly after the Sixth Congress of the Comintern which gave the impetus to the second Leftist zigzag. The main theoretical deception of the new Stalinist line was that capitalism was in a state of imminent collapse, that the workers were in a stage of "unprecedented revolution upsurge" (the "leftward drift") and were but awaiting the call of the Communist parties to storm the fortress of capitalism. The Social Democracy and the AFL unions were dubbed "social-fascist." Accordingly, in the trade union sphere, the Stalinists pursued a dual union policy and set up their own paper organizations which were labelled "revolutionary unions."

The dual union policy operates in practise to separate the revolutionary workers from those workers still tied to the labor fakers. The workers in the old unions are left to the tender mercy of the labor traitors who are thereby

freed from the atmosphere of revolutionary exposure and given a free hand to strengthen their power and domination. Even an honest Marxist leadership embarking on a dual union policy would do great harm to the workers. In the case of the Stalinist bureaucrats, there was no question of a Marxist leadership. The purpose of the Stalinists in launching the dual union uproar was to cover up the betrayals they engineered during the ultra-Rightist period. In the latter, the Stalinist leaders formed open blocs with the union fakers and assisted them to sell out the workers. The most outstanding case of this was during the British General Strike of 1926. The Stalinist bureaucrats had to adopt new tricks to retain their stranglehold on their followers. Hence, they gave themselves a super-revolutionary appearance in the trade union field. They made scapegoats of their former bloc partners, the official union swindlers, labelled them fascist and social-fascist, and gave the impression of fighting them tooth and nail. The Stalinist leaders adopted the guise of fighting to destroy the old unions and to form "revolutionary unions." Accordingly, the Stalinist rank-and-file was imbued with bitter hostility toward the rank-and-file of the old unions, thus intensifying the confusion of the workingclass. A veritable frenzy of accusation, physical violence, direct sabotage, open strike-breaking and similar criminality was set afoot by the Stalinist bureaucrats in their dual union machination.

In the Stalinist-controlled unions, the workers were sent out on isolated, adventuristic and wild strikes. The whole process was aimed to demoralize the revolutionary-minded workers under their influence and fritter away their energies. The union workers were told by both the Stalinists and the AFL leaders, each for their own reasons, that the Stalinist unions were "revolutionary unions." Suffice it to say that these examples of "revolutionary unions" did not inspire the workers in the AFL to break from their rotten leaders but rather repelled them further from what they were led to imagine constituted "revolutionary policy" in the unions.

* * * *

THE CANNON-WHACHTMAN POLICY IN THE NEEDLE TRADES

The line of dual unionism was put into practise by the Stalinist gang wherever they had some forces in the unions. One of the most important of the artificially created Stalinist unions was in the needle trades where the Stalinists controlled a sizeable following as compared to the Dubinsky-Schlesinger-Sigman-Ninno gang who led the official union in the trade. Up until the time of the organization of the new Stalinist union, the course of Stalinism in the needle trades followed the same fever chart of Stalinism on an international scale, at one period forming blocs with the labor fakers and at another demoralizing the workers with adventurist strikes which frittered away their energy and left them an easy prey for the bosses. Writing in a critical vein, Cannon shed a little light on the Rightist policy pursued by Stalinism prior to the formation of the Stalinist dual union in this field:

"Some of the maneuvers in the needle trades were more disgraceful back-room bargains with fakers than Communist actions to mobilize the masses." (The Militant, March 1, 1929, p. 3)

The Stalinists were compelled to drop the line of open blocs with the unions fakers or the revolutionary-minded workers would inevitably have become disillusioned with Stalinism. The cover adopted by the bureaucrats was, as we have mentioned above, the adventuristic formation of "revolutionary unions." The function of a truly Marxist tendency in that situation would have been to explain the zigzag course of Stalinism, to expose the dual union tactic as a

crooked maneuver designed to protect Stalinism and to mislead the workers. What was the reaction of Cannon-Shachtman? Did they follow the Marxist course? Cannon-Shachtman acted as lead-horses for the Stalinist bureaucrats, enthusiastically hailing the formation of the Stalinist dual union in the needle trades:

"The recent formation of the new Needle Trades Industrial Union marks a turning point in the protracted struggle in the needle trades and is a step of great historic significance for the American labor movement as a whole." (The Militant, January 15, 1929, p. 5)

Cannon-Shachtman knew perfectly well that the Stalinist union was a fraud. From years of association with the Stalinist bureaucrats in the C.P. they knew precisely what a rotten gang of scoundrels had cooked up this swindle outfit. They could have no doubt that the whole enterprise could lead to nothing but betrayals of the workers. Yet the Trotsky leaders were not at all bashful in urging support to this new Stalinist instrument:

"Every conscious worker must support the new Needle Trades Industrial Union with all his strength." (Ibid.)

Thus, the function of the Trotskyite leaders was to grease the path of the Stalinist leaders, to assist them in their new maneuver of self-protection and "revolutionary" disguise.

This Stalinist "union" was soon galvanized into the same type of frenzied activity characteristic of Stalinism everywhere during this Leftist "Third Period." The poisoned fruits of this activity were not long in coming. In February 1929 this Stalinist puppet union which the Trotskyites were advertising so energetically called a strike, pulled out some 8,000 workers out of 50,000 organized in the trade, and then betrayed the heroic but misled strikers with a rotten agreement. After the strike was betrayed, the Stalinists themselves admitted the class-collaborationist nature of the agreement ending the strike, all in "self-criticism" of course. The Militant of August 15, 1929 commented on this sell-out by the very union whose formation Cannon-Shachtman had hailed as a turning point of great significance and to which they had urged support.

"In 1929, the agreement made with the bosses in the dressmakers strike, led by the Left Wing Union, was so little different from a typical Sigman-Schlesinger-Dubinsky settlement that the T.U. & L. had to condemn it semi-officially, in an article by Philip Aronberg in Labor Unity."

In another situation, in June 1929, the Stalinist union "called out" the furriers, some 2,000 to 2500 in number, most of whom had been unemployed. After some five weeks the Stalinist finished off this strike too with a sell-out agreement.

It should be recalled that the Trotskyites were hailing the formation of the Stalinist stooge union as a great turning point in the needle trades and were urging the workers to support it. When the Stalinist-led "union" showed its hand in flagrant betrayals, the Trotskyite leaders were caught short, to put it mildly. They were forced to engage in some self-protective talk. Nothing was easier than to heap the omus of blame on the Stalinist bureaucrats, to shout about their misdeeds, to pile criticism on criticism — and conveniently to keep silent about the rosy promises dangled before the workers by the Trotskyites in their puffing up the Stalinist so-called union. By October 1929, the Trotskyite paper was speaking of the collapse of the Stalinist union

in the needle trades. In criticizing a Stalinist T.U.U.L. conference, The Militant stated:

"No attempt was made to probe the reasons for the present collapse of the Left Wing Needle Trades Workers Union and the striking advance of the Right Wing, and draw the imperatively necessary lessons." (October 1, 1929, p. 2)

After some of the treacherous Leftist antics of the Stalin bureaucrats in the field of trade unionism, many revolutionary workers showed disgust and resentment toward the Stalinist policies. The horse-deals of the Stalin bureaucrats with the exploiters stank to high heaven. The Trotsky leadership could not ignore the facts as well as the sentiment of its own followers. The Militant came out with what had all the appearance of merciless exposure of the rottenness of this Stalinist "revolutionary union":

"Virtually the whole union has become corrupted and has betrayed the workers. The leadership is permeated with class collaboration ideas indistinguishable from Sigman's. It has worked hand in hand with the bosses and has even organized one group of them into an association in order to arrange contractual relations with it. It has used Tammany Hall police during strikes, bought immunity from the bourgeois state by employing Tammany Hall lawyers and refraining from criticizing the city administration, and has deliberately covered up the treachery of Ryan, Tammany Hall president of the local A. F. of L. council, in order to gain his support. It 'was being hooked up with Mr. Broderick,' head of the infamous Industrial Police Squad, the professional skull-crackers of the workers. It sold out to Sidney Hillman by pledging its tacit support to him in exchange for support against Sigman and Co. It even made deals behind the scenes with the blackest I.L.G.W.U. bureaucrats (Winfo, etc.) and helped Schlesinger to oust Sigman. It accepted the worst kind of 'impartial chairman' settlements in strikes it led." (May 17, 1930, p. 3)

One might imagine from the above criticism of the Stalinist needle trades leaders that the Trotskyites had abandoned the policy of puffing up this Stalinist outfit and egging on the workers to support it. The facts, black on white, however, show exactly the opposite. This noisy criticism was simply a cover for the continuation of the Trotskyite line of support to the crooked Stalinist union.

"The Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union is not an artificial creation. It was formed as the result of an unavoidable split forced by the traitorous leaders of the I.L.G.W.U. and the Furrier's Union. It had masses of workers behind it. The Left union has a real basis in sections of the industry and, as such, has every claim to support." (J. P. Cannon, The Militant, June 21, 1930, p.3. Emphasis in original.)

This was literally a word for word repetition of the deceptive stuff poured out by the barrelful in the Foster-Browder Daily Worker. While every word against the treachery of the leaders of the I.L.G.W.U. was accurate, every word in favor of the Stalinist union was a lie. The Stalinist Needle Trades Industrial Workers Union was an artificial creation, contrary to the Daily Worker and The Militant fabrications. The actual and true function of the Stalinist "union" was not to weaken but to strengthen the hand of the Dubinsky-Schlesinger-Winfo gang. The thousands of workers tied to Dubinsky and Co. were naturally repelled by the dual union antics of Stalinism. These workers

identified the Stalinist sabotaging tactics with Bolshevism, so that the upshot of the Stalinist union uproar was to discredit the name of Bolshevism and the whole idea of a revolutionary struggle against the bosses. The Dubinskys, and through them the capitalists, as well as the Stalinist bureaucrats were the only ones to profit from the Stalinist dual union furor. That Dubinsky to this day rides high in the trade union movement is due in no small measure to the ultra-Leftist policies of Stalinism in the period under discussion and the support given them by the Trotskyites.

* * * *

ECHOING FOSTER-BROWDER IN TEXTILE

Amongst the textile workers, overwhelmingly dominated by the AFL United Textile Workers Union, the Stalinists formed a dual paper union called the National Textile Workers Union. In this field as everywhere else the Trotsky leaders pursued their avowed course of boosting the Stalinist artificial "union." It would seem from the Trotsky line on the Stalinist N.T.W. that there was simply no end to the wonders of this union:

"That the N.T.W. had the wisdom, the foresight, the militancy and policy of struggle that were and are lacking in the leadership of the old unions is evident from even its brief period of history." (The Militant, January 4, 1930, p. 7)

Accordingly the Trotsky leaders sang their old familiar tune of urging the advanced workers to rally to the Foster-Browder outfit:

"The support of the N.T.W. is the first duty of the class conscious workers." (The Militant, January 25, 1930, p. 3)

As usual, the Trotskyites could not simply boost the Stalinist "union" because the reactionary policies of that sham "workers organization" which soon revealed themselves were repulsive to many of the most advanced workers. The Trotskyite leaders had to cover themselves in their policy of supporting this particular Stalinist "dual union" as they did in the needle trades. The easiest way was verbiage which was cheap and meant nothing. "Criticism" — the Trotskyite leaders need plenty of self-protection — abounds in the Trotskyite press. Thus on the Stalinist textile union which was previously characterized in the Trotsky press as exercising so much "wisdom," "foresight," "militancy and policy of struggle," The Militant wrote:

"In the South there is now practically no N.T.W. left. Only an isolated supporter can be found here and there. In the rest of the textile centers practically the same condition can be found." (The Militant, October 1, 1930, p. 1)

Yet in line with advertising the alleged "militancy" and "wisdom" of the Stalinist dual union, the Trotskyites in general justified the existence of this adventuristic concoction. The Fosters and Browders, naturally, advanced the excuse that the formation of the dual union was wholly correct and based on the situation in the labor movement which they pretended was ideal for the launching of dual unions. These sentiments were echoed in the Trotskyite press:

"There is a big field in the United States for a militant textile union and there is no reason why the N.T.W.U. should not be that instrument." (The Militant, January 1, 1931, p. 2)

Such was the line of the Trotskyites when their immediate factional man-

euvers demanded direct support to the Stalinist union.

It is interesting to note the gyrations and flipflops of the Trotskyites on trade union questions. The Stalinist dual union, the N.T.W.U., was a split off (1928) from the Associated Silk Workers Union, a semi-autonomous union in the textile field. As we have seen, from the start the Trotskyites justified this split and the formation of the Stalinist dual union. Several years later, however, after the Stalinist betrayal of the workers to Hitler, when the Stalinists began to introduce Rightist features in the unions in preparation for another launching of an ultra-Rightist line, the Trotskyites, falling in with this in their own way, switched to support of the Associated Silk Workers Union. No sooner was this done, than the Trotskyites doubled back on their tracks, turned their former story inside out and condemned the Stalinist split in 1928 from the Associated Silk Workers as a "disruptive policy:"

"The Associated Silk Workers was permeated with a radical outlook.

(Continued on Next Page)

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A CORRECTION

We wish to call attention to a typographical error which appeared in the article "Class Collaboration on the 'Left'" in THE BULLETIN of March-April 1945. On page 26, second column, the sentence introducing a quotation showing the methods of the S.P. in the unions reads: "An outstanding one is the Cannonite chiding of the Social Democrats when the latter were throwing their support to Lewis." The last word in this sentence should read Hillman and not Lewis.

On its executive board the Left wing had a majority. A member of the Communist party was one of its organizers. The officials of the union looked to the militants for leadership and policy. A better field for the Left wing and its class education, a higher type of class struggle union could be found nowhere in the country. In spite of all these meritorious qualities the stupid Stalinists, in pursuance of their blind and disruptive policy, split the Associated Silk Workers in 1928 and formed the National Textile Workers Union." (The Militant, October 7, 1933, p. 1)

It goes without saying that the Trotskyite leaders never repudiated their former declaration about the "big field in the United States for a militant textile union" and their echo of the Stalinist demagoguery that "there is no reason why the N.T.W.U. should not be that instrument." This sheerly factional flipflop is quite characteristic of the Trotskyite trade union policy and a whole series of similar maneuvers will be noted in subsequent pages.

* * * * *

MISLEADERS OF THE MINERS

During the Rightist period up to 1928 the Stalinists in the mine fields pursued a policy of blocs with "left" labor fakery such as Brophy, Hapgood, Brennan, Howat, etc. Such a policy could not be continued indefinitely by the Stalinist bureaucrats as we explained before. The Stalinist leaders were compelled to resort to some clever maneuvering to avoid the collapse of their power amongst the radical workers. The switch to the ultra-Leftist line had this self-protective trickery as its motivation. The only Marxist policy in such a situation was to expose the treacherous mechanics of Stalinism, to prove to the workers that the dual unions formed by the bureaucrats were nothing but devices to confuse and blind the workers to the betrayal policy of Stalinism. Any support to the Stalinist dual unions only served to facilitate the self-protective maneuver engineered by the top bureaucrats and thus to perpetuate the stranglehold of Stalinism on the revolutionary-minded workers.

When the Stalinists launched their dual union in the mine field, they found ready-made assistance in the Trotskyite leadership. Camon and Shachtman, easing the task for the Lovestones, Browders and Fosters, gave their puppet union in the mine industry plenty of free advertising:

"To effect the change from surrender to militant struggle and real organization is the great task of the National Miners Union. To accomplish this it must have the full support of the left wing everywhere and that support must be mobilized by the Party." (The Militant, February 1, 1929, p. 2)

The Stalinist miners "union," like all the other Third Period Stalinist "unions," was a caricature organized and guided by the rotten Stalinist clique at the top. It was a concoction pure and simple with no preparation and no genuine basis amongst the miners. The policy of the bureaucrats was one of bluff and noisy fakery. The Trotskyite leaders who were boosting the stocks of the Stalinist outfit could not simply continue such a policy in view of the patently fraudulent nature of the union. The Trotskyite workers, subjectively anti-Stalinist, would be bound to react against a line of undisguised support to the Stalinist dual union. The Trotskyite policy of assisting the Stalinist bureaucrats in fabricating unions along the ultra-Leftist line had to be sugar-coated somewhat with "criticism" of the Stalinist activities. By this device the Trotskyite leaders protected themselves in their line of supporting Stalinism. An example of such "criticism":

"Is not the passivity and lack of vitality of the National Miners Union (on a national scale) another commonplace?" (The Militant, October 1, 1929, p. 2)

As a result of the bureaucratic policies pursued in this union by the Stalinists it soon faced a split situation at a Convention held in October 1929. An attempt at resistance to the Stalinist policy was made by the largest and most militant section of the union. The Militant reported this significant occurrence as follows:

"Thus the possibilities for building the National Miners Union are excellent. Yet, as reported in the last issue, the methods pursued by the Communist Party leadership threatens it with being still-born, almost creating a split situation before the union has taken an organized form. The delegates who walked out in disgust from the district convention held at Belleville, Oct. 27, were precisely the most substantial section of the delegates. They were non-Party members, representing mainly the Staunton sub-district which has been in the forefront during this long struggle against the corrupt old union leadership, the territory in which the most militant strike picketing was carried on last year and from which the most substantial locals joined the N.M.U. in a body. Fortunately, these delegates, although they left the convention, are still determined by all means to build the National Miners Union, a decision which members of the Communist Opposition were able to influence in a considerable measure." (The Militant, December 7, 1929, p. 2. My emphasis - A. B.)

Here was a splendid situation for a real Marxist force to do valuable mass work in a very tense union struggle. A group of the most militant unionists breaks away directly from the Stalinist leadership in the union. A Marxist group would have established immediate contact with these militants and would have striven to organize them for a fundamental struggle against the Stalinist bureaucrats. Such a struggle would have carried important weight because the dissident unionists were significant figures and deeply incensed against the top bureaucrats. What policy did the Trotskyites pursue in this crucial situation?

It will be noted in the above citation from The Militant report of the split in the Stalinist union that the Trotskyites boast of their influencing the dissident unionists to continue the line of building the Stalinist N.M.U. There is a profoundly revealing story behind this boast which shows the actual function of the Trotskyites in the trade unions. It so happens that in this particular union many of the officials were Trotskyites with considerable influence among the rank-and-file. At this Belleville, Ill. conference of the N.M.U. there occurred a spontaneous rank-and-file revolt against the Stalinist bureaucratic domination. The dissidents were so disgusted with the Stalinist leadership that they would not even listen to them. William Z. Foster himself addressed the conference to save the day for Stalinism, but had been able to make no headway with those who were splitting from the bureaucratic leadership. After Foster's speech more than twenty delegates walked out of the conference. In The Militant of November 30, 1929 one of the Trotskyite delegates at the conference, Joseph Angelo, describes the role played by the Trotskyites. Angelo declares that the Trotskyite tops hired a room in the Lyric Hotel for a special meeting and rounded up the delegates who had bolted the conference. What was the purpose of this meeting? THE TROTSKYITES, BY THEIR OWN ADMISSION, ROUNDED UP THESE REBELLIOUS UNIONISTS TO MEET WITH FOSTER SO THAT HE COULD CONTINUE HARANGUING THEM! When the delegates refused to heed Foster's Trotskyite stooges, the latter tried to wheedle them into overlooking the "mis-

takes" committed by the Stalinist swindlers! Another Trotskyite member in a letter to The Militant of the same date gives a description of the Trotskyite antics:

"After Foster's speech we realized that a mistake had been made by the Party in handling these non-Party delegates and that the situation had developed to the point of a split. Watt, Angelo, Goldberg, Payer, Morgan and myself got together immediately and started to round up these delegates and took as many as we could to a room WHERE WE INVITED FOSTER TO TALK TO THE DELEGATES. The delegates refused to go back to the convention hall. Then it was up to us to use our influence to get them to overlook these mistakes and have them remain and work in the N.M.U. and carry on the work of organizing the miners into the union and prepare their forces for the impending strike." (November 20, 1929, p. 8. My capitals - A. B.)

It would be difficult to find a clearer example of the perfidious role of the Trotskyites in the unions. When Cannon-Shachtman and Co. make their perennial holiday speeches about fighting Stalinism let every worker conjure up in his mind the image of the Trotskyites in the Stalinist miners union seizing the rebellious unionists by the coat-tails and dragging them into a back room to have their ears filled with poison by William Z. Foster. The much-vaunted Trotskyite policy of "correcting" the Stalinist organization amounted in practice to giving Stalin's flunkie, Foster, an opportunity to put on a more ingratiating air, to use softer language and mend his fences with the offended delegates.

In December 1929, the Stalinists launched one of their adventuristic strikes in the mine field. The rank-and-file miners were not even consulted prior to the calling of the strike; no strike vote was taken. Most of the "strikers" were workers who were unemployed, while the response among the employed miners was a small factor. The entire affair had all the earmarks of a Stalinist "Third Period" strike. Naturally, the disastrous fate of the workers was a foregone conclusion. The workers were simply pawns in the ultra-Leftist game played by the Stalinist bureaucrats to give themselves a "Bolshevik" cover for their former ultra-Rightist policies. The workers were smashed and bitter resentment set in. The Stalinist bureaucrats had to do a lot of fast talking to maintain their hold on their victims. The big bureaucrats had to pretend that the strike was fully bonafide and completely justified. This fakery found its echo in the press of Cannon and Shachtman. In an article immediately after the sell-out of the miners, The Militant declared:

"To many workers the question will occur: 'Was this strike a mistake?' To which we must say: No— a thousand times No."
(The Militant, December 29, 1929, p. 1)

In the same article the Trotskyites took occasion to give some more free advertizing to the Stalinist fake union among the miners:

"The National Miners Union has proven itself as the only miners' organization which will fight for their needs regardless of obstacles in the way." (Ibid.)

This was said immediately after the N.M.U. perpetrated its flagrant betrayal!

Thus, in the period immediately after the sell-out, when the Stalinist bureaucrats were in hot water, the Trotskyites, who had considerable forces

in the mine union, acted as a shock absorber for the Fosters and Browders. Again, it must be realized, that the Trotskyites could not continue such an openly pro-Stalinist line without some self-protection or it might become evident to the radical workers that the Trotskyite organization was nothing but a tail to Stalinism. Hence, again using that cheap and innocuous method of verbiage, the Trotskyites "criticized" the Foster-Browder bureaucrats whom only the day before they had given such valuable assistance, unsolicited rationalizations and free advertizing. The Stalinist policy in the December 1929 strike was analyzed as follows after the betrayal had been consummated:

"Irresponsibility, bombast and claims based solely on wishes, predominance of narrow factional interest, playing with the interests of the class — these were the outstanding characteristics of the Party leadership of the strike. The sub-district conferences held a week before the strike call was issued by the District Board, did not have the strike on the agenda. The N.M.U. leaders did not even take the trouble of circulating a strike vote among the miners which would have helped to draw broad masses into the struggle. The essential basis of the strike forces was among the unemployed miners and not among those at work." (The Militant, March 1, 1930, p. 3. Emphasis in original.)

In light of the above, when the Trotsky leadership played up the Stalinist strike and glorified its effects in glowing words of tribute they were serving as a transmission agent for spreading poisonous Stalinist deception amongst the miners. The Trotskyite support to Stalinism in this particular adventure simply bolstered up the Stalinist leadership and covered up the criminality with which they toyed with the true interests of the toilers.

The criminal policies of the Stalinist bureaucrats caused the sentiments of the workers to turn away from them. Thousands of militant miners were bitter with resentment and were looking for a leadership which would show them the way out of the terrible dilemma created by the bureaucratic swindlers at the top. The situation was excellent for a real Marxist group with some roots amongst the miners to organize the rebellious feelings of the rank-and-file and give them a genuine direction against the Stalinist bureaucrats. It has been shown plainly that the Trotskyites, who had forces at that time in the Stalinist miners union, did not fulfill the function of a Marxist group. The Trotskyites acted as a lightning rod, draining off the workers' energies and preventing them from fighting the Stalinist bureaucrats. In the summer of 1930, after the big Stalinist betrayal of the end of 1929, the Trotskyite press confined itself to some dull moanings about the fact that the miners had turned away from the Stalinist union. A very poorly attended convention showed clearly that the Stalinist bureaucrats had lost much of their following:

"The National Miners Union has passed like a ghost in the night. After many long months of concentrated bluff in the official Party press about the thousands and tens of thousands of miners who were following the leadership of the N.M.U., about the strikes and demonstrations it was leading, the bubble of bluff has collapsed of internal vacuum. At the 'convention' in Pittsburgh of a few dozen miners, representing little more than themselves, the N.M.U. was quietly interred." (The Militant, August 15, 1930, p. 2)

Very soon, however, the Trotskyites perked up — in a very characteristic manner. What happened was this. A strong rank-and-file revolt against the Lewis machine broke out in the Illinois mine fields. Again, a Marxist group with some basis among the miners, would have intervened to give direction to what was now big sentiment not only against the Stalinist bureaucrats but

also against Lewis and Co. The intervention of the Trotskyites in this new and tense situation consisted of — urging the Stalinist organization, only yesterday proclaimed corpses by the Trotskyites themselves, to revive the corpse, jump in and get control of the rebellious miners!

"We propose to the Communist party and the National Miners' Union forces the establishment of a united front of all Left wing elements in support and possible leadership of the present rank and file opposition. It should by all means be strengthened to bring a powerful delegation to the St. Louis convention on April 15." (The Militant, April 1, 1931, p. 4)

These people acted as prods to the Fosters and Browders, serving to galvanize these putrid scoundrels to "action," the only kind of "action" possible to them, betrayal and treachery. If Foster and Browder happened to be asleep for the moment and did not notice the opportunity to jump into a hot situation to get control of a section of the workers, all that was necessary was to read the Cannon-Shachtman Militant which always contained timely reminders to the Stalinist bureaucrats to get to work!

Actually, the Stalinist forces in the mine fields were not dead in the period when the Trotsky leaders were burying the N.M.U. in the pages of The Militant. Stalinism was simply lying in wait like a hungry beast for precisely such rich pickings as this revolt against the Lewis machine offered. With the first rumblings of revolt the Stalinist band at the head of the N.M.U. pricked up its eager ears. Soon the Stalinist bureaucrats with the Trotskyite aid were right in the midst of the forward moving miners, rapidly recruiting frustrated militants into their treacherous fold through verbal blasts against "Lewisism." The anti-Lewis revolt flared into a strike movement and virtually in the whole Western Pennsylvania area the Stalinists managed to worm their way into the position of leadership.

The program of Stalinism among the miners was the same program that Stalinism has had from its inception throughout the world and has to this very day. This program is one of betrayal of the toilers to keep them in subjection to all forms of reaction. The object of this program is to safeguard the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy against any possible upsurge of the workers. Stalinism has this program when there is no strike, when there is a strike, in time of peace, in time of war, when the workers are quiescent, when the workers are rebellious. In a strike this program results in a sell-out for the purpose of weakening and demoralizing the workers and thus of holding them under the sway of the opportunist and bourgeois forces. When the Stalinist union intervened in the mine strike growing out of the anti-Lewis sentiments of the miners, The Militant treacherously paraded the Stalinist program as a "fighting program":

"The National Miners Union is in the leadership of this strike. It is furnishing a fighting program." (The Militant, July 4, 1931, pl)

Of course, the Stalinist bureaucrats, off on their "Third Period" binge, made a terrific amount of noise against the coal operators and Lewis. The task of Marxists is to expose this pseudo-Bolshevik rumpus as being a concealment of a secret policy of betrayal. In the line of the Trotskyites, on the other hand, the "Third Period" hullabaloo of Stalinism is a "fighting program." This boosting of the Stalinist bureaucrats' fakery as a "fighting program" is in no small measure a factor in their ability to maintain their "Leninist" cloak to this day, to the immeasurable detriment of the toilers.

But as the criminal Stalinist policy began to take its deadly effect, the miners, betrayed by the Stalinist swindlers, returned to the pits. That Stal-

inism would work to stab the miners in the back and sell them out to the mine owners was a foregone conclusion well understood by Cannon-Shachtman. However, during the course of the strike movement, the Trotsky press worked itself up into a lather with the most high-sounding promises along the lines of the official Stalinist press. With this latest and largest Stalinist betrayal in the mine fields, voices against the Stalinist bureaucrats were again forthcoming from the mine fields, and the N.M.U. rapidly lost adherents. The strike having been brought to collapse, the N.M.U. officially decreed the strike over in August 1931. At this point Cannon, Shachtman, et al. quietly removed their N.M.U. vesture and hastily donned their "critical" raiments to suit the shift in occasion.

From the establishment of the Stalinist Miners Union the Trotsky leadership, as we have shown, supported the Stalinist bureaucrats by playing up the N.M.U. in crucial situations and urging the miners to its support. The official Stalinist demagogy about the N.M.U. constituting an instrument capable of leading the miners to victory over Lewisism found an almost verbatim echo in the columns of the Trotsky press. In its initial days, when the most substantial section of the deluded followers of the Stalinist union became restive and moved to break away from the Stalinist death grip, Cannon and Shachtman used their anti-Stalinist disguise to gain the confidence of these workers and lead them back into the clutching fingers of Foster, arranging meetings for the latter and bolstering his influence. The Trotsky policy disoriented the militant miners and left them easy victims to the criminal adventures of the Foster-Browder gang.

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MANEUVERS WITH THE PSEUDO-PROGRESSIVES AND THE "PROGRESSIVE MINERS OF AMERICA"

In the particular period under discussion, the situation in the mine fields was radically different from the situation today when the miners are overwhelmingly under the sway of the Lewis bureaucracy. In those years the Lewis thugs maintained domination over the miners primarily in the anthracite field; in the soft coal regions the Lewis gang was utterly discredited and faced a continuous series of mutinous rank-and-file movements against its machine in the United Mine Workers. The lack of a truly revolutionary force left the field clear for all sorts of swindlers to gain control of the rank-and-file movements and behold them in Lewis' interests. For a period of years the ranks of the militant miners were cursed with leaders of the stripe of Howat, Brophy, Hapgood, etc. who functioned as "left" apologists for the Lewis gangsters. During the Rightist period, from 1923 to 1928, the Stalinist misleaders pushed forward the fake progressives picturing them as the true leaders of the miners. When the Stalinists switched to their equally treacherous Leftist policy, they turned against their heroes of yesterday, ferociously denounced them as "spineless quitters" and promised their followers that no further truck with leaders of this stripe would be had. The Stalinist Leftist policy did not at all wipe out the influence of these pseudo-progressives but as a matter of fact strengthened their influence. The artificial creation of the N.M.U. and the adventurist policy pursued by Stalinism sapped the energy of the militant miners and made them susceptible to the wiles of the Howats and the other "Left" fakers.

Every time the rebellious miners in Illinois began to move forward the counterfeit progressives jumped in, canalized the sentiments of the miners and sold them out to Lewis and the mine owners. In the Spring of 1930 the militant Illinois miners were captured by the notorious Fishwick-Farrington gangster machine which was conducting a clique fight against the Lewis gang. This clique struggle lasted almost a year, featuring not only verbal battles in the press but actual gun fights between the misguided miners controlled by both

the Lewis and the Fishwick swindlers. When the Fishwick-Farrington clique finally sold out to Lewis and agreed to recognize his authority in an official action in the capitalist courts, in the Spring of 1931, the Illinois miners broke from the Fishwick-Farrington mobsters and began to look about for a new leadership. The sentiments of these miners were white hot against the Lewis machine and they overwhelmingly rejected the idea of going back into the Lewis fold.

The sell-out by the Fishwick crew to the Lewis gang was therefore greeted with a revolt of the Illinois miners. Accordingly, Howat, the Musteites and other fake progressives who had been left out in the cold by the Fishwick machine in their swing to Lewis, again got into the forefront of this upsurge of the miners. In April 1931 a convention for a new union was actually called by the pseudo-progressive leaders. However, at this convention the question of a definitive formation of a new union was left open so as to leave the ground clear for future maneuvers with Lewis. Again the militant miners were frustrated and again the Lewis machine was enabled to mend its fences and regain some of its losses.

In the Summer of 1932 the Lewis crowd negotiated a crooked contract with the mine owners, agreeing to the operator-inspired idea of a wage-cut for the terribly exploited miners. This time the revolt against Lewis took on truly huge proportions, particularly in the Illinois mine fields. At this particular moment the influence of the Stalinist bureaucrats also was quite low amongst the miners in Illinois. It is clear that in general the field was quite favorable for the functioning of a Marxist force with some roots among the miners. The miners were actively interested in the formation of a new leadership and the field was ripe for a powerful blow to be struck against all the reactionary forces in the mine unions.

A Marxist intervention in such a situation must be based on a clear understanding of the nature of the various clique fights and maneuvers which are the continuous curse of the trade unions. The task of Marxism is to steer the workers clear of all the fraudulent cliques. The biggest swindlers are at such a moment quite apparent to the rebellious unionists. Thus, Lewis, Fishwick and Farrington stood virtually self-exposed before a big section of the miners as rotten gangsters and betrayers. At such a moment the immediate danger of such known bandits is actually a lesser factor in the situation. It is the sham "oppositions" which at such a tense moment are particularly dangerous. In almost every outburst of this type, fake "progressives" spring up to capitalize on the workers' newly aroused resentments. The workers are especially prone to fall into the trap of almost any demagogue who will come before them with attractive promises and a "progressive" cover. The particular task of the Marxists is to expose the sham "progressives" and prevent them from coralling the rebellious workers. The function of the sham "progressive" is to drain off the aroused sentiments and interests of the workers and shunt them into channels which lead eventually back into the clutches of the chief swindlers, in this case, Lewis and Co. Lewis throughout his bloody career has faced such revolts of the rank-and-file, but has retained his hold precisely because the upsurge of the miners was misled by various fake "progressives." The Marxists have to pursue an independent line basing themselves entirely on the aroused rank-and-file.

The chief fraudulent "progressives" at the time of this upsurge of the miners were the Musteites, the Howat clique and the Socialist Party gang. These dangogues very soon set about to capitalize on the rebellion of the miners. Their scheme eventually took the form of the formation of a "new" union. The reason for this was that the miners unequivocally refused to go back with Lewis. The "progressives" could get control of the resentful miners

at that moment only by launching an "independent" union accompanying the maneuver with much fanfare about conducting a "class struggle policy." The Progressive Miners of America was the outcome of this tactic. Marxists would make it apparent that this "new" union with its corrupt, opportunist leadership of sham "progressives" could lead only to another debacle and a collapse of the miners' upsurge..

The nature of the sham "progressives" was perfectly clear to the Trotskyites. In 1931 the Trotskyites were "criticizing" the "progressives" of the Muste group and the Howat clique. The Militant of April 15, 1931 declared:

"Keenly aware of the spirit spreading among the miners, these professional dampeners of working class militancy, yesterday's open and concealed adjutants of Fishwick and Co. have taken advantage of the absence of any substantial and genuinely militant leadership capable of opposing Lewisism and have sought to ride the wave of the rank and file revolt."

Concerning the C.P.L.A., The Militant wrote:

". . . the Muste group is seeking to establish its domination of the new movement and perform its assigned function of keeping it from going red."

It would seem from this that the Trotskyites were performing a Marxist function. It was not long, however, before the Trotskyites changed their tune and fell in line with the "progressive" fakors. The capturing of the mass sentiment of the miners by the sham "progressives" was peddled by the Trotskyites as a "broad united front," thus sanctioning the participation of the Trotskyites in the engineering of the "new" union:

"The present rank and file opposition movement of Illinois is a broad united front of all militant and progressive forces. Rank and file members of the C.P., Communist League of America (Opposition), I.W.W., Socialist Labor Party, Socialist Party, C.P.L.A. and various independent groups have united with us for the common cause of fighting the immediate struggle before us." (The Militant August 27, 1932, p. 3)

In the scramble for jobs which characterized the inception of this union the Trotskyites won some posts on the Policy Committee and secured for one of their leading figures, Allard, the position of editor for the Progressive Miner, the organ of the "new" union. These concessions on the part of the pseudo-progressive leaders were obviously motivated by a desire for a radical-sounding cover to catch those miners who were breaking away in ever larger numbers from the grip of the Lewis gang. The Trotsky leaders, tasting pie in the form of the posts handed over to them, cynically discarded their own warnings against these false leaders and immediately sang a paean of praise to the "new" union:

"The Communist League of America (Opposition) greets the formation of the 'Progressive Miners of America.' It represents a serious step forward for the American working class and one which is destined to mark the beginning of a new chapter, not only for unionism in the mine fields, but for trade unionism as a whole." (The Militant, September 10, 1932, p. 1)

What was the nature of the leadership of the Progressive Miners of America which promised such a "brilliant future" for the cause of the miners?

"The leadership of the P.M.A. is composed of varying shades of political opinion. There are republicans and democrats, S.P. and Musteites with Communists in a very small minority, whilst official Communism is not represented in this great struggle of the miners." (September 24, 1932, p. 1, The Militant)

Marxism is able to determine the policy and outcome of any tendency by the nature of its leadership. It is this method of analysis which enable Marxism to foresee and forewarn the workers of disasters engineered by the opportunist leaders. An important function of Marxism is precisely this arming of the workers against the opportunist leadership and its policies. The Trotskyites pursued exactly the opposite course. That they knew perfectly the treacherous character of the leadership of the so-called Progressive Miners of America is quite clear from the above citation. This leadership contained people who uttered such sentiments as the following reported in The Militant as coming from Joe Pieck: "The coal-operators are good friends of the Progressive Miners of America and they will help to build the new union." (October 15, 1932, p. 3) The P.M.A. leadership, to put the matter briefly, was utterly class-collaborationist. Nevertheless, the Trotskyites disarmed the workers with such demagogic praising of the "new" union as the following:

"This new union, born on the eve of the betrayal by the reactionary misleaders, is not going to surrender to the bosses' agents, Walker-Lewis, without a merciless struggle." (The Militant, September 24, 1932, p. 1)

But it was precisely such a surrender which was in the making and which was the only possible policy of the corrupt P.M.A. leadership. The workers following this leadership were blinded by the Trotskyites to the disaster impending.

A major issue which the "progressive" leaders used in mobilizing the miners around the P.M.A. banner was the Lewis-coal boss agreement for a wage cut from \$6.10 per day to \$5.00:

"The break with the decrepit Lewis-Walker clique, which led to the formation of the Progressive Miners of America, ostensibly occurred over the issue of the betrayal by the former of the basic \$6.10 a day wage scale." (The Militant, October 15, 1932, p. 1)

That the opposition and the hue and cry raised by the leaders of the P.M.A. against this wage cut was a sham can be seen in the outcome of the first convention of the P.M.A. and how it resolved this question:

"The first convention of the Progressive Miners of America has ended with the acceptance of the Walker-Lewis five-dollar wage scale." (Ibid.)

In other words there really were no basic differences between the Lewis gang and the Muste-Pearcy brand of opportunists, the issue of the Lewis wage cut being a mere talking point designed to fool those workers moving away from Lewis.

Thus, the P.M.A. already showed its treacherous hand. This was known to the Trotskyites. The P.M.A. carried out the same swindling policy as the Lewis machine. However, the Trotskyites still had the pieces of pie given them by the "progressive" leaders, the several posts in the P.M.A., so that The Militant still continued to peddle the official fraud about the P.M.A. constituting a

center of struggle against the policies of the Lewis gang:

"The Progressive Miners of America now constitutes a serious challenge to the rule of corruption and servility to the operators of the Lewis-Walker combine. That is its great capital which it is duty-bound to preserve." (Ibid.)

Since the miners in the P.M.A. were particularly incensed against Lewis for his crooked agreement to reduce wages and since these miners had rallied to the P.M.A. primarily on this issue, it is clear that when the P.M.A. gang made the same agreement as Lewis, some sort of bureaucratic swindle was involved which did not base itself on the democratic will of the rank-and-file. The "progressives" were acting behind the back of the ranks just like the major union bureaucrats of the Lewis camp whom these small-time P.M.A. careerists were supposed to be opposing. The Trotskyites, however, were not above painting the bureaucratically operated P.M.A. as a democratic union with control in the hands of the ranks:

"It is a union belonging to the miners and it can become a real harbinger of a real militant national coal diggers union." (Ibid. My emphasis - A.B.)

This so very "democratic" union was soon to give the Trotskyites a sad lesson in "progressive" union democracy. The Trotskyites continued to support and cover up the opportunist leadership. In 1933, however, the P.M.A. top bureaucrats no longer needed the "Left" cover provided by the Trotskyites. Hence the Trotskyite functionaries were forthwith kicked out of their posts. In July 1933, for example, Allard was removed as editor of the union's paper, and later on, Angelo, the Trotskyites' main representative, was expelled from the union. Now Cannon and Shachtman vociferously declared that the basic policy of the P.M.A. was not essentially different from Lewis' and that the Illinois miners had unwisely placed confidence in the "progressives:"

"Announcement in the latest issue of the Progressive Miner of the expulsion of Joe Angelo demonstrates more graphically than any other single act how closely the leaders of the P.M.A. have come to the basic policy of Lewis and how basely they have betrayed the confidence which the Illinois miners unwisely gave them." (The Militant, October 21, 1933. My emphasis - A.B.)

We call the reader's attention to the date of this statement, October 21, 1933. But let the reader turn back the pages of The Militant several months and see who it was that was deceiving the miners into placing this unjustified confidence in the crooked organization led by the sham "progressives." On January 21, 1933, The Militant declared:

"The Progressive Miners organization of Illinois enjoys a high respect among the militant and progressive labor elements throughout the country. AND JUSTLY SO." (P. 4. My capitals - A.B.)

The author of these words is James P. Cannon.

The Trotskyites' moaning about the miners' lack of wisdom is sheer hypocrisy. The miners were misled and deceived — this is the crux of the matter. The role of the Trotskyites in leading the militant miners by the nose in the adventure with the P.M.A. was a major one. Cannon's crocodile tears about the miners' lack of wisdom was nothing but a cover up of this basic fact.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

THE R.W.L.'S PERSISTENT DISTORTION

From its inception the drive of the renegade Stalinist leaders for the usurpation and entrenchment of permanent bureaucratic power in the Soviet Union was expressed on the international field by a line designed to stifle and choke off any revolutionary developments amongst the masses so as to ensure the continuation, stability, and domination of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Stalinist bureaucrats gave their undivided attention to the rehabilitation of the imperialist system by the injection of antidotes against proletarian upheaval. Accordingly, the Stalinist leadership kept a particularly watchful eye on the growth of the revolutionary movement in China. As a necessary first step, the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party was taken in hand and whipped into line by the Stalin gang, thereby creating a base for disrupting the forward movement of the Chinese masses and handcuffing them to world imperialism and the Chinese exploiters.

A complicating feature for Stalinism in China was the weakness of the Chinese bourgeoisie, reflecting its subservient compradore role to the big imperialist powers and expressed in the impotence of its political watchdog -- the Kuomintang. As a result, Stalinism set as its main goal in China the strengthening of the bourgeois Kuomintang and the establishment of its hegemony over the Chinese masses. In January 1923, one of the big Stalinist bureaucrats, A. A. Joffe, was sent to China to make clear to the Chinese bourgeoisie the counter-revolutionary line of the Kremlin rulers. Joffe formally repudiated the Leninist line of Soviets for China, pretending that conditions were not suitable in China for proletarian revolution. Joffe and Sun Yat-sen affixed their names to a declaration to this effect on January 26, 1923.

A January 12, 1923 decision of the Executive Committee of the Communist International instructed the Chinese C.P. to "coordinate the activities of the Kuomintang and of the young Communist Party of China." (Quoted in P. Miff, "Heroic China," p. 22) The E.C.C.I. instructed the Chinese revolutionary workers to join the Kuomintang. The Third Congress of the Chinese C.P. in June 1923 adopted the decision to carry out the instruction in practise.

With the line of proletarian revolution formally repudiated and the Communist-minded Chinese workers herded into the Kuomintang, Stalinism beheaded the rising proletarian movement in China and laid the basis for one of its most momentous betrayals.

With unflagging energy the Stalinists pumped life blood into the Kuomintang acting as self-appointed organizers for the miserably weak Chinese bourgeoisie, teaching them how to build their party amongst the masses. In May 1924 the Stalinists even went so far as to organize a bourgeois military academy for training the future butchers of the Chinese workers and peasants, the Whampoa Military Academy, installing Chiang Kai Shek as director.

It should be particularly noted that all these events took place up to the Spring of 1924.

A sample of how the vital facts are misrepresented and concealed can be found in the manner in which the Revolutionary Workers League deals with this extremely critical phase of history. In a recent issue of its publication, International News, the R.W.L. describes the sequence of Stalinist development in China thus:

"Following its policy of 'socialism in one country' the Stalinist

machine in China liquidated itself into the Kuomintang shortly before Sun's death and propounded the famous 'bloc of four classes' program." (July 1945, p. 4)

First to straighten out a point of chronology. Sun died on March 12, 1925. The entry into the Kuomintang was officially organized by the Chinese C.P. in June 1923. This is not exactly "shortly before Sun's death." But this is not the central distortion contained in the R.W.L.'s piece of "history." Notice that the R.W.L. makes the Stalinist entry into the Kuomintang a matter of "following its policy of socialism in one country." The entry into the Kuomintang was engineered in the middle of 1923. In the Spring of 1924, Stalin explicitly rejected the whole idea of socialism in one country. Stalin came out with his hokum about "Socialism in one country" in the Autumn of 1924. The fact is that when the entry into the Kuomintang was cooked up, nothing whatever was heard about socialism in one country. The latter fakery came long after the entry into the Kuomintang. What is more, an explicit rejection of the possibility of building socialism in one country also came after the entry into the Kuomintang. The fact is that the entry into the Kuomintang had nothing whatever to do with the "theory" of socialism in one country.

The R.W.L.'s story which makes the entry into the Kuomintang a matter of following the policy of socialism in one country is a sheer fabrication.

What are the real facts of the Stalinist concoction "the theory of socialism in one country," and what is its actual role in the rise of Stalinism?

The essence of Stalinism is the conscious bureaucratic usurpation of power in the workers state. This deliberate, engineered centralization of power was under way by the various corrupted leaders of the Party as early as 1921, when, amongst other things, there already occurred the secret formation of the conspiratorial Trio of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin. The latter was already at that time being groomed by Zinoviev for the post of General Secretary. The renegade leaders, to insure their stolen powers, were already embarked on a course of frustrating any liberation of the toilers, of preventing proletarian revolution. In Germany in 1923 this counter-revolutionary policy was carried out by the Stalinist bureaucrats, resulting in an epoch-making disaster to the workers.

The Stalinist chaining of the Chinese toilers to the bourgeois Kuomintang in 1923 was only a continuation of the bureaucratic counter-revolution.

The "theory" of "Socialism in One Country" was propagated some years after the initial development of Stalinism and served as an ideological disguise to cloak the stranglehold of the Stalinist bureaucracy on the Soviet State and to lull the Russian workers to sleep with the consolation that the Stalinist gangsters were sincerely interested in bringing about Socialism. The Stalin gang never believed in such a "theory," had no intention of building socialism anywhere, and were in fact consciously afraid of and opposed to any march toward socialism. The noise of building socialism in the Soviet Union was out-and-out demagogy first spread by the renegades in Autumn 1924 after a record of several years of deliberate counter-revolution had already been piled up. The bunk about socialism in one country was in no way whatever at the roots or origin of Stalinism, either chronologically or politically. It was merely some ideological dust later thrown into the eyes of the toilers. The fraudulent story which dates the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern from the adoption of "Socialism in one country" stems directly from Trotsky and aims to conceal the true story of the Stalinist development and prevent the uncovering of Trotsky's own role as a collaborator of Stalinism in the degeneration of the Bolshe-

vik party. The R.W.L. simply has taken over this Trotsky myth and thereby draws a veil over the whole crucial period of the origin and spread of the Stalinist disease.

The line of support to the Kuomintang was advocated by the entire bureaucratic leadership and, as we have pointed out, had nothing at all to do with the theory of Socialism in one country. Additional proof can be drawn from the policy of one particular leading figure in the Soviet Union, one whom the R.W.L. will never accuse of believing in Socialism in one country. Along with all the others this leader declared:

"We approve of Communist support to the Kuomintang party in China, which we are endeavoring to revolutionize." (Inprecorr, May 29, 1924.)

The uninformed worker will be surprised to learn that this statement was made by none other than LEON TROTSKY. Notice that this statement was forthcoming in the Spring of 1924, months before Socialism in one country was cooked up. What then becomes of the R.W.L.'s story that the Stalinist entry into the Kuomintang stems from "Socialism in One Country?" Nothing but a crass distortion of the entire sequence of events in China and the Soviet Union.

Is ignorance at the basis of the absurd distortions of Stalinist history which flow from the penmen of the R.W.L.? Since the facts have been unearthed, published, and made available to the R.W.L. leaders for a long time now, this explanation must be ruled out. The true explanation lies in the whole political past of the R.W.L., in its unbreakable attachment to the politics of Trotsky which it characterizes as "Marxist" until the year 1934. Since Trotsky's role was that of a renegade from Leninism and a collaborator of Stalinism, the R.W.L., in attaching itself to Trotsky, necessarily acts as a transmission belt for Trotskyite poison and functions to prevent a true understanding of Stalinism by peddling the same fables produced by Trotsky so as to conceal his participation in the Stalinist renegacy.

It should be noted that the above quoted statement of policy by Trotsky falls into the period when he was a "Marxist" according to the theoreticians of the R.W.L. Since Trotsky's line was that of support to the Stalinist policy in China, the R.W.L. adherence to Trotsky automatically makes it an accomplice in the crime.

It is obvious that the R.W.L. leaders will not budge an inch from peddling the Trotskyite fable that "Socialism in one country" was the inception point of the Stalinist crimes. To admit the truth, the R.W.L. leaders would have to acknowledge that their persistent repetition of this Trotskyite myth has aided in deceiving the revolutionary workers and preventing them from achieving a true understanding of the real story of the Stalinist development. An honest road is closed to opportunists who are not interested in telling the truth but are rather bent on building up their prestige as "Marxist" leaders even if they have to build it on fraud.

The R.W.L. leaders stand as a stumbling block in the path of the revolutionary workers, phonographing Trotskyite deception and acting as political satellites in the Stalinist system.

A. Burke
July 10, 1945

T H E T R O T S K Y S C H O O L O F F A L S I F I C A T I O N

AN EARLY SYMPTOM
OF
BUREAUCRATIC CORRUPTION

In his autobiography Trotsky makes the following categorical statement: "I think I can rightfully say that in all my political activity personal considerations have never played a part. But in the great struggle that we were carrying on, the stakes were too big to permit me to consider side issues. As a result I frequently trod on the toes of personal prejudice, friendly favoritisms or vanity." (My Life, p. 442)

Are these words true to actual fact? In the same work from which we quote the above words we find the answer. On page 433 Trotsky describes a very interesting moment during the civil war in Russia. It was in the Fall of 1919, after the Red Army, under Trotsky's command, had beaten off the White Guard attack upon Petrograd. At a meeting of the Politburo a proposal was made and carried to award the Order of the Red Flag to Trotsky for the able defense of the city. What happened next is most illuminating:

"At the close of the meeting of the Politbureau, Kamenev, considerably embarrassed, introduced a proposal to award the decoration to Stalin. 'For what?' Kalinin inquired, sincerely indignant. 'I can't understand why it should be awarded to Stalin.' They pacified him with a jest, and the proposal was accepted. After the meeting Bukharin pounced on Kalinin. 'Can't you understand? This is Lenin's idea. Stalin can't live unless he has what some one else has. He will never forgive it.' I understood Lenin, and inwardly agreed with him."

Before we examine Trotsky's attitude in this shabby affair, it is proper to clear up the insinuation that Lenin's standard of morals had deteriorated to such a revolting degree that he, presumably, encouraged opportunist self-aggrandisement and vanity in the Party leaders. In another work, Trotsky painted Lenin in quite different colors. Trotsky himself knew how stern Lenin was in the question of personal integrity.

"Lenin was not only a theoretician and technician of the revolutionary dictatorship, but also a vigilant guardian of its moral foundations. Every hint at the use of power for personal interests kindled threatening fires in his eyes." (The Suppressed Testament of Lenin, p. 19)

The above-given description of Lenin's moral outlook does not at all correspond to the story that it was Lenin's idea to play up dishonestly to Stalin. Either what Trotsky says of Lenin being a vigilant guardian of the moral basis of the Party or the story of Lenin's advocating a policy of gratifying Stalin's vanity, is a fabrication. One excludes the other.

Let us now examine Trotsky's part in this affair. He says that Kalinin raised an indignant voice against the proposal introduced by Kamenev. Kalinin, it is to be assumed, saw in the proposal a gross violation of the whole spirit of award for meritorious action in the civil war, and was aware that all members of the Politburo realized the impropriety of conferring the Order upon Stalin. But where was Trotsky's indignant voice in this matter? Far from re-

ording opposition, Trotsky indicates his consent, the whole business being pictured as agreement with "Lenin's idea."

But if the conferring of the decoration upon Stalin was "Lenin's idea," why was Kamenev "considerably embarrassed?" Trotsky leaves this point without explanation. We can offer a hypothetical reason for Kamenev's embarrassment. He, like Kalinin, knew that everybody in the Politburo was quite clear that Stalin performed no heroic feats to merit the Order; he therefore felt that the members would sense something of a crooked friendship between him and Stalin. It may be that by then Kamenev and Stalin had begun working in secrecy to create a bureaucratic clique "orbit" which later developed into the "Trio."

In passing, it is worth observing that in Trotsky's story Lenin is portrayed as standing on a very low level as compared with Kalinin in the task of safeguarding the personal rectitude of the Party leadership. Curiously, Trotsky did not express doubt that this basically dishonest business was "Lenin's idea," but leaves the allegation to sound as true.

Without question Trotsky's experience with Stalin in the civil war stood out in his consciousness at the time Kamenev's proposal was made. Early in the year Trotsky had sent a message to the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee, Sverdlov, saying "The line pursued by Stalin, Voroshilov and Co. means the ruin of the entire enterprise." (L. Trotsky, My Life, p. 444) As months went by, Stalin's opportunism grew. During the Summer of 1919 Trotsky gathered from Stalin's acts that "some intrigue was afoot" (p. 452) and even offered his resignation from the post of War Commissar. In view of all the friction that took place between Stalin and Trotsky during the civil war, Trotsky's policy with respect to the move of Kamenev is quite revealing as an attempt to appease Stalin by gratifying Stalin's paltry egotism.

Even more revealing is Trotsky's behavior during the official presentation of the Order:

"The award of the decoration was very impressively staged in the Grand Opera theatre, where I made a report on the military situation before the joint session of the major Soviet institutions. When, toward the end, the chairman named Stalin, I tried to applaud. Two or three hesitant hand-claps followed mine. A sort of cold bewilderment crept through the hall; it was especially noticeable after the ovations that had gone before. Stalin himself was wisely absent." (Ibid. P. 433. My emphasis - G.M.)

Unfortunately Lenin's failing health prevented him from seeing much of what was going on, otherwise there would have been an altogether different story for Trotsky to pen. The scene of the presentation of the award to Stalin is worth holding in mind. The audience, as Trotsky indicates, quite aware that Stalin had nothing to do with the saying of Petrograd and not knowing of any especially distinguishing military services by Stalin, sat bewildered. It did not applaud, except for "two or three hesitant hand-claps," and even those were the result of the leading example shown by Trotsky himself who attempted to stir the audience the moment the chairman mentioned Stalin's name. At this juncture the pertinent question to be raised is as follows. If Trotsky says "in all my political activity personal considerations have never played a part," what considerations moved him in that specific situation? Was it in the interests of the toiling masses and the international revolution that Trotsky humored the vanity of a leader tinged with dishonest ambition! Was Trotsky promoting sterling revolutionary integrity or rottenness and corruption by aiding to put over the award which he was convinced Stalin did not earn?

Trotsky clearly was following the line of personal appeasement of Stalin, of trying to live on good personal terms with the self-seeking bureaucrat. Characteristically enough such was his line even when Stalin, Kamenev and Zinoviev conspired to remove him from power. On one occasion Trotsky made a written admission of that policy. In 1928 in a letter to Muralov who raised the subject of Trotsky's disavowal of Lenin's Testament three years earlier, Trotsky stated:

"In any case, my then statement on Eastman can be understood only as an integral part of our then line toward conciliation and peace-making." (The New International, November 1934, p. 125)

We see then that Trotsky's words "I think I can rightfully say that in all my political activity personal considerations have never played a part" and his claim that he "trod on the toes of personal prejudice, friendly favoritism, or vanity" are contrary to the truth, as his action in the case of awarding the Order of the Red Flag to Stalin plainly shows.

When the picture is rounded out by supplementary facts, it is clear that Trotsky's line of conciliation within the degenerating bureaucratic leadership existed not only in 1925, when he slandered Eastman for Stalin's benefit, but even as far back as 1919. Indeed, this policy of conciliation, of attempting to live in peace with the Stalin clique was the keynote of Trotsky's whole policy during the formative period of Stalinism and for many years thereafter. Nothing but personal considerations were or could be involved. To remain in the leading bureaucracy in personal harmony with the other leaders was the whole aim of this treacherous policy. This policy was tenaciously clung to at the expense of the political requirements of the proletariat.

For a number of years, the Stalin center pretended to accept Trotsky's friendly overtures, but in the back of its mind always lay the hope, and later, plan of ousting Trotsky from power and centralizing control entirely in its own clutches. When at the end of 1923, the Stalin center opened a faction fight against Trotsky, the latter was transformed into a sham oppositionist still maneuvering to maintain his position within the bureaucracy through the policy of conciliating the Stalin clique.

G.M.

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