

T H E BULLETIN

OF THE WORKERS LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

THE ROOTS OF THE "TRUMAN DOCTRINE"

—THOMAS F. HARDEN

THE YALTA DEAL: CLUE TO A CRIME

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THE WORK OF CANNON AND SHACTMAN IN THE TRADE UNIONS

PART 7—TREACHERY IN THE COAL FIELDS

Documents From The Archives Of Trotskyism

The August 1927 Declaration of the Opposition

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THE BULLETIN
of the
WORKERS LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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* THE ROOTS OF THE "TRUMAN DOCTRINE" *
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On March 12, 1947 President Truman appeared before a joint session of the American Congress with a statement of foreign policy involving direct military aid to Greece and Turkey, two strategic states bordering on Stalin-controlled territory. Truman announced openly that the weight of American imperialism would be used against the Stalinist forces.

What is behind this whole affair? Is it just another imperialistic grab as the Stalinists say? Is it almost a "declaration of war" as is claimed openly in some imperialist quarters? Is it a preventative of war as other capitalist spokesmen claim? Is it a "new policy" as was stated by most of the capitalist press on March 13, 1947 or continuation of an old policy in a new guise? Above all, are we confronted with the prospect of war, the most terrible and devastating yet seen, or just "peaceful" imperialist penetration? The answer to all these questions must be sought in an analysis of the present historical period.

The October Revolution was a body blow to world capitalism. At one stroke the international capitalists were deprived of the possibility of exploiting one sixth of the globe. This was fundamentally much worse for them than the immediate loss suffered by the expropriation of the Russian and international bourgeois holdings in Russia. Ever since that time the main antagonism as between countries has been the antagonism between the property forms in the Soviet Union and in the imperialist world. And this was true despite the fact that from the very start there was bureaucratic usurpation of power from the Russian proletariat.

In the period between the failure of the first intervention against Russia and June 22, 1941, the international bourgeoisie was constantly working to eliminate this contradiction. With the advent of the Nazis to power in 1933 the international bourgeoisie deemed they had found their perfect weapon. It is important to note, for future reference, that international imperialism was compelled to build up its Nazi spearhead under the guise of "appeasement." When nearly all of Europe had been turned over to the Nazis, the second attack started on the Soviet Union.

The failure of the Nazis to smash the Soviet Union became evident to the imperialists during the Battle of Stalingrad. This signified a failure to eliminate the basic contradiction between the private economy in the capitalist world and the socialized economy in the Soviet Union. Although the Nazi spearhead did not succeed, it inflicted tremendous havoc on Russia in lives and material. If the practically intact forces of the U.S.A. and England had been able to attack Russia at that time their chances of success would have been very great. But these imperialists were in an ideological fix. In the eyes of the masses of the imperialist countries, Stalin was an ally and principal victor over Fascism. A new attack presupposed the use of the Anglo-American forces as the main instrument. It therefore became necessary to transform the sentiment of the Anglo-American masses with respect to the Soviet Union.

Now ensued one of the most curious paradoxes in history. In the previous period Hitler had been aided by world imperialism under the guise of "appeasement" until the point was reached when "appeasement" could no longer be made acceptable to the masses. At this point, to appease the masses who were sick

of the Munich policy, the imperialists had to declare "war" on Hitler. The feeling was widespread among the masses that if a "get tough" policy had been applied to Hitler from the start war could have been avoided.

The problem for the imperialist strategists was to transform Stalin into an aggressor who was following the pattern of Hitler. Then the imperialists could say: We learned a costly lesson before. Now we must crush this monster before it is too late.

How could Stalin be transformed from the "glorious co-victor over Fascism," the "brave ally", to the new world menace. Billions of dollars worth of equipment were turned over to Russia in the form of Lend Lease, mostly after Stalin-grad. Huge chunks of territory in Europe and Asia were turned over to Stalinism. The most vivid example is in the Far East where Manchuria, North Korea, the Kuriles, and southern Sakhalin were handed over to Stalin on a silver platter. Stalin took what he could get with the permission of the imperialist rulers. However, each gift carried with it an obligation. Lend Lease not actually used against the Nazis was to be returned or paid for, the terms being purposely vague. The occupied territories were to be governed by "democratic" governments set up by what the imperialists call "free elections."

This was the first part of the process. The Soviet Union was established as an expanding power. Once the actual expansion of the Soviet Union was firmly fixed in fact, the imperialists had a concrete basis for raising a hue and cry about aggression. In previous articles we pointed out the background and meaning of this imperialist "get tough" policy with Russia from its inception. Our analysis that this line would continue and intensify has been fully vindicated by the present development.

Having first established the "get tough with Russia" attitude as the official line, the next step was quickly forthcoming. In the Truman message on Greece and Turkey, a transition from the "get tough" policy to a stage of direct and open preparation for war is revealed. In this connection it is very significant that the imperialists agreed that Stalin take over the Balkans with the sole exception of Greece. The imperialist omission of Greece from the Stalin sphere was not accidental. It is now quite patent that the imperialists wanted Greece as an ideological weapon and a base for planned military operations.

The case of Turkey is even stronger as a criterion of approach to actual war. Truman admitted, as he had to, that there was no war devastation in Turkey; he could not assert the existence of "terrorist bands" there. The proposal to give money and military personnel to Turkey, the proposal to reorganize the Turkish economic and military structure, can not be regarded as other than direct preparation for war.

The salient point about this whole situation is the role of the Stalinist bureaucracy. If Stalin had refused to take over the new territory the whole imperialist plan would have been a miscarriage. Stalin's own game is to expand his power in any way that he can. When he saw an opportunity to enlarge his domain, he seized upon it. He undoubtedly calculated that if he didn't move in, the imperialists would enter with their forces. It was this Stalin opportunism and policy of self-aggrandisement at the expense of the masses which played right into the hands of the imperialists. The responsibility for the present war crisis rests equally with the imperialist plotters and the Stalin opportunists.

At the present moment the masses are being led to slaughter by Stalin

and by the imperialists. The historic class enemy, imperialism, is protected by opportunism within the proletariat, primarily Stalinism. An exposure and destruction of Stalinism is necessary for the overthrow of imperialism. But while the Kremlin seat is the focus of Stalinist infection throughout the world, the overthrow of Stalinism by imperialism will not move the workers one inch toward liberation. When Stalinism is defeated by a revolutionary force, only then is the obstacle to the forward movement of the working class removed.

Despite all the Stalinist betrayals, despite the criminal opportunism, despite the existence of a goodly number of revolutionary-minded workers who know of the treachery of Stalinism, the Stalin force retains a strangle-hold on the neck of the world masses. What is preventing the ousting of Stalinism and the implanting of a correct understanding among the revolutionary workers?

The key is the Trotsky force which has captured the main stream of the revolutionary-minded anti-Stalin workers and ties them back to Stalinism by the policy of "critical support" and thereby prevents any struggle against both Stalinism and imperialism. Those workers in the Trotsky camp who sincerely want to struggle against capitalism and Stalinism, who want to prevent another blood bath more horrible than any ever seen in history must break with their leadership and form a real Marxist cadre. They can and will find a ready response in the masses of the world who are disgusted with capitalism and bureaucratism, sick of war and hunger, and yearning for a way out.

Thomas F. Harden
March 1947.

EXCERPTS FROM THE TROTSKYIST PRESS:

A "Marxian" Approach to Truman's Role

"Though honest himself, Truman bears the trait of the worst political machine in the country. Mediocre in personal capabilities, the best that can be found to say of him is that he is loyal and earnest."
(Labor Action, April 23, 1945 p. 4. Our Emphasis)

How to Get Justice in the United States

"Breitman then went ahead with the major proposal he had come to make: "For these reasons we are here to propose the complete abolition of the general court martial, and the institution of a system of civilian court trial for soldiers charged with serious offenses." (Trotskyite proposal to War Dep't. Advisory Committee on Military Justice, The Militant, Sept. 21, 1946 p. 7. Our emphasis)

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* -- EDITORIAL NOTES -- *

1- THE YALTA DEAL: CLUE TO A CRIME

The imperialist-Stalin crime of laying the basis for a new butchery of millions, is far from being a perfect one. No better clue is needed to solve this crime than the Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin agreement at Yalta to have Stalin enter the Far East. We are presenting here this section of the Yalta Agreement to show how absurd the "concessions" policy, which the imperialists adopted, appears on the surface in view of the situation at that time. The Yalta meeting found on the one hand a Soviet Union which had experienced a devastation and loss of life unprecedented in history. Large portions of the economy were utterly destroyed and whole sections of the country laid waste. On the other hand, at the time of Yalta, there were the two imperialist giants, American and British imperialism, with their immense land and naval forces virtually unused and intact; with American and British war production at an all time peak. The leaders of these two great imperialist powers met with the head of the much strained and relatively much weaker Soviet Union and in the discussions which followed, for some mysterious and seemingly illogical reason, the imperialist representatives agreed to enormous territorial concessions to Stalin.

The key clause in the Far Eastern section, it will be observed, called for Stalin to enter the Japanese situation and thereby pick his territorial plums, three months after the war in Europe ended. At such time, the imperialists claimed, despite the fact that they would be able to concentrate their entire military efforts solely on the Far East, where Japan would be isolated and surrounded, they would somehow be in desperate need of military assistance from the Soviet Union. So great would that need be that they agreed to reward Stalin by depriving their "ally" China of her rights in Manchuria by turning over to the Soviet Union former Tsarist privileges in that territory; by letting him occupy Northern Korea and by turning over Southern Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands. It is significant that the imperialist puppet, Chiang Kai-shek did not protest at the partitioning of supposedly sovereign Chinese territory.

Why were these concessions made, seemingly without purpose, by the imperialists? The only reason was to lay the ideological basis for a war to wipe out "Communist expansion", as we have been pointing out in our publication.

Stalin's crime in taking the territories has made possible the entire war crisis today.

The following section of the Yalta agreement is self explanatory:

"AGREEMENT REGARDING JAPAN

"The leaders of the three great powers-the Soviet Union, the United States of America and Great Britain- have agreed that in two or three months after Germany has surrendered and the war in Europe has terminated,

By citing Truman's words defending American intervention in Greece and Turkey, the capitalist propagandists made an almost open demand for similar direct intervention in Hungary. Such intervention is obviously only a matter of time.

The Stalin clique replied to the American note by accusing the imperialists of "rude interference" and claimed that some members of the Small-Holders party had been caught plotting in an "anti-Republican conspiracy" and therefore ruled out any investigation in collaboration with the imperialists. The Stalin spokesman did not bother, of course, to make clear why the Small-Holders party leaders should be plotting against a government in which they themselves presumably held the majority!

A second note from the American bourgeoisie on March 17, 1947, retorted that "It seems clear to the United States Government that minority groups under the leadership of the Hungarian Communist Party are attempting to seize power through resort to extra-constitutional tactics." A day later the Stalin gang again rejected the demand for an investigation and there the matter stands at this writing.

A key point which the Stalin crew is unable to counter in the imperialist diplomatic campaign is the reference to the Yalta declaration which the imperialists use. The Yalta declaration promised "free elections" and the imperialists can claim that as signatories of that declaration, and as participants in the Allied Control Commission for Hungary, they are responsible for seeing that the Yalta pledges are carried out. This point was made an important feature in the American diplomatic notes. Naturally, the Imperialist rulers knew full well from the beginning what policy Stalin would follow in his occupied sphere. They had witnessed "elections" in Russia and had seen how those frauds were palmed off by the Stalin clique as "free" elections. But interestingly, during the period of 1943 to 1945, when the imperialists were encouraging Stalin's expansion in Europe and Asia via secret agreements, they actually pretended to believe in Stalin's "democratic" assurances. During a Stalin-Churchill conference in Moscow, the capitalist writers gave the imperialist diplomatic line at that time as follows:

"The fact is that the British have reached a point where they are willing to see Rumania, Bulgaria and even Hungary and Yugoslavia brought within the Russian security system along with Czechoslovakia and Poland. They take at face value Russian Foreign Commissar Vyachesloff M. Molotoff's assurance to Rumania last June that the Russians had no desire to communitize the country, and they sympathize with Russia's desire to cushion her own frontier." (The New York Times, October 15, 1944.)

Of course, the present American protests about the Stalin activities in Hungary are echoed by the British imperialists. The hypocrisy and double-dealing is self evident. Since the imperialists knew well in 1944 that the Nazi army was near elimination and that Germany would necessarily be occupied by the "Allies", against whom was Stalin supposed to be cushioning his frontier?

The imperialists are not concerned one whit with "free elections" nor do they practice such a policy themselves. They were and are perfectly aware of the fact that Stalin, too, cannot abide by such a method of rule. What the imperialists wanted by inserting such phrases as "free elections" into the

agreements covering Stalin's expansion was a weapon to blacken Stalin later before the masses as a necessary ideological prerequisite for a military assault. Through these agreements the imperialists have a "legal" basis and a strong talking point with the masses to justify intervention in the Balkans and other parts of Europe where Stalin is in control. To succeed in this campaign, paradoxically, the imperialists first needed Stalin's expansion and this was secured during the so-called "appeasement" period from Teheran to Yalta. At that time the imperialists claimed sympathy with Stalin's desire to "cushion" his frontier. Now they are raising a howl at what they seemingly supported before and base their anti-Soviet campaign around the cry that Stalin is a violator of agreements and an "expanding power" thereby threatening the peace of the world. The criminality of the Stalin clique has provided the greatest assistance to the imperialist scheme for the whipping up of a war psychology against the Soviet Union. If the Stalin force remains unexposed before the vanguard workers which they dominate, the success of the imperialist plan is assured since the Stalin opportunism will continue. Only the light of revolutionary exposure can expose both the Stalin and imperialist camps whose policies are leading inescapably to a terrible climax.

-- A. Burke
March 1947

3- THE TROTSKYITES AND INDO CHINA

The Trotskyites have been voicing loud protests about the suppression of the Indo Chinese masses by the French imperialists. Labor Action of January 27, 1947 reported a demonstration to be held by the Workers party with some Viet Namese before the French Consulate in New York City, against the brutal imperialist policies of the French government in Indo China. Posters were put up in the Workers Party headquarters in New York condemning these policies. Similar protests against the brutal suppression can be found in The Militant, organ of the Socialist Workers Party.

All this outcry would lead a worker (and a Viet Namese in the demonstration) to believe that the Trotsky leaders are actually fighting the brutal policies of the French bourgeoisie. A glance at the line the Trotsky leaders advocate for the French workers, however, will show that the "revolutionary Marxist" concept of these leaders is support to the very people who are making possible the French policies in Indo China, actions which the Cannons and Shachtmans claim to condemn. The majority of the present French government consists of Socialists and Stalinists. These forces are making the suppression of the Indo Chinese masses possible through their political collaboration with French imperialism. The touchstone of the real Trotsky line, therefore, is their relation to these opportunist forces which are facilitating the imperialist policy of death and terror in Indo China. Echoing The Militant, organ of the Cannon Trotskyites, the Workers Party leadership stands on the following position on France:

"No other central slogan is possible for the revolutionary Marxists, and none corresponds better to the needs of the situation than: a government of the Socialist Party- Stalinist Party-Confederation Generale du Travail." (Editorial in Labor Action, January 28, 1946)

Continued on page

The reader will observe the date of the above quotation; January, 1946, or more than a year ago. Since that time the Social Democrats and Stalinists in France have worked with might and main to prop up the French bourgeoisie. They have disrupted strike actions and have voted military credits to insure the power of French imperialism. The Stalinists have organized brutal gangster attacks to stifle opponent workers, including Trotskyite workers. Recently, the Social Democratic and Stalinist opportunists added another black page to their long series of betrayals by approving the dispatching of troops to Indo China.

The link between the imperialist atrocities in Indo China and the political policies of the Social Democrats and Stalinists is patent. The Trotskyites have been confronted with a mountain of evidence proving the danger to the masses stemming from these reactionary forces. Evaluating the period since the formulation of the slogan for a CP-SP government in France, Max Schachtman presents the following conclusion:

"To us it seems that the subsequent developments in France have served to confirm this analysis, and to dispel the by no means unjustified doubt expressed by many of the opponents of the slogan in our party." (The New International, March, 1947, p.72)

The Trotskyite vorbiage against the French imperialist terror in Indo China is the shadow. The support the Cannons and Schachtmans give to the Stalinists and Socialists, who are carrying out this bloody policy is the substance of the Trotskyite line.

A. Jones
March 1947

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THE MYTH OF A FREE PRESS

A good indication of the political line of the Workers Party is its recent proposal that the CIO Industrial Council and the AFL Central Labor Union, of Philadelphia, take over the struck newspaper, The Philadelphia Record. "This," the Workers Party states, "would be a free press because it would be a people's press." That, the Workers Party further states, would be a great blow struck by the labor movement against capitalism. (Labor Action, February 10, 1947, p1)

The heads of the CIO Industrial Councils and of the AFL Central Unions throughout the country, and the Greens and the Murrays at the heads of the parent organizations, have been faithfully serving the interests of the bourgeoisie politically and economically for years, as the Workers Party leadership is well aware. Can there be any doubt in the minds of these leaders as to the policies these labor henchmen of the capitalist class will carry out in a paper run by them?

(continued on page 11)

* THE NATURAL HISTORY OF A LIE *

In the November, 1946, issue of International News, publication of the Revolutionary Workers League, there appears the following on page four:

"In our ranks has been manifested two revisionist tendencies-seemingly opposites, but in reality two sides of the same political demoralization and lack of faith in the revolution. On the one hand a Marlonist study-circle tendency developed, which called for no work in the class struggle 'in this period' but study and polemics against opponent groups, particularly Stalinism."

The R.W.L. organ speaks of a "Marlonist study-circle tendency." Obviously the R.W.L. leaders are here attacking the ideas of the Harden-Wilcox tendency which originally developed within the R.W.L. and ultimately joined hands with the Workers League for a Revolutionary Party. Is it true that the Harden-Wilcox tendency advocated "no work in the class struggle 'in this period'" as the International News asserts? If this be true, then the accusations of revisionism, political demoralization and lack of faith in the revolution are justified. However, if the statements on the Harden-Wilcox orientation cited by the R.W.L. are not true, then we are dealing with a case of slander.

A thorough search of every document ever put out by Harden-Wilcox when they were in the R.W.L. and since their joining the W.L.R.P. yields nothing that would even remotely resemble advocacy of the line imputed to them by the R.W.L. writers. We are forced to the conclusion that this alleged line of no work in the class struggle in this period originated in the imagination of the authors of International News. Particularly illuminating of the methods of Okun and Co. in this connection is the placing of quotation marks around the phrase "in this period" in the original citation. This gives the unwary reader the impression that the R.W.L. leaders are actually citing from documents. I do not propose to leave this cheap trick unexposed. In no document of ours does this phrase appear in any such context.

The abstract phrase "in this period" can be found in anybody's writings and that includes Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and anyone else who ever produced documents of any type. The R.W.L. method is to subtly inject quotation marks around this phrase to give an authentic looking appearance to their distortions of our line as a whole.

But we shall not limit ourselves to simply pitting our assertions against those of our opponents. We will do what the International News significantly did not do; and that is to substantiate our statements by reference to the actual documents in question.

As far back as January 2, 1945 a letter was sent out to the membership of the R.W.L. by Okun, Acting National Secretary of that organization, and was reproduced in full in the March-April 1946 issue of The Bulletin. Significantly, in point four of that Okun letter, the very same accusation was levelled on our orientation in the form of a paraphrase of our theses:

"That we must have an 'advanced workers'' orientation. FIRST we concentrate on winning over advanced workers in the various political groups and we polemicize against them (particularly Stalinism, which is the fountainhead of opportunism): and THEN we will do work in the class struggle."

Just a few days before this, while still a member of the Central

Committee of the K.W.L., and in fact its National Organizational Secretary, I had submitted to the plenum a document of the then Leninist League, now Workers League for a Revolutionary Party, as expressing my views on orientation. This document pointed out that revolutionary participation in the class struggle in this period meant working to win over the vanguard workers from their present misleaders and to organize them into a revolutionary party. In short, the essence of the differences which became crystallized between Harden and the K.W.L. leadership revolved around the tasks necessitated by revolutionary participation in the class struggle. On the other hand, Okun and Co. try to put across the view that they were for participation in the class struggle whereas the Leninist League was against. Everyone participates in the class struggle in a society marked by class divisions. There is no such line, objectively, as non-participation in the class struggle; the point at issue was and is under what line shall this participation be governed. The K.W.L. turns its back on the misled workers following the opportunists by orienting itself toward those workers who still have not broken with capitalism subjectively.

Okun and Co. spread the illusion that they "fight" opportunism as a part of their general struggle against capitalism as a whole, and that it is capitalism which is the main enemy. The views advanced by Harden-Wilcox were that the historical enemy, capitalism, is protected by the opportunists who operate within the working class to prevent any real struggle against the capitalist system. Without destroying the power of the opportunists, there can be no real fight to overthrow capitalism. The main bulk of those workers who are already subjectively anti-capitalist, the vanguard workers today, are under the control of opportunism. The backward workers can not leap over the head of the vanguard; it is the vanguard workers who determine the political direction of the working class as a whole. The first step in destroying the capitalist system must be the winning of the vanguard workers to the correct policy and the smashing of opportunism.

The lesson of China, Germany, Spain, France, etc. is, that wherever the workers move en masse to revolution, they flock to that force which they identify with revolution. That force was the Stalinist system and it is this system which today stands more strongly entrenched than ever in its history. In France today, to take but one example, the problem is not as the K.W.L. would have it, to explain the evils of capitalism, but rather as we see it, to win over the millions of workers already anti-capitalist in ideology to a Marxist policy. Unless this is done, the opportunists in control of the vanguard workers in France will keep the workers tied to the French imperialists. It is such an orientation which Okun brands as non-participation in the class struggle.

On February 28, 1945, while still a member of the R.W.L., I addressed a letter to the Political Committee of that organization in which, among many other things, I took up this particular question of orientation. After repeating the Okun paraphrase of what he termed my line, and which we cited above, I wrote as follows:

"Reply

A. Falsification. "THEN we will do work in the class struggle." Nowhere have I said this. On the contrary I have stressed that the only real work in the class struggle for Marxists, at the present time, with the present relation of forces, is connected with an advanced workers' orientation."

The letter of February 28, 1945 on this point shows that as far back as that time the writers of the International News knew what my real views were on orientation.

The membership of the R.W.L. should consider this whole matter very carefully. It is one thing to conduct a struggle against the real views of a political opponent. It is quite another thing to be fully informed of the real position of an opponent and yet concoct out of sheer imagination a position an opponent does not hold and continually try to attack him by striking at the invented position.

We of the W.L.R.P. will publish and reply to any document of the R.W.L. We call on the rank and file of the R.W.L. to demand that their leaders in turn adopt the same attitude and publish and discuss all the pertinent documents on the disputed questions.

Thomas F. Harden
March 1947.

(Continued from page 8)

Like the expressions "free state" or "the public", the phrase "free press" is designed to conceal the class cleavage in society and the political essence of the specific press. There is a bourgeois press- Fascist, Conservative, Liberal; there is the petty bourgeois press represented by Social Democratic publications; there is the Stalinist press of the Soviet Union, the Comintern and their satellites and "critical" supporters; and there is the trade union press- either pro Stalinist or pro capitalist directly and indirectly. But there is no such thing as a "free" press.

The taking over of the Philadelphia Record by the CIO and the AFL leaders would change it from a bourgeois to a bourgeois-labor publication and nothing more. Let a worker try to put material into a newspaper controlled by the Greens and Murrays, material which will really expose their line of class collaboration and sell-out, and he will very shortly see how free their press is.

The advocacy by the Workers Party of a "free" press controlled by labor fakery is an excellent example of the support this organization gives to the people who are selling out the workers in the trade unions, and is a perfect illustration of the opportunist essence behind its "mass work."

A. James
March 1947

THE WORK OF CANNON AND SPACHTMAN
IN THE TRADE UNIONS

PART VII- TREACHERY IN THE COAL FIELDS

LEWIS' BUREOCRATIC BACKGROUND

During the period of the war situation from 1941 to 1945 the American trade union workers stirred against the policy of the wage freeze which intensified the effects of the continual rise in the cost of living. In the coal fields a steady deterioration in living conditions aroused the miners against the no-strike pledge that had been foisted on them and against the Wall Street War Labor Board. The developing strike sentiment in the mine fields came to a head in 1943 and threatened to smash the authority of the W.L.B., auguring a death blow to the no-strike pledge which the labor bureaucracy was using as a club in the interests of the bosses. Many militant trade union workers looked hopefully to the coal fields. It was felt that here a spark would be ignited and an explosion set off to blast the no strike pledge out of existence. The key factor in this turbulent situation was the leadership of the United Mine Workers Union, concentrated in the hands of John L. Lewis. This leadership spoke in the name of the miners and claimed to represent their interests. Since the leadership of the U.M.W. was placed in the forefront in the subsequent mine crisis, the character of every political tendency in the working class can be evaluated from the position it adopted on Lewis and his policy.

In previous sections of this series we have already dealt with the role of Lewis in some detail but mainly in connection with the C.I.O. Lewis' onerous role in the mine fields specifically was an open and shut case, although many of the miners were unaware of this fact. A brief sketch of the highlights of Lewis' trade union career is the necessary basis for a scientific understanding of the events under discussion and will also indicate just what was confronting the seething miners.

Samuel Gompers, loyal agent of Wall Street within the unions, spotted the up and coming Lewis and in 1911 opened the door to him in the restricted A.F.L. top circle, when Lewis was appointed field and legislative representative of the class collaborationist A.F.L. After unstinting service to capitalism in this capacity, Lewis was rewarded with the first vice-presidency of the U.M.W. In 1919 he betrayed the first major post-war strike of the miners with the dictum that "you cannot fight the government." In that period, although the miners were in a strategically favorable position from a trade union point of view to win their demands, Lewis instead of holding a referendum, arrogantly ordered the workers to return and didn't even bother to announce the terms under which the miners were to resume work. In 1920 he elbowed his way into the presidency of the union in a vote conducted through the mails and counted by friends at headquarters.

When a section of the miners went out on strike in Kansas to protest a state law instituting compulsory arbitration, Lewis "outlawed" the strike and without a trial expelled these miners from the union, leaving them helpless prey to the vultures owning the mines. In the large scale mine strike of 1922 to resist wage cuts, he struck up a bargain with the bosses in Western Kentucky on the first day, ordering a resumption of work in return for an agreement extending the old terms until the following year. A few days later he signed two year contracts for south-eastern Kentucky and Tennessee. Having divided the solid ranks of the miners by these separate agreements for a section of the miners, Lewis then found it a simple matter to break up the

rest of the strike. He also established the policy of separating the bituminous and anthracite miners, a division which weakens the organized resistance of the miners to this day.

Lewis has never sought to conceal his pro-capitalist outlook and in his book "The Miners Fight for American Standards" openly defended the perpetuation of the capitalist system of wage slavery.

At the U.M.W. conventions Lewis consistently refused the floor to opponents or over-ruled resolutions he did not like and organized the terrorization of oppositionists. Opponent miners were first beaten up by Lewis' thugs and then kicked out on trumped up charges. Charters were revoked to smash rebellious locals and ballots were stolen to negate referendums. While the exploited miners were starving as a result of the sell-out agreements, Lewis voted himself fabulous salaries and by this systematic looting of the treasury established himself in palatial splendor. His class consciousness is shown in his hob-nobbing with top bankers and capitalists who form his closed circle of friends and confederates.

The Mine Strike of January 1943.

In January 1943, an acute ferment pervaded the coal fields. The existing contract which Lewis had "negotiated" was due to expire in April 1943. However, the miners were suffering terribly under the pressure of rising living costs and felt that they could not wait for the expiration date of the contract to improve their miserable conditions. In addition, the anthracite miners resented a fifty cent dues increase foisted on them by a pro-Lewis, hand-picked convention. As a result of these grievances against the owners and the union leaders, the miners began to leave the pits in a spontaneous strike movement in January 1943, coupling the protest against the unjustified dues increase with the demand for a new and better contract:

"Called in protest against an increase of 50 cents a month in dues collected by the check-off, the walkout later involved also a demand for a wage increase of \$2 a day." (The New York Times, Jan. 14, 1943)

The War Labor Board ordered an immediate return to work and threatened reprisals against the miners. But the miners were adamant and ignored the orders and threats of this boss agency. The action of the miners created a crisis for the bosses since it threatened the prestige and authority of the governmental strike-breaking machinery. At this point, Lewis stepped into the breach and denounced the strike. Lewis openly sided with the strike-breaking orders of the W.L.B.:

"Mr. Lewis has assured the WLB and Chairman Truman by letter that he is doing 'everything possible' to end the work stoppage, it was learned at the miners' union headquarters." (The New York Times, Jan. 15, 1943)

The capitalist press evidenced a sympathetic concern for the preservation of Lewis' authority over the miners and praised his "labor statesmanship", i.e. his strikebreaking.

The miners were in a militant mood and resisted the back to work orders of both Lewis and the W.L.B. Lewis, therefore, had to do some fast talking to soften the miners' resentment against him and build up some confidence in his leadership. Accordingly, he pretended that if the miners would get back to the pits, the hand of the UMW leadership would be strengthened in the forthcoming "negotiations" for a better contract.

"To stand by the agreement, (the then existing contract-A.B.) said Mr. Lewis, would mean that the anthracite negotiations which open in March would put the union spokesmen in a better position to negotiate a more satisfactory agreement." (The New York Times, Jan. 16, 1943)

In official testimony at a W.L.B. hearing Lewis definitely promised the miners a "wholesome increase" in wages but insisted that the precondition for any increase was the ending of the strike.

On January 19, 1943, Roosevelt issued an official presidential back-to-work ultimatum and warned the miners of dire consequences if they continued their strike. The Lewis leadership supplemented Roosevelt's order by threatening the striking miners who refused to terminate the strike with immediate expulsion from the union. Overwhelmed by the imposing line up of forces against them, the miners reluctantly ended their twenty-four day strike. Recognizing that the atmosphere remained explosive, the bosses were constrained to admit that they had won a very tenuous victory and that all the elements for a strike remained intact:

"The side issues, popular resentment against John L. Lewis, President of the U.M.W.A. and a \$2-a day increase in wages, also remained, possibly to plague the armistice achieved only under Presidential decree and threats from high officials in the union." (The New York Times, Jan. 22, 1943)

The collusion between Lewis and the W.L.B. was so clear to any trained political eye as to admit of no ambiguity. Since we are dealing in this series with the work of the Trotsky leaders in the unions it is necessary to see whether they knew about Lewis' role at the very inception of the mine crisis in 1943. A glance through the pages of the Trotsky press shows that the Cannon leadership was fully aware of Lewis' collaboration with the W.L.B. in forcing the miners back to work:

"At the War Labor Board hearing on Jan. 15, John L. Lewis, UMW President, joined with the Board in demanding the workers' return to work." (The Militant, Jan. 23, 1943)

An understanding of the basic unbreakable connection between Lewis and the capitalists must serve as the cornerstone for any analysis of the momentous events in the coal fields which followed in the spring of the same year and the position of the Trotsky leadership in relation to the workers, and in this instance, toward the miners.

The Eruption of the Mine Crisis in March 1943.

As has been indicated both the bosses and Lewis knew that an ominous strike situation was brewing in the coal fields and that unless the miners secured a concrete improvement in their conditions, they would take the expiration date of the soft coal contract on March 31, 1943 as a strike signal. Consequently the bosses and Lewis prepared to frustrate this strike ferment and preserve the no-strike W.L.B. set up.

To dispel the discontent of the miner caused by the dues increase, Lewis devised a technique to appear anti-boss and gain the confidence of the miners. He loudly criticized the Little Steel formula, castigated the Wall Street sharks on the strike-breaking WLB, shouted that the miners were hungry, presented pages of statistics to prove it, and swore that he would reject any settlement which did not fairly adjust the grievances of the miners. On March 10, 1943 Lewis raised some "demands" to enter to the boiling feelings

of the miners. These demands were quite "modest" as Lewis himself admitted but the miners were ready for a fight to the finish and left no possible doubt on this score.

In the mine contract "parleys" the owners did not hesitate to reject the modest Lewis demands outright. It was well-known to them through years of experience that Lewis used demands only as a face-saver and that he was really unconcerned about the starving miners whose interests he vociferously claimed to champion. The boss strategy was to pass the buck to the WLB (which had to approve contracts at that time) because they know that referral of the issue to the strike-breaking WLB meant a rejection of the demands since the WLB was officially committed to preserving the 15% Little Steel formula.

In January 1943 a real crisis existed due to the actual rank-and-file strike in the coal fields. At that moment, Lewis' hand was called and to crush the strike, he had to come out openly on the side of the bosses and their WLB to order the men back to work. In March 1943, however, there was no immediate strike crisis. The whole matter was still in the discussion stage. Therefore, to quiet the miners and dispel their discontent to some extent, Lewis "reversed himself" and now loudly criticized the WLB, refused to appear at any of the Board's hearings on the mine contract and in general made a lot of anti-boss noise. These verbal gestures cost Lewis nothing but they fooled many of the workers which is what Lewis hoped to do. The capitalist press added its particular dose of chloroform by identifying Lewis with the militant miners, pretending that he was putting up a real struggle. Typical headlines in the capitalist press in those days were:

"LEWIS DEFIES WLB IN MINING PARLEYS." (The New York Times, March 11, 1943)
"LEWIS CHALLENGES 'NO-STRIKE' PLEDGE." (The New York Times, March 27, 1943)

It was screaming headlines like the above and stories in this vein which strengthened Lewis' demagoguery among the miners. As a result of this propaganda and similar stories pouring forth from the Stalin mill, Lewis became generally accepted among many militant workers as a genuine opponent to the no-strike class collaborationist mechanism of the Wall Street gang. Manifestly, this was the period when it became more than ever incumbent for revolutionary Marxists to expose Lewis as a strike-breaker in disguise and clear up the miners who were misled on the nature of this dangerous enemy within their midst.

Did the Trotsky leaders know that Lewis was really 100 percent behind the no-strike pledge and one of the key participants in stringing this noose around the neck of the American workers? Cannon and his colleagues demonstrated their knowledge of Lewis' real policy on more than one occasion and even published the latter's own remarks in which he boasted of his influence in foisting the no-strike agreement on the trade unions:

"In the war labor conference in Washington in December last, I was one of those representatives of labor who voted to accept that contract between government, industry, and labor which called for the elimination of work stoppages throughout the country, on the basis of the government setting up an agency which would give judicial determination to the ills and grievances of the workers of this country. I was glad to do so. I was glad to make that personal contribution as an official representative of our membership. I like to believe that my presence in that meeting was helpful." (The Militant, June 13, 1942. p. 2)

From this citation it is plain that Lewis' strike-breaking role was no secret to the Cannon leadership many months before the mine crisis came to a head in 1943. We have already shown that Cannon and Co. knew that in the January 1943 strike Lewis worked together with the WLB in breaking up that struggle. But how did the SWP leadership behave when the crisis was coming to a head in March 1943? This was the strategic moment in the brewing strike situation and it was just at this crucial point that Cannon and Co. fell in line parroting the boss press and the Daily Worker that Lewis was a threat to the no-strike pledge:

"The capitalist class is well aware that Lewis and the miners now constitute a threat to the entire governmental mediation machinery which is designed to keep the workers in the chains of no-strike agreements while the war costs are loaded upon their shoulders." (The Militant, March 20, 1943 p. 2)

The truth of the matter was that neither Lewis nor the miners who were shackled by Lewis' machine, were a threat to the government policies. Appearing before a congressional committee, Lewis publicly told of his definite attachment to the scheme of Government Labor Boards and hearkened back to the old strike-breaking Labor Board under the Wilson machine as a shining example to follow. Soon after this statement, Lewis called off the scheduled strike and agreed to an extension of the stale fraud of "negotiations" for thirty days, to May 1, 1943.

In the face of Lewis' public testimony in favor of Labor Boards and his breaking of the scheduled strike, the Trotsky leadership had to backtrack for the moment on the portrait of Lewis as a "threat to the entire governmental mediation machinery" and to the no-strike pledge. Accordingly, the S.W.P. organ came out with the "discovery" that Lewis was really not opposed to the government machinery after all:

"Despite the fact that the War Labor Board's policies and activities have made it necessary for the miners to denounce it and refuse to submit to its jurisdiction, Lewis right now, in the midst of the present coal controversy, proposes the setting up of still another board. Apparently he does not break with the idea of labor being imprisoned in such bodies; but has a quarrel merely with their personnel. He is only asking that these boards grant slighter concessions to labor and especially to its officialdom." (The Militant, April 3, 1943)

Lewis not only generally supported the idea of class-collaborationist Labor Boards but had even helped promote the one he was demagogically criticizing in March 1943. The Cannon leadership knew all about this significant aspect of Lewis' line:

"It must never be forgotten that Lewis, like the CIO and AFL leaders, was one of the sponsors of the present War Labor Board." (Ibid.)

Cannon and Co. now self-righteously proclaimed that the workers should never forget that Lewis was one of the sponsors of the War Labor Board. The workers also should have been warned not to forget that Lewis was 100 percent behind the no-strike pledge and was one of the key participants in that particular conspiracy entered into by the labor fakers and the bosses. But at the moment when it was vital to spread this knowledge, the S.W.P. leaders did everything possible to make the workers forget these facts by depicting Lewis a "threat" to the no-strike pledge and to the government class-collaboration machinery.

The April "Negotiations" and the Strike Crisis on May 1, 1943

The April "negotiations" were a stalling device for both Lewis and the bosses. The bosses naturally kept insisting that the case be submitted to the Labor Board. Lewis, on his part, to keep in character with his assumed role as a militant, claimed that the WLB had prejudged the case of the miners and refused to appear before that body. Early in April 1943, Kennedy, the secretary-treasurer of the UMW resigned from the WLB to give emphasis to the Lewis pretense of fighting the WLB. Once more a hue and cry was raised in the boss and Stalin press that Lewis was working to destroy the WLB and to break up the no-strike pledge. On their part, the miners were solid for a strike and demanded that there be no further extensions of the "negotiations" beyond May 1, 1943. Even the hostile capitalist press had to acknowledge that the widespread sentiment in the coal fields was for a strike:

"Emphasizing the growing crisis, it was learned that local mine unions have been telegraphing to Mr. Lewis at his temporary headquarters at the Hotel Roosevelt, urging him not to agree to any extension of the negotiations beyond May 1." (The New York Times, April 17, 1943)

As "negotiations" stalled, the WLB formally stepped into the situation in the latter part of April 1943. Miners began walking out of the pits in protest, impatient with the fruitless wage "parleys." The Lewis leadership indicated its actual line when it refused to back these stoppages:

"The prevailing opinion among union leaders was that local units had 'gone off half-cocked,' in anger over the stymied wage negotiations." (The New York Times, April 24, 1943)

Tension mounted as more and more miners left the pits. As the walk-outs extended, the WLB told Lewis to take a more active hand to throttle the movement. The UMW spokesmen reassured the bosses and their agents in the government and announced that the leadership was not even taking a strike vote or making any kind of preparations for a strike:

"The union is taking no strike vote and is making no strike preparations," declared K.C. Adams, editor of the United Mine Workers Journal and press spokesman for Mr. Lewis." (The New York Times, April 26, 1943)

In short, Lewis was ready for another extension of "negotiations."

But the miners were not waiting for strike votes or official notice by the leadership for a strike. As the "negotiations" dragged to a close the strike movement in the coal fields reached a high point in intensity. Roosevelt officially "took over" the mines to intimidate the striking miners. But the back-to-work appeals from the government spokesmen and the threat of troops did not deter the militant miners. The headlines in the capitalist press showed the nervousness of the bourgeoisie because of this ominous threat to their schemes:

"STRIKING MINERS HOLD FAST IN DEFIANCE OF WHITE HOUSE." (The New York Times, April 30, 1943)

At this key point the Lewis gang once more acted to save the day for the bosses. On May 3, 1943 Lewis callously ignoring the will of the rank-and-file, echoed the demands of the capitalists that the miners go back to work. Lewis pretended that the government was a "new employer" with a good "labor record" and that the miners necessarily must be patient with this so-called new employer. Lewis stated:

"The mine workers recognize that they have a new employer who has not yet had time to appraise the immediate problem facing the industry. It is our desire to cooperate with the government and to relieve the country from the confusion and stress of the existing situation." (Quoted in The New York Times, May 3, 1943)

Lewis himself had given the lie to the above pretense about the government not having had time to judge the problem in the coal fields when he pointed out that the official government agency, the WLB had long "prejudged" the case in favor of the bosses. The miners were deluded by Lewis' demagoguery into believing that the bosses government was standing impartially by viewing the situation with an open mind. As a result they drifted back to work under a "truce" agreement.

The bosses were gleeful at Lewis' strike-breaking order and were quite frank in admitting that the Lewis move was the key factor in the situation. Without Lewis' intervention, it was conceded, the official government threats would not have forced the miners back to work:

"How much they (the miners-A.B.) might have been influenced by President Roosevelt had not a truce been reached became an academic matter, but there were signs that he probably would not have swung much weight." (Ibid.)

The Lewis betrayal clearly saved the coal barons from a very uncomfortable situation and propped up the official government fake of "impartiality" and "fair dealing" in the class struggle. Lewis' exhortation to rely on the government to work out a solution in the coal crisis was a deliberate blow at the rank and file miners.

How did the Cannon leadership act in this new crisis? We must remember that the Cannon paper, in self protection after Lewis had broken the scheduled strike set for April 1, 1943, had stated that Lewis was one of the sponsors of the WLB and noted on April 3, 1943 that this fact should not be forgotten. However, one week later, when the mine crisis sharpened the Cannon leadership once more dropped all pretenses of opposition to Lewis and identified him with the militant miners whom he was selling out:

"Workers who want to give their families such a nourishing diet as well as decent clothing and warm homes, are behind John L. Lewis and his fighting miners in their efforts to have some of the huge profits of the U.S. monopolies given back to the workers in the form of increased wages."
(The Militant, April 10, 1943 Original Emphasis)

In this particular crisis there was no reversal by the S.W.P. leadership on their estimate of Lewis. Having laid the groundwork for all out support to Lewis, they continued in this line even after their protagonist broke the developing strike with his back-to-work order on May 3, 1943. Lewis in this move had set a 15 day "truce" with the government so as to fritter away the spirit of the miners. Concealing again Lewis' open strike-breaking, the S.W.P. leadership still painted him as an honored leader of the American proletariat:

"As for Lewis- despite his inconsistencies and occasional failure to draw the proper conclusions, despite his organizational isolation- he has emerged again as the outstanding leader of the union movement, towering above the Greens and Murrays as though they were pygmies, and has won the support of the miners and the ranks of the other unions." (The Militant, May 8, 1943)

What about Lewis' fraudulent promises which were never fulfilled? With a truly brazen disregard for truth, the S.W.P. leaders blandly palmed off the Lewis sell-out as a victory for the miners:

"FINE WORKERS WIN FIRST ROUND." (Headline, The Militant, May 8, 1943)

One basic fact the Trotsky leaders made sure to keep out of the workers' consciousness: While the Lewis gang remains in control, any real gains for the miners are excluded.

The Crisis Between May 3, and May 18, 1943.

The Lewis May 3, 1943 "truce" with the government was to expire on May 18. In Pennsylvania, however, some fines were levied against the miners for their previous spontaneous walk-out. In protest, many miners in that coal mining region left the pits again. Once more the UMW leaders stepped in and forced the aroused miners back to work:

"Union chiefs acted to end the stoppage." (The New York Times, May 8, 1943)

Many of the militant miners instinctively rejected the illusion about the capitalist government being a neutral party in the dispute, despite the Lewis demagoguery to the contrary:

"Government control of the mines seemed to make no difference tonight to the miners striking against fines for recent walkouts in bituminous fields." (The New York Times, May 9, 1943)

But in the absence of a scientific understanding which can only be imparted by a revolutionary leadership, the miners were doomed to frustration. Manacled by the sell-out policies of the Lewis misleaders, the militant sentiments of the miners could find no healthy outlet. One thing in the situation was crystal clear- that was the unbridgeable chasm between the strike feelings of the oppressed miners and the scab line of the Lewis crowd. On occasion, an inadvertent admission would leak out from the boss press, testifying to this fact. One such occasion was the response of the miners to the Lewis back-to-work order on May 3, 1943. The New York Times was constrained to acknowledge:

"Coal Diggers Re-Enter Pits; Many with Apparent Reluctance." (Sub-head, May 4, 1943. My emphasis-A.B.)

The divergence between the mood of the miners and the line of the Lewis gang was consistently distorted by the Trotsky leadership. On the one hand, the Trotsky paper presented evidence showing that the miners wanted a strike. On the other hand, Cannon and Co. only used this truth as a shield to put over a defense of Lewis' crimes against the miners:

"All the evidence shows that the miners' sentiments were guiding Lewis and that Lewis was not simply dragging them about by their noses." (The Militant, May 8, 1943)

This was sheer fabrication. Were the miners' sentiments guiding Lewis in his repeated "truces" which prevented strikes? Did the feelings of the miners motivate Lewis' call for another War Labor Board? Did the sentiments of the miners guide Lewis in the behind-the-scenes negotiations with the agents of Wall Street's government? Can any honest worker, familiar with the facts, deny that Lewis acted against the miners and for the mine owners?

The Trotsky leaders were quite clear on the true story of Lewis. But in the Cannon brand of politics, truth has always been subordinated to bureaucratic considerations.

The Third Lewis "Truce"

May 18, 1943 was the deadline set for a new contract by the terms of the "truce" negotiated by Lewis with the government on May 3. As the May 18 deadline approached, the atmosphere again became filled with strike talk. But as before, Lewis broke up the threatening strike movement by announcing a new "truce" on May 18; this latest of the "truces" was to last until May 31, 1943. As before many miners found the Lewis line hard to digest and tried to resist any extension of the "truces." The miners defied Lewis and walked out again:

"The stoppages were in defiance of the extended truce order given by President John L. Lewis of the U.M.W., pending further negotiations for a new wage contract." (The New York Times, May 20, 1943)

However, the Lewis machine was able, although with some difficulty, to beat down this strike movement, too.

It is worth noting, that right in the midst of this crisis, Lewis petitioned William Green and Co. for a return of the U.M.W. to the A.F.L. This move, like the "truces" was conceived and executed behind the backs of the miners. As Lewis undoubtedly calculated, the surprise maneuver for a bloc with Green and his ilk had a demoralizing effect on the miners. Meanwhile, attention was diverted from the immediate struggle against the coal bosses to the question of the manipulations with the A.F.L. leadership.

While Lewis was working in his characteristic fashion to stifle the strike movement around Mid-May 1943, the Cannon leadership was kept busy in its self-appointed role of press agent for the Lewis mob. Whereas many of the miners were heroically trying to resist Lewis' third strike-breaking truce announced on May 18, The Militant declared with a straight face:

"Lewis' present policy and methods of struggle for a living wage are supported by the UMW membership to a man." (May 22, 1943. Editorial)

The Lewis demagoguery with which he cloaked his selling out of the miners and which, unfortunately deceived many miners, was pictured by the Trotsky organ as "masterly conduct":

"By his masterly conduct of the miners' battle Lewis has won greater support from the miners than he has ever had during the past twenty years." (Ibid. p. 4)

The key point here is the hymn of praise to Lewis' conduct. If it was a fact that Lewis was consolidating his grip, then it was all the more vital to expose him before the rank-and-file. But the increasing revolts against the Lewis "truces" showed that the Trotskyites were distorting even this phase of reality.

The Outcome of the Coal Crisis

When May 31, 1943 came and passed with no new contract forthcoming, another strike wave swept the coal fields. On June 3, Roosevelt ordered the miners to return to work by June 7, or face the consequences of defying

the government. A day later, Lewis peremptorily ordered the miners to comply with the Roosevelt edict. In a statement explaining this double-cross, Lewis told his time-servers forming the mine policy committee of the UMW the following:

"Notwithstanding these abusive tactics (of the WLB-A.B.) the miners and their leaders, as patriotic Americans, place the law and the national interest above their own ungranted and long-deferred claims for justice and equity." (Quoted in The New York Times, June 8, 1943)

By dint of some assiduous flag-waving, Lewis was able to stall for a little more time with the miners who were growing suspicious as to the ultimate outcome of all the "negotiations." Lewis set a new deadline for the contract, June 20, 1943, and the miners went back to work. By the time this deadline approached, the pent-up dissatisfaction of the miners began to express itself. 60,000 miners "jumped the gun", in the language of the UMW organizers, and walked out as the abnormally stretched out negotiations came near the date set for the conclusion:

"60,000 CEASE WORK IN THE COAL MINES AS UNION AND OPERATORS DELIBERATE; TRUCE WILL END AT MIDNIGHT TONIGHT." (Headline, The New York Times, June 20, 1943)

There was no iota of doubt as to the sentiments of the miners who walked out to force the hands of the negotiators.

Knowing the true character of the UMW leadership, the bosses acted accordingly and refused to concede an inch. To save face with the rank-and-file, Lewis issued some verbal blasts against the tactics of the bosses in the "negotiations." In his anxiety to show the cooperative spirit of the UMW leadership in contrast to the coal owners, Lewis let slip a most damning admission. Let us recall that when "negotiations" had first opened in March 1943, Lewis indicated that the "demands" presented to the bosses were really too modest in relation to the real needs of the hungry miners. Now, after all the "truces" and the wind-jamming in negotiations, Lewis and Co. pointed out that they had reduced their own originally modest "demands" to a miserable fraction:

"After saying that in the entire negotiations of the last three months the Appalachian Operators had not made a counter-offer of any character the union committee declared that the miners had reduced their original demands to 'a mere shell and shadow of their original proposals.'" (The New York Times, June 21, 1943)

Of course, the Lewis-men lied that it was the miners who had reduced the original demands whereas in truth this was done behind the backs of the miners by their crooked leaders.

With hope for anything concrete forthcoming from the farce of "negotiations" rapidly dwindling, the miners left the pits in larger numbers than previously. The question of a thorough-going strike which Lewis opposed, could not be left hanging fire. It was patent that the game of truces could not be continued ad infinitum. On June 18, 1943 the WLB rendered a decision and threw out even the whittled down "demands" of portal to portal pay which Lewis and Co. had substituted for the original demands in the course of the "negotiations." The miners rejected the WLB dictated yellow dog terms and walked out again. On June 22, 1943 Lewis cracked down on the miners and

thereby upheld the authority of the WLB which he had previously pretended to ignore. Lewis named October 31, 1943 as a new deadline, giving as his excuse the fact that on this date government operation of the mines would terminate and therefore free the hands of the miners.

Thus, in January 1943 when the miners had spontaneously struck, Lewis fooled them into believing that a return to work would strengthen chances for an improvement in conditions by April 1943 when a new contract would presumably be negotiated. When April came around Lewis promised to do something in May 1943. In May 1943 Lewis stalled around and told the miners to hold out until June 1943. Finally, by June 22, 1943, Lewis put an end to the cat and mouse game with the miners and forced them to continue working under the same intolerable conditions which caused the strike movement at the very inception of the mine crisis in January 1943.

To put over this strike-breaking line, Lewis pulled the wool over the eyes of the miners from the start of "negotiations" in March 1943 with a barrage of anti-administration noise and with loud strike threats against the owners. But he always managed to appear at the crucial moment with a "truce" arranged without the knowledge or consent of the miners whom he claimed to represent. The Lewis bureaucrats saw to it that the advantage of the offensive remained in the hands of the bosses who were thus able to inflict a severe blow to the miners and to terrorize the other union workers. When the WLB eventually passed on the mine contract, it gave the miners some piddling increases not even approaching the modest demands originally raised and these few pennies more it did allow were conditioned on "increased hours of work." The exploitation of the miners was thereby intensified, the work week extended, and the accident rate in the mine fields consequently shot upward. It would be difficult to picture a more palpable sell-out than the one the Lewis gang engineered in the mine fields in 1943.

The S.W.F. and the Outcome of the Mine Crisis

In June 1943, as the mine crisis approached a climax, all political tendencies were compelled to show where they stood. Many months after Lewis had prevented the June 1943 strike movement and sold out the miners, the Trotsky leadership came out with a very clear statement of fact on the manner in which Lewis jammed the WLB yellow-dog contract down the throats of the miners:

"On June 18, the WLB crowned its work of infamy by flatly rejecting the demand of portal-to-portal pay and dictated a 'yellow dog' contract, which it declared the miners' union must sign. Three days later, the miners walked out again. The third general coal strike was on.

"The next day Lewis again instructed the miners to return to work, empty-handed, under a 'truce' until Oct. 31, provided the mines remained under government control." (The Militant, Nov. 13, 1943, p. 1. My emphasis-A.B.)

But what was Cannon's policy during the crucial phase of the mine crisis in May-June 1943? Their policy in this period is the true gauge of the actual role of the Trotsky leadership in the trade unions. On May 22, just a month before Lewis finished off the game of "truces", the Cannon leadership came out with an analysis insisting that Lewis would not sell-out and that he would win a victory for the miners:

"On the contrary, the miners' leadership will not settle for the face-saving formulas which are enough for the craven AFL and CIO leaders. They will accept nothing, they have demonstrated, except genuine concessions to the pressing needs of the 500,000 miners of this country." (The Militant, May 22, 1943 p. 4)

This was presented to the workers as a fundamental Marxian analysis of the mine situation and a guide to the miners. This statement served as chloroform and assisted Lewis and the bourgeoisie.

Were the Cannon leadership Marxist, it would have warned the miners that Lewis' refusal to appear before the WLB was just a pose to deceive the miners. Just a short time before Lewis openly lined up with the WLB decision to force the miners back to work, the Trotsky leadership added another soporific by spinning the fiction that Lewis was a hero and an opponent of the government anti-labor machinery:

"But from the very first day of the current coal negotiations, Lewis challenged this repressive machinery, studiously ignored the WLB, unlike every other union leader, conducted himself as the spokesman of a sovereign power as if his headquarters suite in New York were fully on a par with the White House. This one act of courage of one union leader threatened to topple the whole intricate labor relations edifice and upset Roosevelt's coalition with the labor movement." (Fourth International, June 1943, pp. 168-9)

Of course, when the coal crisis had cooled down Lewis readily agreed to appear before this very same WLB which he had been "denouncing" so vociferously. This only showed that his previous refusal to appear before the WLB was a face-saving maneuver indulged in to appease the fighting sentiments of the miners.

What of the S.T.I. stories that Lewis was being guided by the sentiments of the rank-and-file and that his policies were being supported by the miners to the last man? Again, when the Cannonite leadership was recording history many months after the events they admitted that fully 100,000 miners revolted against the sell-out on June 22, 1943 and defied the Lewis order to return to work:

"It will be recalled, in this connection, that over 100,000 miners refused to return on the policy committee's instructions after the June 22 strike, and the temper of the miners is now at fever heat after the six months red tape, delay and raw deals they have been handed by Roosevelt's WLB." (The Militant, Nov. 6, 1943 p. 2)

But what was the Cannon policy during this fight of the militant rank-and-file against the authority of their leadership? While the miners were being bludgeoned back into the pits, their voices strangled by the Lewis bureaucracy, the Cannon leadership wrote of the relationship of the miners to the rotten officialdom above. At the end of June 1943, that very period when 100,000 miners refused to follow Lewis, as the Cannonites later admitted, the Trotsky organ lied that:

"The support Lewis has maintained so far in this battle is based on the conviction of the men that he is really fighting for them. Lewis did not call them out against their will. On the contrary, it is only because Lewis has given them leadership in an open struggle which the miners themselves demanded that he has sustained his authority and prestige." (The Militant, July 3, 1943 p. 2)

It would be hard to conceive of more distortions packed in the space of such a few sentences. Lewis did not call out the miners on strike; the latter went out on their own and against the line and policies of Lewis. Lewis did not give leadership but assisted the miners and forced as rotten a sell-out as was ever pulled on the miners. As for the "support" which the Trotskyites

say Lewis gained from the miners, this was refuted by the repeated rank-and-file walk-outs against the truces and finally by the open rebellion of 100,000 miners against the Lewis back to work order on June 22, 1943. The Trotskyite boot-licking of Lewis was a direct slap in the face to the huge number of militant rank-and-filers who tried to fight against the Lewis sell-out.

The Cannon services to the Lewis crowd did not go unappreciated. The hardened muscle men in the Lewis bureaucracy took note of The Militant line on the mine crisis and thanked the Trotskyites for their first rate job in the interests of the Lewis leadership:

"One International Board member with whom I spoke Wednesday- and they are usually non-committal- stated quite openly:

"Yes, I read The Militant and I know it is widely read among the officials among the officials around here. And I have heard some very favorable comments about the job you boys have been doing on the mine situation.'" (Ibid.)

A fitting comment to Cannon's pro-Lewis line in the mine crisis! The sell-out brigade in the UMW was highly enthusiastic about Cannon's herculean efforts in their behalf.

The Victor of the 1943 Coal Crisis

Lewis had promised the miners in his "truce" of June 22, 1943 that as soon as the mines were "returned" to the owners, the strike issue would again be posed. In October 1943 the mines were formally turned back to the owners. This coincided with the expiration date of October 31, 1943 which Lewis had placed on his so-called truce with the government. Many miners, taking Lewis demagoguery at its face value, walked out of the mines as the deadline neared. Although Lewis and his gang appealed to the miners to stay on the job, the miners ignored their leadership:

"Close to 100,000 miners had quit work prior to the Oct. 31 deadline, despite an appeal from Lewis and the mine union officials." (The Militant, Nov. 6, 1943 p. 1)

Lewis swung into action and worked to break up this strike as he had done with all the others. The opposition to this strike shown by the Lewis mob proved that the former excuse peddled by Lewis about government operation was a pure fraud. Lewis was for preventing strikes, whether the mines were under the direct management of the owners or the pretended management by the government.

When the government "operation" of the mines terminated at the end of October 1943, the long awaited new coal contract was signed. This contract chained the workers to their rotten conditions for a two year term. In appearance the miners gained a few niggardly crumbs. In actuality the miners lost, because they were forced to work longer hours for the extra few cents. The Trotsky leaders themselves showed this to be so in fact:

"It is difficult to estimate the exact money increase per hour that the miners will receive, as it depends in part on the number of hours they will work and how much overtime they will earn. The actual money increase may vary from less than \$1 per day to as high as \$1.25 per day. THE ADDITIONAL INCREASES WILL ALL ACCRUE AS A RESULT OF INCREASED HOURS OF WORK." (The Militant, Nov. 13, 1943 My capitals-A.B.)

And the conclusion was drawn: "Of course, this is a far cry from the original demand of \$2 a day increase." (Ibid.)

Thus as one can see from the above statements, it was the class enemy who won. But how did the Trotsky organ introduce this defeat of the miners? In a sub-headline over the above-quoted article, they brazenly lied that:

"THE MINERS HAVE WON." (My capitals-A.B.)

The WLB decision was not yet the last move. Later on, when the situation had quieted in the coal fields, the WLB reinterpreted even the fake concessions and lopped off some more money from the miners' thin pay envelopes:

"Under this WLB edict, 31 cents has been lopped off the miners take home pay by a new method of computing pay for both hourly and piece rate employees. The new method sets 97.14 cents per hour as a composite base for computing overtime instead of the basic \$1.00." (The Militant, Nov. 27, 1943 p. 2)

Such was the miners' "victory"!

Those owners who did agree to the new contract naturally did so because they saw an opportunity to increase the exploitation of the miners. On the other hand, some of the bosses wished to continue on the old tack and refused to sign the new contract with the UMW:

"The remainder of the bituminous operators are still sabotaging the negotiations, as are most of the captive coal owners." (The Militant, Dec. 4, 1943)

It should be clear that the "sanctity" of the government agencies was upheld in practise only by Lewis and was openly ignored by the owners when it suited their particular purpose.

The clearest statement of all on what the miners actually got was made by none other than Lewis himself. In a review of the whole situation in the mine fields during the entire period of the war situation, Lewis admitted that despite increased speed-up the miners had no increase in their base pay since 1941 and were ground down by the longest work week in American industry. Lewis was quoted as follows:

"The miners had been 'little rewarded' for their efforts, having had no increase in their basic pay since 1941. The fact that the miner was permitted to work longer hours was considered a 'favor' to them, but they did not consider their readiness to work longer hours in that light.

"He asserted that the miner today was working nine hours a day, six days a week and that 'these are longer hours than exist in any other American industry.'" (The New York Times, March 13, 1946.)

When Lewis commented that the miners were "little rewarded" this was noted in connection with the phenomenal increase in coal production from the year 1941. In light of the above admission on the miners actual working conditions by the misleader, Lewis, how much truth, then, was there

in the Trotskyite statement that "The Miners Have Won" made in their paper on November 13, 1943?

By beating back the strike crisis with the aid of Lewis and his Trotskyite whitewashers, among others, the bourgeoisie won a tremendous victory and was better enabled to preserve the no-strike WLB machinery to frustrate the workers. The Cannon clique, to the extent of its influence, helped Lewis stifle the miners in the crucial strike situation in 1943 and opened the path for the capitalists to tighten their repressive machinery.

The Mine Crisis in 1945.

By 1945 the cost of living had so outstripped wages that the straining American workers everywhere raised the demand for the elimination of the 15% Little Steel formula which kept the wage structure frozen. The trade union bureaucracy condemned the frozen wages in words but supported it in action. In the coal fields where the company stores bled the miners white, the ever increasing chasm between wages and the cost of living was felt acutely by the miners. In addition, mine disasters were rising due to the increased hours of toil. The greed of the bosses and the sabotage of any real struggle against them by the UMW leadership was expressed in the lack of adequate safety measures and equipment among other things.

Once more the miners stiffened their backs and prepared to challenge the insatiable parasites owning the mines. But Lewis channelized the demands into the issue of a royalty for tonnage mined to go into a so-called welfare fund. Lewis, by picturesque language, depicted the gruesome disasters and the horrible conditions underground. All this was used to concentrate attention on the need for a "welfare fund" but the catch was that Lewis took pains to see that the proposed fund would be administered by no other than himself and his loyal flunkies. Instead of a fight against the Little Steel formula, Lewis once more pushed the miners into a trap. In light of the rise in living costs, the miners were actually suffering a deterioration in conditions. On the other hand, the owners were bloated with super-profits. However, the tactic in this period to prevent any increase in the workers actual pay rates was to divert attention to fringe concessions so as to leave the basic pay of the workers unaltered:

"The AFL heads also advised their affiliates to submit demands for wage adjustments based on the 'fringe' concessions granted the United Steel Workers Union. Even John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers Union has taken a hand in this game. In the recent demands submitted to the coal operators, Lewis emphasizes that all of them fall within the Little Steel formula." (The Militant, March 10, 1945 p. 1 My emphasis-A.B.)

The Cannon press readily recognized that the Lewis "demands" were in no way commensurate with the real needs of the mine toilers:

"In reality this demand of the miners is far too modest and inadequate to meet the needs of half a million underpaid and over-worked men with families to care for." (The Militant, March 31, 1945 p. 5 Original Emphasis)

But as in 1943 the Trotskyites showed that the miners were in a strike mood and once again they distorted the truth by identifying the militant class struggle sentiments of the miners with the sabotaging policy of Lewis.

Ignoring all the lessons of the past, and the more recent betrayal in 1943, the Cannon leadership went all out once more in covering up the Lewis set in this crisis and lavished honeyed words of praise on these "representatives" of the miners:

"It is an enormous advantage for union officials to enter negotiations knowing they can count on the support of a militant membership. The method of the miners is to use this advantage to wrest concessions from the bosses. Their representatives entered negotiations fully armed with a mandate to strike if the bosses rejected their demands. Negotiations were carried on in the open in full view of the public. There was no crawling or cringing before the profit-bloated coal operators or their political agents in Washington." (The Militant, April 21, 1945 Editorial)

The facts were as follows. Negotiations began in March 1945 and despite the strike vote the "talks" were extended for another thirty days. But the bosses and Lewis never did get a chance to repeat the same stalling game they had played in 1943 because this time the miners began walking out in spontaneous strikes as soon as the announcement was made of the extended time for "negotiations." The spontaneous strike movement involving large numbers of miners who would not stand for any protracted delays this time forced a hurried agreement which was signed on April 11, 1945. This agreement gave the miners some "fringe" concessions but nothing fundamental. Naturally the Lewis clique shouted "victory" to confuse the miners. And once more the Lewis bureaucracy found an echo in the Trotsky press where the story of "victory" was also given:

"This victory was won on April 11, eleven days after the lapse of the old contract." (The Militant, April 21, 1945 p. 1 My emphasis-A.B.)

But the "victory" turned out to be as non-existent as the one trumpeted in 1943. Two Trotskyites went out into some coal towns as part of a subscription drive for their paper. In interviews reported with the miners, the truth leaked out; the "victory" was but another sell-out. Everything was again promised on increased exploitation of the miners:

"Most of the men agree that their recent negotiations with the operators and the government gained them but slight improvement in wages. They all pointed out that no increase will be realizable until they start working beyond their traditional 7 hour day. And many of those miners, who have been hoaxed and chiseled before, implied that they might have to strike yet to insure the concessions they are supposed to have won." (The Militant, May 8, 1945 p. 7)

What the miners said was true. The increased hours soon took the inevitable toll reported in the cold statistics about rising mine accidents.

In 1941 and then from 1943 to 1945 the Trotskyite leaders portrayed Lewis as a fighter against the no-strike pledge and held up his conduct and leadership as a model for other trade union leaders to follow. Subsequently, in 1946, when the military controls were somewhat relaxed the auto workers at General Motors went out on strike against the auto barons. During this strike, Lewis appeared before Wall Street's Congress and denounced the auto strike

and the strikers. This treacherous blow by Lewis was widely and happily publicized by the capitalist press all over the United States. The Lewis statement was a subject for wide comment also by the union workers who were supporting the auto strikers. It could not therefore go unnoticed by the Cannon leadership. But Cannon and Co. came out in its own typical manner. After their years of deception which depicted Lewis as a great union leader and fighter, they simply attributed their former line of support to some unidentified "militants" and solemnly expatiated on the latter's ignorance of Lewis' role:

"Of course all Lewis proved by this 'blow below the belt' is that he is not a great labor leader, as some militants mistakenly believed, but a narrow-minded ambition-crazed old bureaucrat." (The Militant, Dec. 29, 1945 p. 2)

But where did revolutionary-minded workers pick up the "mistaken" belief that Lewis was a great union leader if not from the pages of the Trotsky press?

SHACHTMAN'S LEAD TO THE MINERS

Shachtman, like Cannon, was fully aware of Lewis' fundamental class-colaborationist ideology and policies. During the initial stages of the mine crisis in 1943, the Shachtmanite Workers Party took note of Lewis' reactionary machinations with known enemies of the working class:

"More recently, Lewis has made overtures to the reactionary farm bloc for a joint struggle against the Roosevelt order. In all of this, he exhibits a fundamentally conservative political outlook, a lack of class and political consciousness. He has a bourgeois mentality." (The New International, April, 1943 p. 109 Original Emphasis)

Further, the Workers Party organ acknowledged that a Lewis proposal put forward during the mine "negotiations" would be of tremendous profit to the owners and conversely of little benefit to the miners:

"Lewis' suggestion that the government subsidize the mines as in England would be of little benefit to the miners but of tremendous profit to the owners." (Labor Action, April 19, 1943)

Lewis, it was observed, went so far in his unashamed support to capitalist legislation that he overtly assisted in a Congressional conspiracy to raise the price of food. This was reported in the same issue of the above-quoted Labor Action.

All these moves by Lewis, such as exhorting a government subsidy to the profit-mad coal owners, support to capitalist plots to raise the price of food, proposal for a new WLB that would more effectively serve the bosses needs, all came during the period of the mine crisis. Lewis, as this shows, was consistent in his strikebreaking in all spheres. Yet Labor Action evaluated Lewis' role in the specific mine crisis as follows:

"Lewis is the leader of a union that is waging a battle for all labor- and waging it properly." (Labor Action, May 17, 1943 p 4)

Shachtman will tell the workers on paper every day in the week that a "proper battle for all labor" means a militant strike, democratically conducted and governed by a revolutionary policy which raises the class consciousness of the workers. But Shachtman's real, not paper, line was revealed

to be support to crooked backdoor deals, bureaucratic suppression of the rank-and-file, and a policy based on class collaboration. This is what Shachtman pictured to his readers as a model and inspiration for work in the unions.

The Workers Party support to Lewis necessarily entailed a distortion of Lewis' actual function in the mine crisis. This can easily be seen in the Shachtmanite press even after the mine crisis of 1943 when the betrayal had already been consummated. A year later, Shachtman, in his ballyhoo of Lewis, went to the extent of pretending that Lewis did not endeavor to break up the strike movement as the labor lieutenants of capitalism always do:

"The Roosevelt government attempted to break up the UMW because this union by its actions was upsetting the wage-freeze appletart and in fact repudiating the no-strike pledge. ITS LEADER, LEWIS, UNLIKE MURRAY, GREEN AND THOMAS, DID NOT RUSH FROM MINE TO MINE EXHORTING THE MEN TO RETURN TO WORK." (Labor Action, Oct. 2, 1944. Emphasis in Original, My capitals-A.B.)

The fact is that the miners' walkouts were in protest against the Lewis "truces" and stalling. The mine strikers were in opposition to Lewis' policy and he acted on the basis of that understanding. For example, in the large scale walkouts in June 1943, even the capitalist press reported on the endeavors of the Lewis henchmen to break up the strike. The bourgeoisie for the moment let its guard down and evidenced a sympathetic concern for Lewis' attempts to quell the uprising of the miners. Under the headline "Lewis Facing Crisis as Rebellious Men Return to Mines," The New York Post observed:

"With few exceptions, coal miners in this area went back to work today-but they returned reluctantly and only after UMW officials crushed a budding rank-and-file revolt.

"It was the most serious crisis faced by the United Mine Workers Union since the wage controversy started. John L. Lewis, himself, obviously concerned with the trend, was in constant communication by telephone with local officials- while members of the policy committee rushed from meeting to meeting seeking to stem the rebellion." (June 7, 1943)

The New York Daily News which didn't attempt to conceal its hostility to the miners headlined the events: "Lewis Fighting To Get Miners Back to Work", and stated:

"John L. Lewis swung into action this morning and spent the entire day on the long-distance telephone suppressing a wide-spread rank-and-file rebellion against his order directing 533,000 miners to return to work tomorrow." (June 7, 1943)

Any objective observer understanding the issues involved and knowing Lewis' trade union biography could have predicted this rank-and-file explosion against the strike-breaking from the top. But while one can plead ignorance of the facts when they were occurring, what can we say of the W.P.'s brazen distortions when the facts were already known and recorded? That over a year later after the mine crisis, the well-informed leaders of the Shachtman tendency had to lie about Lewis' line shows a premeditated whitewashing of the Lewis leadership. A fair-minded Shachtmanite worker would have to allow that was the W.P. leadership simply misinformed in 1943 when it claimed that Lewis was the standard bearer in the fight for the American workers it easily could have come out with an admission of error when Lewis stabbed the miners in the back. But Shachtman continued with his deceptions and even added the lie that Lewis, unlike other labor fakers, did not try to break the strike movement.

This fabrication was disseminated by Labor Action when ignorance of Lewis' work in the mine crisis could no longer be an excuse. As in the case of Cannon and Co. it was not ignorance which guided the pro-Lewis line of the Shachtman leadership.

The Workers Party leadership went to great lengths to describe a convention of the Lewis-ridden mine union in the Fall of 1944. It is instructive to see what Labor Action designated for special praise at this convention:

"The highlight of the Convention was the exchange of telegrams between the Interior Department and the UMWA. We only have space for some of the best paragraphs from these replies of the convention." (Ibid. My emphasis-A.B.)

What were some of the "best paragraphs" which Labor Action quoted for the education of its readers? One excerpt from the first telegram of the Lewis leadership reads:

"You know, Mr. Secretary of the Interior, the coal miners are doing a job producing coal to win the war; they are buying bonds, too. We hope you will study the record on these facts. With nearly 300,000 less men employed in the anthracite and the bituminous industries, we will produce this year nearly 45,000,000 tons more than was produced in the war year of 1918." (Ibid.)

The W.P. leadership singled out for praise the boasts of the Lewis bureaucracy about the increased speed-up of the miners (which means intensified exploitation) and the misguided pro-capitalist illusions of the miners instilled by none other than the Lewis leadership.

From the other telegram, the Shachtman paper exhibited as one of the "best paragraphs" a piece of demagoguery which all labor fakers try to sell to the uninitiated- i.e. that they are not bureaucrats at all but simply servants of the rank-and-file:

"This convention is the supreme authority of the union. We are the employers of John L. Lewis and he is responsive to our orders." (Ibid.)

If these excerpts, according to Labor Action represented only the "best paragraphs" one can understand what was contained in the parts which were omitted. And, it must be remembered, it was these telegrams, which highlighted the convention, according to Labor Action.

In the July 15, 1944 issue of the bourgeois magazine, Colliers, Lewis wrote an article provocatively entitled "Not Guilty." The object of the Lewis article was to prove that he was absolutely devoted to the capitalist system, patriotic to the bosses government, and opposed to strikes. Labor Action cited this article of Lewis and noted his open admission of strike-breaking ideology:

"We don't care for the very reactionary John L. Lewis who assumes such a pious air of shock and patriotic fervor over strikes that have taken place." (July 31, 1944 p.2)

The Shachtmanite paper had to acknowledge that Lewis sounded off like a big bourgeois and not at all like the labor leader he is played up to be:

"Lewis here sounds like the New York Times, Henry Ford or a Republican congressman." (Ibid.)

Lewis did not try to palm himself off as a militant labor leader. The capitalist and Trotsky press did that job for him. Indeed, in the very same issue of Labor Action in which the Shachtmanites discussed Lewis' "Not Guilty" an editorial comment on another page stated:

"In Lewis' case, you have a labor leader with great imagination and courage on purely trade union questions, who despite that, is a hopeless reactionary politically." (Ibid. Original Emphasis)

The W.P. finds a symbol of courage in Lewis' trade union policies. ~~And~~ what are those policies according to Lewis himself? A line for increased speed-up of the workers, opposition to strike struggles, and a desire to jail militant workers who are for strikes "against the government." To the Shachtmanites this is presumably a source of inspiration for trade union workers! Since Shachtman's readers are composed of workers who already know that Lewis is devoted to capitalism, Shachtman adds that Lewis is a hopeless reactionary politically. This is simply a stale repetition of the old Social-Democratic-Stalinist pretense about a Chinese Wall supposedly dividing the political and trade union spheres. There is only one Lewis, a bribed tool of Wall Street who serves the bankers and bosses in all fields. In the class struggle there is no duality; a "hopeless reactionary politically" can be no other than a hopeless reactionary in every other phase of the class struggle.

Even in explaining away Lewis as a "hopeless reactionary politically" who is presented as somehow progressive in the trade unions, the Shachtmanites pile Osse on Pelion. One would believe from Labor Action that Lewis is simply naive in politics and that is why he innocently falls into support to the bosses in this decisive sphere:

"Lewis evidently believes what the Republican platform says about its opposition to the freezing of wages and its protestations on Labor front trends of the Roosevelt government. This is certainly a very naive and we might say non-political manner for the leader of a great organization like the Miners Union to render or withhold political support to either of the two capitalist parties." (Sept. 11, 1944 p. 3)

Shachtman himself, some years ago, disseminated the knowledge that Lewis grew rich out of swindling the trade union workers and that he organized one of the outstanding skull cracking machines in the entire union movement. Yet Shachtman attempts to whitewash this criminal agent of the bourgeoisie as politically naive!

In Lewis' crooked negotiations with the bosses in 1945, the Shachtmanite W.P. came to view again as lickspittles of Lewis. They quoted Lewis' proposal for a "royalty" on tonnage mined and could hardly contain their enthusiasm:

"Lewis says:

"Such royalty shall be deemed partial compensation in equity to the mine worker for the establishment and maintenance of his ready-to-serve status, so vital to the profit motive of the employer and so essential to public welfare."

"It is a grand sentence leading far. It does not go far enough, but it makes a serious attempt to lift labor theoretically to the status of

capital. And it does so, not in general, not in the abstract, not in a convention address, but in wage demands and negotiations. It is aimed at disturbing the pockets of capital and not at soothing the ears of the workers." (Labor Action, March 12, 1945 p.3 My emphasis-A.B.)

This nauseating grovelling before the utterly putrid Lewis is what Shachtman passes on to his followers as revolutionary "mass work." Reading Shachtman's organ, one would think that the strikebreaker Lewis has struck a blow in the interests of the working class. The W.P. leaders did not lose the opportunity to spread the most poisonous class collaborationist illusions in this connection:

"Lewis places the capitalist and the laborer in a category apart, both as human beings with human aims, human responsibilities and human privileges. He says: 'You get your royalty to encourage you. We must get our royalty to encourage us.'" (Ibid.)

Labor in equal partnership with capital! This is a snare and delusion spread by all the direct and indirect agents of capitalism to deaden the class consciousness of the workers.

When Lewis came out for a "welfare fund" he naturally pretended a sincere interest in ameliorating the terrible conditions of the miners. The W.P. leadership did not content itself with just passing on the Lewis hypocrisy as actual concern with the miners but even smuggled in a meaning which Lewis never had in mind:

"Note what the fund is to be used for. Modern medical and surgical service, hospitalization, etc.; but the last two items are 'rehabilitation and economic protection.' That can mean anything, from establishing workers' recreation clubs to building a university for training workers to master the process of managing the coal industry." (Ibid.)

What is this talk about Lewis wanting a betterment of the welfare of the miners? It is bunk and Shachtman knows it. When it was in Shachtman's factional interest to tell some bits of truth about Lewis he showed the real Lewis to be nothing but a labor crook and thief:

"His career of 'industrial statesmanship' began many years ago as a petty official systematically looting the treasury of the Panama, Illinois local union. Through that he learned the first lessons in the shady art of buying henchmen. In the highest office of the union he made it into a system. He reinforced this with the methods of deliberate vote stealing, frame-ups, and slugging of opponents." (The Militant, Feb. 10, 1934)

The Cannon-Shachtman support to Lewis from 1943 to the crisis in 1945 in the mine fields was no accident. It was an outgrowth of the Cannon-Shachtman policy in the trade unions. It showed that were Cannon-Shachtman in leadership of the unions they would have carried out the betrayal of the miners at first hand. Being restricted in forces and temporarily limited in influence, the extent of their participation was consecrated to the defense of the Lewis sell-cuts and the whitewash of his strikebreaking line.

TO BE CONTINUED

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF TROTSKYISM

*** THE AUGUST 1927 DECLARATION OF THE OPPOSITION ***

Editorial Note:

Following their capitulatory Declaration of October 16, 1926, Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev made every conciliatory effort to live in peace with Stalin. However, Stalin's relentless drive to wipe out all the big figures of the former days continued.

In the summer of 1927 the pressure against the leaders of the Opposition Bloc proceeded along the lines of securing a public declaration of unconditional support to Stalin and a statement condemning all whispers about the Thermidorian nature of Stalin's Central Committee. At that time the Sapranov group, formerly in the Opposition Bloc, having broken with Trotsky because of the capitulatory October 16, 1926 Declaration, stood on the position that the Thermidor was an accomplished fact. Also in Germany a tendency developed to break with the Stalinist counter-revolution and the call was raised for the building of a revolutionary party, thereby creating a threat to the hold of the Stalin clique on the advanced workers in that highly important country. Stalin required a shield against that danger. No one could provide him with a more effective protection against the revolutionary workers of the German Communist Party than the leader of the Opposition Bloc, Trotsky.

Below we print in full the August 1927 Declaration of the Opposition. The line in this Trotsky document, as in all the other documents of the Opposition, clearly establishes the correctness of our charge that the Cannon-Shachtman-Oehler story of Trotsky fighting against the Stalin bandits is nothing but a fraud. We call the reader's attention to the "Clemenceau" point in this Declaration. Behind the walls of the Central Committee, Trotsky, in the discussion on the danger of imperialist attack, had recalled that during the World War, Clemenceau urged the change of the French bourgeois leadership to enable a successful prosecution of the military struggle against Kaiser Germany. Trotsky's remark was immediately seized upon by the Stalin clique and twisted into a threat to remove it from power in the event of war.

In 1940, during the factional fight with Shachtman, Trotsky wrote him a letter giving the "Clemenceau thesis" the very interpretation which the Stalin clique used in 1927:

"Then you seem to forget the so-called 'thesis on Clemenceau' which signified that in the interests of the genuine defense of the USSR, the proletarian vanguard can be obliged to eliminate the Stalin government and replace it with its own. This was proclaimed in 1927! Five years later we explained to the workers that this change of government can be effectuated only by political revolution. Thus we separated fundamentally our defense of the USSR as a workers' state from the bureaucracy's defense of the USSR. Whereupon you interpret our past policy as unconditional support of the diplomatic and military activities of Stalin!" (In Defense of Marxism, p. 39. Original Emphasis)

The August 1927 Declaration, however, establishes beyond a shadow of doubt that what Trotsky wrote to Shachtman in 1940 was a lie. Trotsky in 1927 protested hotly against the interpretation that he would attempt to remove the Stalin Central Committee.

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International Press Correspondence- (Imprecorr) August 18, 1927, pp.1078-9.

Declaration of the Opposition at the Joint Plenum of the C.C. and C.C.C. of the C.P.S.U.

Moscow, 11th August 1927

The declaration of the Opposition at the joint plenary session of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union signed by comrades Avdeyev, Pakayev, Yevdokimov, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Lisdin, Muralov, Peterson, Pyatekov, Rakovski, Smilga and Trotzky contains the following:

Ignoring the polemical form of the questions put to us, we answer them according to their significance as follows:

The first question: We are absolutely and unreservedly for the defence of our socialist Fatherland against the imperialists. We are naturally absolutely and unreservedly for the defence of the Soviet Union also under the present Central Committee of the Party and the present leadership of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. If the passage concerning Clemenceau in the letter of Trotzky has led to an obviously false interpretation of this comparison in the sense of a struggle for power and the utilisation of the war difficulties, then we reject decisively all such interpretations. At the same time we maintain our conviction that the Party should not reject all criticism even during the war, or refuse to improve the policy of the Central Committee should it be incorrect.

In our draft resolution upon the international situation, we put forward the following slogans: the defeat of all bourgeois States fighting against the Soviet Union - Every honest proletarian in the capitalist countries must work actively for the defeat of "his" government - Every foreign soldier should desert to the Red Army if he is not prepared to assist the slave holders of "his" country - The Soviet Union is the Fatherland of all toilers, since the 7th November 1917 we are for its defence, our war for the defence of the Fatherland (Lenin) will be a war "for the Soviet Republic as the troop of the world army of Socialism, our "War for the defence of the Fatherland will not be the way to the bourgeois State, but the way to the international socialist revolution" (Lenin) - "Whoever is not a defender of the Soviet Union is a traitor to the international proletariat.

With regard to the question of the Thermidor, we say, in this country there are Thermidorian elements growing which have a sufficiently serious social basis. We do not doubt that the Party and the proletariat of the Soviet Union will overcome these dangers with a correct Leninist and inner-Party democracy. What we demand is that the Party leadership fight these phenomena and their influence upon certain parts of the Party, more systematically. We do not say that our bolshevist Party, its C.C. and its C.C.C. is Thermidorian.

With regard to the second question: We admit that the communist movement in Germany is threatened with a direct split and the formation of a second Party. Subordinating ourselves to the decisions of the Comintern concerning the impermissibility of maintaining organisatory connections with the expelled groups Urbahns, Maslov, we demand expressly and we will work for this inside the Comintern, a revision of the decisions for expulsion, having regard to the fact that amongst those expelled are hundreds of old revolutionary workers who are closely connected with the working masses, who are devoted to the work of Lenin and who are honestly prepared to defend

the Soviet Union to the last. The formation of a second Party in Germany would evoke a tremendous danger. We propose that the C.C. of the C.P. of the Soviet Union through the E.C.C.I. carry out the following measures to avoid this danger.

Upon condition that the organ of the Urbahns group ceases publication and that the group subordinates itself to all decisions of Comintern Congresses, the re-admission of all those who accept this condition into the Party together with a guarantee that these comrades may be permitted to express their opinions in the press and in the ranks of the Party and the Comintern.

With regard to the third question: We emphatically condemn all attempts to form a second party in the Soviet Union. We consider the way to a second Party in the Soviet Union to be absolutely false and dangerous for the revolution. We will use all our power and all our forces to fight against any such tendency for the formation of a second Party. We condemn the disruptive policy just as energetically. We will carry out all decisions of the Communist Party and of its Central Committee. We are prepared to do everything possible to destroy all fractional elements which have formed themselves as a consequence of the fact that on account of the inner-Party regime we were compelled to inform the Party of our opinions which were falsely reported in the whole press of the country.

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