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OCTOBER 1946

POLITICAL CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE WORKERS LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

CRITICISM FROM A GROUP IN DETROIT THE REPLY

—ARTHUR BURKE

A LETTER FROM FRANCE

ON THE ISSUE OF TROTSKY

AND THE WORKERS STATE

AN EVALUATION OF THE

"GROUP OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISTS"

—GEORGE MARLEN

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E D I T O R I A L N O T E

This issue marks the first appearance of POLITICAL CORRESPONDENCE, which is designed to serve as a supplementary organ to THE BULLETIN of the WORKERS LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY. POLITICAL CORRESPONDENCE will contain discussion articles on important issues, polemics on our position both pro and con, and letters of political interest from groups abroad and in the United States.

The immediate aim of the WORKERS LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY is to arm the revolutionary workers with an understanding of the pseudo-revolutionary organizations now controlling the proletarian vanguard and to organize these workers into a new party. POLITICAL CORRESPONDENCE will endeavor to serve as a vehicle for clarification and discussion toward the solution of this problem.

Address Communications to:-

THE RED STAR PRESS
P.O.Box 67 Station D
New York, N.Y.

*
* A CRITICISM OF OUR LINE *
* FROM A GROUP IN DETROIT *
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Editorial Note:

In 1945 the Detroit branch of the Revolutionary Workers League (Ochlerite), split away from that organization. The Detroit group setting out on its own, organized a "Committee for a Marxist Group", which has since been reorganized into the "Workers Educational Society."

The following letter criticizing our line was written in answer to a proposal for a joint conference. The reader will note that our group is referred to as the LL. (Leninist League) On May 8, 1946 the members of the LL adopted a resolution changing the name of the organization to the WORKERS LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY. (See the June-July 1946 issue of THE BULLETIN)

We publish this letter and our reply because the letter clearly expresses the sentiments of many advanced workers today who are seeking the road to a new revolutionary party.

May 24, 1945

Dear T.,

1- No arrangements have been made with Markon to come to Detroit for this reason: we are not prepared to discuss negotiations with any groups or individuals until our political basis has been defined. We are now in the process of working out this basis prior to calling a conference.

2- On the matter of democratic centralism, we have adopted the position laid down by the Revolt group (RWL) when it was formed in 1939. That is, we accept it as the basic position; elaborations can and will be made. Copies of this position will be made shortly and circulated to you and others:

4- With regard to the polemic on the nature of the war, the comrades here have neither engaged in a discussion, nor have the desire of doing so in the future. They consider the LL's position as unrealistic and untenable, a position which was drawn up in this manner: first a theory was postulated, and then the facts made to fit the theory. This incorrect position would immobilize us in our efforts to build a movement based on the struggle against the imperialist war. It would suggest the idea that the imperialists no longer engage in wars for the redivision of the world, to market their surplus capital and goods, but rather run the risk of revolutions among the workers at home just to stage a sham battle, for the purpose of attacking the Soviet Union. This is not to deny that the imperialists always have had and still have the objective of attacking the SU at some future date, but this has been relegated to the background for the present in the struggle between Japanese and American imperialism for the Far Eastern spoils.

In short, the comrades regard this question on the nature of the war as a settled one. They have examined all or most of the LL material, and do not see the necessity of a long polemic on this subject.

Although this may be putting the matter quite curtly to say we do not even want to discuss the issue, the point is that there are more pressing matters related to building a new organization, and the organizational steps to be taken, and that we must spend what little available time we have to this task.

5- Now, on the main point, that of calling a conference based on your "five points." (A. The counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism. B. The existence of Trotskyism and all its branches including the RWL as a "loyal opposition" and real collaborator of Stalinism. C. The major antagonism at the present time being between the forms of property in the capitalist world and in the SU, with widest freedom of discussion on the nature of the war. D. Complete and fullest democratic centralism. E. Concentration on the winning of the vanguard to the above positions as the road to the masses (as you comrades say, we are starting from scratch.)...

You seem to think that we are so close to the LL that we have merely to stretch out our hand a few inches to unite with them. This is not true. Where the LL published material dealing with the nature of Trotskyism and the struggle Trotsky did not put up against Stalinism we are agreed, and even distribute their literature on this subject. But beyond this what? We did not discuss the nature of the party nor the road to building it, nor the character of the press. In other words, we agreed on something "anti", but nothing "pro."

The task today is to build a new party, but it cannot be built on an "anti" basis, that we are against this or that tendency. To say that we must annihilate Trotskyism and Stalinism theoretically completely before we can ever build a group is tantamount to saying at the outset that we will never build a group. A big point made by the LL is that Lenin conducted a vigorous theoretical struggle against the Mensheviks at all times, and that we should follow his example.

We are for this, but we are also for the class struggle itself, which in practice proved Lenin's theory to be correct. If we seek to build a movement on this basis: that we are the theoretical super-men, and that all must come to us, as to a place of worship, then who is to have the final word as to correctness of this or that position? The Trotskyites claim they are the only revolutionists in the world, and beat their chests, and point to their paper and documents as proof, because therein they do indeed call themselves revolutionists many times over.

As Marxists we start from the material conditions, from the facts. To proclaim ourselves correct theoretically is not enough. It is necessary to prove to the workers in action that we are revolutionists, and that our theories are revolutionary. The Trotskyites claim to be revolutionists- just as the Stalinists once did- but in the class struggle itself, it is quite a different story, which we do not have to enter into now. I am not trying to make an amalgam between the LL and the Trotskyites, but merely to show that acceptance of the LL basic position- that Stalinism, and its twin Trotskyism, must be defeated on the lecture platform in the study hall, will lead us not away from Trotskyism but into it. If we do not draw away from Trotskyism then we have no separate basis for existence, except as a left Trotskyist grouping.

We know that the LL does not believe- nor do we wish it to think we are unfair enough to believe of it- that we should not participate in the class struggle. It is the emphasis that counts, the proper relationship of theory to practice, in which our differences delineate themselves in bold relief. The proof lies in the press, which is the voice of the organization to the working class. The Bulletin is not our idea of a revolutionary press. It is completely anti-Stalinist and anti-Trotskyist, and is more suitable for a select elite of intellectuals.

But the LL will counter that this is the sort of material that is necessary in order to win workers of these opponent organizations. Here again we see an incorrect relationship between theory and practice. To believe that here in Detroit we can take a copy of the "Trotsky School of Falsification" to a Cannon or Shachtman member and win them over to our tiny group is equivalent to drawing castles in the air with one's finger. It has not worked. It will not work.

These workers in the Trotskyist organizations have entered these as members because they thought the organizations had a correct program of struggle. They are not interested, nor do they possess the theoretical development, to be interested in what Trotsky said or wrote in 1923. At most they will reply, what had that to do with the present situation, when our group is fighting the system tooth and nail? How can one answer this? By saying that it does not matter? That is no answer at all! It does matter seriously. We must show these workers that in the class struggle itself, the Trotskyists are word-mongers, dishonest and double-dealing in their approach to the workers (flowing from their program, of course) and that if they really want to fight the system, they must break with these future Laborites.

Similarly in our approach to workers outside of existing organizations, and in our opinion, our main concentration should be on winning these "raw" workers. As soon as a worker joins a Trotsky organization, he is immediately indoctrinated with the idea that he is in the only revolutionary organization in the country. He develops a loyalty towards this organization, and looks upon attempts to break him from it as disruptive. Whether we like it or not, these are the facts. To concentrate on these workers alone, and they are as a rule not highly developed, by giving them anti-Trotskyist literature would really be making a sect, a sick ultra-left group of ourselves.

Now, as to the raw worker, and by him we do not mean the worker just in from Kentucky, but the union militant who is not in any working class political organization, or who used to be in one. And there are plenty floating around in Detroit. Can we win this worker on a pure theoretical basis? Experience says no. We must win him on a program of class action, and then tie this in with an exposition of a full political program. We want him to accept both simultaneously, but it is not likely he will accept the second before the first.

This, the LL replies, is economism, mass line-ism. Our answer is this; unless we translate theory down into the workers language, down into his actual struggle itself, prove to him that he must look to the Marxists for the solution of his daily issues, as well as his ultimate ones, then theory becomes divorced from practice, and passes through the threshold of Marxism into the realm of scholasticism.

In the light of all this, we naturally rejected the basis you laid down for calling a conference here in July. It would be anti-Stalinist, anti-Trotskyist, a Kaffee Klatsch. It would be unrelated to reality, to material conditions, and therefore not very Marxist. However, if the LL will turn the problem upside down, and open a discussion on the practical tasks of building a party- organization, press, activity in the class struggle, the relationship of the European situation to this country, etc., we have no disagreement there. Because this is the basis on which we will issue the call for the conference, when the time becomes ripe for it.

As a matter of fact, we have assigned comrades the task of drawing up these documents, on these points: Building the Party, the Press, Relation of the Trade Union work to building a party, Russia, the World Scene in Relation to the US, democratic centralism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat (Labor party, workers control of production under capitalism, etc.) Of course, democratic centralism has been disposed of, and we are examining a document of the Revolutionary Marxist Group on the dictatorship of the proletariat. These positions will be circulated freely, and will form the basis of our conference discussion. Anyone is free to write on these matters, or to add any other subjects he desires.

But we will not call an anti-Trotskyist or anti-Stalinist conference. We want a party-building conference, to bring people together on a program of action in the class struggle. From the topics above, it can be seen that we have not ignored the theoretical aspects, but have placed them in their proper relationship to the practical subjects. I.

Editorial Note:

Our reply to the above letter appears on the following page. The next issue of POLITICAL CORRESPONDENCE will present a continuation of our discussions with this group by publishing discussion abstracts of a joint meeting held in Detroit in October 1945.

R E A D

THE BULLETIN

of the WORKERS LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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(On Trotsky's article - "Did Stalin Poison Lenin".....	.05

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C H I N A (1931-1946)

- 1- The Japanese Invasions
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RED STAR PRESS
P.O.Box 67 Station D
New York City

July 14, 1945

Committee for a Marxist Group -

Dear Comrades:

We learn from your letter of 4/24/45 that you are in the process of developing a group and a program and that you have tentatively accepted the position and document on democratic centralism which the Stamm group adopted in 1939. We would like to present our analysis of this document and contribute it to your discussion.

First, what is the history of the tendency which produced this particular document? We start from the premise that political people do not produce documents in a vacuum. These documents arise in a definite political situation, mirror a certain political development, and determine a political evolution.

The political development which fathered this specific Stammite document was a clique fight in the RWL. The document was calculated to produce a "political" basis for the Stamm split from Oehler and justify the separate organizational existence of Stamm's faction. Soon, after a relatively short period of time, Stamm decided to close shop and left his own group high and dry. You comrades are personally acquainted with this significant development of Stamm and his tendency. More, you broke with Stamm and retraced your steps back to Oehler when you became aware of Stamm's opportunist direction. Where do you stand now on this whole development? Did you not repudiate the whole role of Stamm when he cravenly departed from the political arena? You cannot ignore these questions when you take a stand on a Stammite document.

Serious political workers can not accept documents per se— we know that any political schoolboy can sit down and knock out Marxist-sounding documents at a dime a dozen. And, as a matter of fact, the pseudo-Bolshevik leaders, the Browders, Fosters, Cannons, Shachtmans, Oehlers, Fields, Weisbords, etc. can and did produce Marxist sounding articles and theses on such questions as democratic centralism. With precise detail and with a Marxist sounding terminology, these misleaders expostulated and carefully specified the "democratic" content, assuring the workers that this signifies the right of the rank and file to initiate and control policy, to select the leadership and call it to accounts, etc. Similarly, they have sworn that the centralist aspect means only unanimity in action and not bureaucratic control from the top.

In truth, it is precisely such Marxist-looking documents which serve as a disguise to the opportunist swindlers, blinding their followers to the true story hidden behind these innocent appearing documents and the crooked nature of the leaders offering them for acceptance.

An advanced worker breaking from a structure of opportunism will not find the Marxist path unless he attempts to get a total picture of the opportunist tendency representing itself as Marxist. Such a worker can not deal with people offering leadership on the beginning point of an affidavit swearing fealty to the principles of democratic centralism torn from the context of an entire political line and its history. While the question of democratic centralism is of principled and vital importance, the mechanics of the Stalinist development in the working class movement has converted it into a convenient political football tossed around by highly artful political sharpers for purposes of befuddlement. Democratic centralism has been torn

from its real content by the opportunist leaders and fashioned into an abstraction. Although the Stalin, Trotsky, and Left-Trotsky leaders write learned theses on democratic centralism in the abstract, their fundamental political program remains founded in treachery and is made operative in the day to day struggle as a medium for misleading the workers and betraying them to the class enemy. The principle of democratic centralism, affirmed over and over again by the Browders, Cannons, Shachtmans and Oehlers is used to conceal the crudest sort of burocratism which forms the actual practise in the life of their opportunist organizations.

We cannot then consider the problem of democratic centralism in and by itself. To consider it in such a light is to consider it as an abstraction. In order for democratic centralism to be a living thing it must be studied as an organic part of an entire political line. This, we believe, is the correct approach to the problem.

What is, then, the political line behind this particular Stammite document? We contend that this document is politically opportunist, concealing and covering up the true story of the whole Stalinist development which is the key problem of our epoch. How is the Stalinist development directly related to the points raised in Stamm's document?

An inescapable feature of the problem of democratic centralism is the Stalinist betrayal of this principle. Stamm illustrates his position by a historical analogy to the manner in which this principle was betrayed in the Stalinist development from the angle of Trotsky's role in the process. Indeed, this historical treatment is of key importance. Obviously the real standpoint on democratic centralism will show itself by the attitude in which the Stalinist violation is viewed. If one accepts or covers up how and when Stalinism operated to betray democratic centralism then one blinds the workers to the true story of democratic centralism in the Stalinist system and palms off the betrayal as the genuine article. The same logically follows with any falsification of Trotsky's true role in reference to this process. Let us briefly trace the landmarks of the Stalin-Trotsky betrayal of this principle and see how it is treated in Stamm's document.

From the beginning Soviet society was beset with the burocratic plague which infected the entire body of the Soviet Union and stunted the growth of the new Workers State. This development was brought to a head and given a centralized direction by a burocratic development in the Bolshevik party itself, a development concentrated in the entire top leadership outside of Lenin. By 1921, a conspiracy of these renegade Bolshevik leaders to usurp permanent positions of power took a definite organizational form in the creation of the new appointment-carrying post of General Secretary and the secret manipulation of one of the leading conspirators into that key post.

The 7th All Ukrainian Conference of April 1923 and the epochal 12th Congress of the R.C.P. held a few days later marked milestones in the consolidation of the Stalinist stranglehold on the once Bolshevik Party. On the international scene the Stalinist counter-revolution was expressed, among other things, by the Sun-Yat-Sen-Joffe communique of Jan. 1923 which placed a noose around the neck of the Chinese toilers, and the springing of the Stalinist 4th C.I. congress trap of the "Workers Government" in Germany to behead the revolutionary development of the German workers in October 1923. In every single one of these cases, we have presented authentic documentary evidence showing how Trotsky greased the skids for this Stalinist development, betraying Lenin's trust and actively propogandizing for Stalin's policy as the reporter of the Stalinist Central Committee at the 7th All-Ukrainian Con-

ference, voting for the Stalinist resolutions at the 12th Congress of the R.C.P., smothering Lenin's "bomb" against Stalin and participating in the Stalinist frame-up of the Georgian Bolshevik leaders. Joffe, co-author of the infamous communique on China in Jan. 1923 was a subordinate in Trotsky's Far Eastern Department and a personal follower of Trotsky. In the German revolutionary development in 1923, Trotsky played up the Stalinist--Social-Democratic "Workers Government," comparing it to the proletarian dictatorship formed as a result of the October Revolution and lying that the Stalinist hacks in Germany were leading the workers to victory.

Notice that in his document Stamm begins with the year 1924, thereby concealing this whole development and throwing a veil over Trotsky's role as a turncoat from Leninism and a collaborator of Stalinism in this initial period. This point alone is enough to indicate that Stamm's document does not break from the Stalinist political system but rather covers up its origin and consolidation.

Let us go further and take up some of the alleged facts which Stamm does present and see whether they correspond to fact. Stamm's viewpoint is that Trotsky and his followers acted as weaklings pursuing a line of "protesting and submitting." We challenge Stamm or anyone else to establish by documentary evidence a single protest of Trotsky's in supporting: the Workers Government trap at the 4th Congress of the C.I., the approval to the line of Stalin's Central Committee voiced at the 7th All Ukrainian Conference and at the 12th Congress of the R.C.P., the "Lenin Levy" at the 13th Congress of the R. C.P. in May 1924, the monstrous statement on Eastman's disclosures, the Stalinist beheading of the British General Strike prior to the actual culmination of that betrayal by the Anglo-Russian Committee, the Stalinist support to the Kuomintang in China prior to the first half of 1927 after the Kuomintang had performed its hangmen's role.

Trotsky has not, Cannon has not, Shachtman has not, Oehler has not, and Stamm has not produced a single scrap of authentic evidence of Trotsky's opposition in the form of "protests" against these Stalinist betrayals. Such evidence has not been produced because it doesn't exist. This story of "protest" is a Trotsky alibi, conceived by Trotsky after his expulsion from the Soviet Union to explain away the victory of Stalinism and to build himself up as a fighter against the Stalinist degeneration of the Bolshevik Party.

Let us take at random but one point which Stamm presents as one of his strongest points -- the story of how Trotsky knifed Eastman when the latter divulged some facts pertaining to Lenin's Testament. Stamm writes:

"In 1925 Eastman published Lenin's testament and exposed Stalin's suppression of it. The Stalinist political Bureau demanded of Trotsky that he deny the existence of the document and repudiate Eastman. Trotsky did."

The story that this repudiation of Eastman by Trotsky was "foisted" on the latter by the Stalin gang is a pure Trotskyist invention. This alibi Trotsky kept pushing right to the end, with the addition that the repudiation was authored by Stalin and his henchmen. In one of his very last "explanations," Trotsky stated:

"On the contrary, the Troika wished to utilize Eastman's publication in order to provoke a kind of oppositional abortion. They presented an ultimatum: Either I must sign the declaration written by the Troika in my name or they will immediately open the fight

on the matter. The opposition center decided unanimously that this issue at this moment is absolutely unfavorable, that I must accept the ultimatum and sign my name under a declaration written by the Politburo." (L. Trotsky, "In Defense of Marxism," p. 160. Emphasis in original)

This Trotsky fable is echoed in its fundamental features by Stamm albeit in a context of "criticism." In this connection there are some facts worth noting.

First, in his book "Since Lenin Died," Eastman reveals in a footnote (p. 26) that in a private conversation with Trotsky, he told the latter of his knowledge of Lenin's suppressed Testament. Trotsky immediately instructed Eastman to keep his mouth shut and regard his information as an "absolute secret." Was Trotsky's attitude forced here by Stalin? Quite the contrary, it was the purely spontaneous reaction of a Stalinist bureaucrat involved up to his neck in Stalinist crimes. Trotsky's advice to Eastman was part and parcel of his entire policy. When Eastman later disregarded Trotsky's instructions and published what he knew, the latter transferred his spontaneous private reaction onto the public field in the form of one of the most vicious denunciations ever penned.

Second, it must be borne in mind, that these events occurred in the year 1925, when Trotsky was still a top figure in the Soviet Union with truly enormous prestige and influence. Any talk that Trotsky, at this period in history, could be prevailed upon to affix his signature to such a revolting statement against his will and line is a pure deception, stemming straight from the Trotsky school of falsification. The entire relation between Trotsky and the other Stalinist leaders absolutely excludes the Trotsky myth that "submission to discipline" motivated Trotsky's line.

Stamm actually attempts to circulate as good coin the lie that Trotsky sincerely believed the Stalin-ridden Bolshevik party to be Marxist in his "explanation" of the mainspring of Trotsky's policies:

"The conception of discipline of the Left Opposition was the opposite of Lenin's. It called for submission to revisionism and bureaucratic measures to enforce it as long as in their judgement the organization as a whole was still Marxist." (Our emphasis - L.L.)

This clean bill of health which Stamm offers on Trotsky's crooked intentions performs the same function in the workers movement as Trotsky's lying assurances of the sincerity of the Stalin gang voiced a hundred times over in the period in question. Both function to uphold Stalin-Trotsky premeditated treachery to the cause of the working class and prevents the victims from learning of its existence.

We could detail every other point made along these lines in Stamm's document (all these points have been elaborated at one time or another in our publications) and show a similar consistent pattern of Left-Trotskyite prevarication. In short, despite its seemingly anti-Trotsky vein, Stamm's document is politically tied to Trotsky and through Trotsky directly to the Stalinist system.

A vital point to bear in mind in considering Stamm's document is the entire Stalinist development prior to 1924. At the 10th Congress of the R.C.P. in 1921 a whole hullabaloo was raised about Workers Democracy. The fiercest blasts against bureaucratism were delivered by the Stalinist conspirators who

thus cloaked their secret manipulations behind the scenes to build a bureaucratic machine to entrench themselves in permanent positions of power. In this case, speeches and resolutions against bureaucratism served as a blind precisely for bureaucratism and plots for its extension.

Revolutionary workers must take careful note of Lenin's reorientation of viewpoint when the Stalinist development began to manifest itself to him in the person of Stalin and some of his henchmen. Originally, in building the 3rd International Lenin laid down as a criterion the acceptance of a certain program concretized at the 2nd Congress in the famous 21 conditions for affiliation. At the 3rd Congress, when the question of intentions was raised with regard to some of the reformist leaders Lenin countered that "we have no sincerometer." However in the Stalinist menace Lenin saw that dishonesty, premediated treachery, were the outstanding and characteristic features. Therefore, Lenin warned Trotsky as the latter reports (My Life, p. 484) not to compromise with Stalin even on a right line. Lenin's earlier view with reference to some of the figures in the 2nd International that "we have no sincerometer" has been widely publicized by the opportunist swindlers. But they keep mum about Lenin's later and sharp criterion adopted towards Stalinism which stressed as the cardinal feature not programmatic agreement but dishonest intentions.

This feature, conscious treachery, is the pivotal point of the entire Stalinist system and is the criterion that must necessarily be applied to every document produced by the Stalinist bandits. It is precisely because the advanced workers in this Stalinist epoch have been blinded to the presence of this all important factor that they have been willing to accept positions and documents at face value and therefore fallen right into the Stalinist trap. Due to its very nature, the question of democratic centralism is precisely one of those problems that can easily be presented in a Marxist light on paper by the Stalin-Trotsky-Left Trotsky leaders. Exactly for this reason, must the revolutionary workers be especially wary of accepting documents on democratic centralism per se. The revolutionary worker will question the authenticity of such documents in light of the relation it bears to the entire Stalinist development and to the total political line of the tendency presenting these documents.

We have no doubt that if you comrades reconsider the Stamm document from the standpoint of the whole development of Stalinism, the unbreakable political tie of Stammism to Trotsky, you will be prompted to reject this document and repudiate the people representing it.

Now for some specific objections which you raise against our line.

You characterize the development of our position on the sham war as follows: "first a theory was postulated, and then the facts made to fit the theory."

Actually our development was quite the opposite. If you will study our publication prior to August 1939 you will find that we did not even dream of such an eventuality as a sham war. Rather, we had developed the rather naive view that all the imperialists would simply unite in full view of the masses and launch a concerted attack on the Soviet Union. The first big hole was punched in our theory by the Stalin-Hitler Pact in August 1939 directly contradicting our expressed idea that the era of Pacts between the imperialists and Stalin was at an end. Then came the absolutely flabbergasting events of

Sept. 1939 giving the coup de grace to our whole previous concept of the imperialist maneuvers. When Hitler invaded Poland we saw this as a real war. It was the development of the Sitzkrieg in the west, this enormous fact which gave us the clue to the whole sham war scheme, a scheme which we never imagined even in our wildest nightmares. Even with the growth of our understanding of the sham war maneuver our notions of the future maneuvers of the imperialists were still imperfect as our publication exhibited. Up to the Nazi occupation of France in June 1940 we still clung to the idea of a united attack by the imperialists on the Soviet Union envisaging at first that the Stalin invasion of Finland would serve as the "legal basis." This being refuted, we corrected ourselves but fell into another error. This was the idea that the European imperialists would negotiate a "peace" with Hitler to manipulate for the disgorging of the Nazi occupied territory on the basis of "inviolability of small nations." On this basis we thought that the imperialists would cook up a legitimate reason for invading the Soviet Union under the guise of "freeing" the territories seized by Stalin in conjunction with Hitler. Facts soon contradicted this prognosis, these facts being the Nazi occupation of Norway, Holland, Belgium, and France. We could go on but we think the point is obvious. Far from postulating a theory and then twisting facts to conform to our theory, we were constantly and continually revising our prognosis to fit the new facts in issue after issue of our publication. The invasion of the Soviet Union we correctly foresaw as the corner stone of the imperialist policy but our prognoses surrounding this question, our prognostications of the day to day maneuvers of the imperialists were for the most part incorrect. How, then, can you say that on the nature of the war we made up facts to fit into a preconceived theory?

Even if we assume for a moment that we proceeded along the path you impute to us, we could never have presented a shadow of evidence to support our position. Yet our Bulletin contains a wealth of documentary detail on the sham nature of the war amongst the imperialists drawn entirely from reports of correspondents, eye witness reports, communique and other official documents which appeared in the bourgeois press. Never at any time was a single piece of the material we presented ever challenged by the proponents of the idea that a real war was raging amongst the imperialists. If you can produce a single "made up fact" contained along these lines in our publication we would like you to produce it.

There is still another point worth considering on this question of inventing facts to fit a preconception. Take but one single point — the question of the Verdun fortresses. In the War of 1914-18 the German Army launched offensive after offensive to capture this gigantic fortress. In 1915 specifically they battled toe to toe with the French Army in an unremitting eight month slaughter to capture this fortress. The attempt failed in this epoch-making battle watered by the blood of hundreds of thousands of French and German soldiers. After more than two decades of modernization and perfected defenses worked out to the last detail, the Nazi army occupied and raced through Verdun in 24 hours with nary a casualty for their pains. (See "The Case of Holland, Belgium and France") When the game was reenacted in reverse in 1944 the American Army performed a similar "miracle" in less time than it takes to tell about it. Did we invent these facts? Or rather weren't the inventions all necessarily on the side of those who were howling about "great battles" such as the R.W.L., to mention but one case.

We adduce the facts on Verdun to illustrate likewise this point. Supposing one were to "postulate the theory" that the World War of 1914-18 was a sham war in its fundamental respects. Where could facts be drawn to support this theory? If you think they can be made to fit the theory, try to present

some. You could not even if you wanted to because there are no such facts in existence and no interpretation of them could be twisted into any kind of evidence to lend credence to this view.

Yet how do you account for the enormous amount of irrefutable documentary evidence which we have accumulated on the present situation since September 1939? There is only one possible explanation. These facts are objective, they exist, and they cannot be honestly explained away.

You state in your letter that you have already come to regard the character of the war as a "settled" question and close the door to a discussion of your views although you are admittedly still in the study circle stage in so far as working out a program is concerned. Comrades, at this late date, must we reiterate the established Marxist traditions and spirit on the question of discussion of opponent views? You know well through personal experience how Stalinism has poisoned the minds of the advanced workers on the matter of free discussion, meeting the demand with the black jack, slander, and character assassination. You know how the latter two methods are imitated by the Trotsky and Left Trotsky leaders who are not yet strong enough to resort to the well known strong arm methods although some attempts have been made even along these lines. You express a desire to break decisively with the whole perfidious Stalinist structure. Yet before you have even adopted a program you are ready to rule out discussion on such a vital point as the character of the war. Haven't you been too hasty in adopting such an attitude? We are positive that if you think the entire matter over more carefully you will agree with us on the necessity for a discussion.

In countering our views on orientation you state:

"The task today is to build a new party, but it cannot be built on an 'anti' basis, that we are against this or that tendency. To say that we must annihilate Trotskyism and Stalinism theoretically completely before we can ever build a group is tantamount to saying at the outset that we will never build a group."

The rock bottom basis for the correct orientation is the situation within the working class, specifically of that among the vanguard, whom Lenin characterized as the key in the class struggle. Just as this key in the hands of the opportunist leaders locks the door to proletarian revolution, so does this key in the hands of Bolshevism open the door to the overthrow of the class enemy.

Today the working class is confronted by a mass of conflicting opportunist tendencies, dominated by the Stalinist system which has maintained a stranglehold on the movement of the key sections of the workers up to this writing. The rich historical experiences of the past twenty five years shows that Stalinism was and still is the decisive force in the proletarian movement without the great mass of the workers even being aware of this fact. Further, Stalinism does not disintegrate or stagnate but rather functions as an aggressive, dynamic movement, constantly extending its power and working for the physical elimination of all competing organizations harboring revolutionary minded workers. Stalinism does not permit the advanced workers freedom of movement or operation but is militantly jealous of its power and influence and is ever scheming to destroy revolutionary minded opponents.

It is this context which confronts the handful of revolutionary workers

who realize the necessity for the building of the new revolutionary party and are willing to implement this realization with practical steps. Obviously, this situation in the working class dictates the need for the revolutionary workers to raise their call for the building of a Marxist party in terms of a polemic against the already existing and powerful structure of opportunism which dominates the movement of the key sections of the workers. Unless the truly revolutionary workers prove that the call of the opportunist swindlers is fraudulent they establish no safeguard against the danger of the workers falling into the trap set by the betrayers masked as revolutionaries. And since the call for a revolutionary party must take the form of an exposure of the pseudo-revolutionaries already dominating the field it logically follows that this call has to be directed in the first instance to the deceived followers of the counter-revolutionary leaders.

Certainly we do not accept the defeatist idea that a group cannot be built in the struggle against the Stalinist system. Rather, history teaches us that unless the Stalinist system is exposed and wiped out then the pattern of working class defeat characteristic of the period of Stalinism will continue unchanged.

We see as the central feature in the dilemma of the working class not the failure to break subjectively with the bourgeoisie. Instead we see that in every capitalist country for the past twenty five years workers have broken and still are breaking with the bourgeoisie and its parties in great numbers. The cardinal feature is that upon breaking with the bourgeoisie the workers plunge right into the paralyzing Stalinist death grip. Hiding behind the symbols of October Revolution, Lenin, Soviet Union and assisted by its sham opposition, the Trotsky and Left Trotsky leaders, Stalinism is thereby enabled to dominate historically the working class of every country and swerve the direction of any struggle the workers might undertake.

The revolutionary workers must become cognizant of the rich historical lessons shown in the development of the Bolshevik Party which points the path for proletarian victory. As Lenin never tired of pointing out, Bolshevism crystallized, gained strength, and became hardened exclusively in the struggle against opportunism. In the 1917 period in Russia the entire fight to overthrow the capitalists hinged on the outcome of the struggle between Bolshevism and opportunism in the Russian workers movement. As soon as Bolshevism won predominance (late August-September) in the vanguard over the Mensheviks and S.R.'s the road was cleared for the greatest upheaval in the history of the human race, the October Revolution. These invaluable lessons, buried and distorted by the present opportunist tendencies, must be resurrected and applied to the present beginning phase of the struggle to build a new revolutionary party.

The task automatically posed before the revolutionary workers of today is to pick up the broken threads of Lenin's struggle against Stalinism which he clearly saw menaced the work of his entire life. But in piecing together the hidden facts of Lenin's struggle and making these facts available to the advanced workers, the revolutionists must account for the victory of Stalinism over Lenin's policy. That inescapably leads us to Trotsky who secretly knifed the sick Lenin and went over lock, stock, and barrel to the Stalin gang. Later the Stalinist centralization process which cast Trotsky from the summits of bureaucratic power forced him to alter the forms of his basic policy. Selected by Stalinism to serve as its chief whipping boy, Trotsky was immediately thrust into the leading position amongst the revolutionary anti-Stalin workers. By use of "anti-Stalinist" demagogy and aided by the Stalinist hounding campaign against him Trotsky was able to corral the main sections

of the revolutionary anti-Stalin workers only to divert them to support of Stalinism. History points its finger directly at the discarded Stalinist bureaucrat, Trotsky, and his tendency as the present main obstacle in the path of recreating a new Bolshevik International.

Life presents the anti-Stalinist workers in the "4th International" camp as the only feasible and logical soil to implant a knowledge of Stalinism. These Bolshevik minded workers who have broken subjectively with Stalinism are ready to accept an exposure of Stalinist treachery. The very subjective development of these workers make them amenable to learning the real origin and nature of Stalinism. It is precisely these "4th International" workers who now form our chief concern; specifically our task reduces itself toward getting these workers to bring their subjective sentiments into harmony with objective reality. This means in the first instance the exposure of their present misleaders who are diverting these workers back into the Stalinist stream.

You observe correctly that a worker who joins the Trotsky organization is soon indoctrinated and develops a loyalty to his organization. You likewise point to the fact that this worker therefore looks upon attempts to break him away from his organization as disruptive. Both these points are made to challenge the validity of our orientation. The feeling of loyalty and attachment to his organization and leaders on the part of the Trotsky workers is but natural and is a characteristic of practically every sincere worker in every opportunist organization without exception. Logically, then, the Marxist must therefore strive to overcome this barrier and combat the opportunist poison that is instilled into these workers by their misleaders. How else should a true Marxist react to the fact that misguided workers develop an attachment and loyalty to their organizations? By turning his back upon these workers and allowing the pseudo-Bolshevik leaders a free hand to manipulate these workers and through them the whole working class into destruction? You want to concentrate rather on the "unaffiliated workers." However, since the main stream of the decisive sections of the workers flows overwhelmingly to the pseudo-Bolshevik current such an orientation would not dam the flood.

As another objection to our orientation you make the point that the Trotsky workers will not be broken from the clutches of the Cannons and Shachtmans simply by handing him a copy of the Trotsky School of Falsification. Quite correct! If the Trotsky workers could be broken away from their misleaders simply by handing him a copy of the Trotsky School then the problem of recreating a new Bolshevik International would be absurdly simple. We naturally reject and combat such political naivete. The struggle to expose and cast out the opportunist misleaders is a long and difficult process. It takes a long time for the truth to get a hearing and make headway against the cunning opportunists who have at their disposal enormous forces and a whole tradition for the spread of their deceptions. Against this gigantic structure of opportunism we have but one weapon, the truth, which we endeavor to present as often as our limited forces permit as an antidote to the opportunist poison.

Slowly, almost imperceptibly, this truth is penetrating the minds of the advanced workers. First we materially assisted to the extent of our forces in speeding the disintegration of the multifarious Left-Trotsky tendencies which plagued the anti-Stalinist movement a few years ago, and thereby cleared the field for our tendency. Now, our line finds a voice in the person of a couple of individuals in the R.W.L., the only remaining Left-Trotsky group of any importance. Meanwhile we have won the ear of a few hundred revolution-

ary anti-Stalinist workers and established a steady and stable audience for our material. While these workers do not accept our tendency today, the ideas we espouse have been pounded and implanted into their minds over a period of years. When the objective situation cracks, as it inevitably will, and these workers begin to move forward then the seeds we have planted will begin sprouting and bear ripened Marxist fruit. This work is admittedly arduous and painstaking; it is terribly slow with no prospect of easy returns. True, it is not a "get rich quick scheme" but it is the only solid basis for bringing about the resurrection of true Marxism in the ranks of the proletariat and the building of the new revolutionary party.

Another objection to our orientation is put forth in your letter in this form. Allegedly, the Trotsky workers "are not interested, nor do they possess the theoretical development, to be interested in what Trotsky said or wrote in 1923. At most they will reply, what had that to do with the present situation, when our group is fighting the system tooth and nail? How can one answer this?"

The answer to this is quite simple. Analysis of the present day activities of the Trotsky movement occupies the major portion of articles appearing in our publication over the past five years. The "Trotsky program today" bears an integral connection to the history of Trotsky's role in bringing about the victory of the Stalinist development in the Soviet Union. To take but a few points, The Bulletin has analyzed time and again the Trotsky position on Spain, Italy, France, India, etc., on the entire sham war, on the question of defense of the Soviet Union, on their "military policy for the proletariat," on their labor party maneuvers, on their policy in the bourgeois elections, and the reactionary character of their entire "mass work" in the unions giving names, places, and dates. There is not nor can there be a Chinese wall between Trotsky's degeneration from a revolutionist into a Stalinist and the present day activities of the Trotsky movement.

In reality it is The Bulletin only which devotes any amount of attention to the present day activities of the Trotsky movement. Compare the amount of material appearing in our publication, for example, with that appearing in the R.W.L. press, including both their paper and "theoretical" organ. Again to restrict ourselves to a few points; who exposed the Trotsky maneuvers in relation to the entire C.I.O. leadership, the crooked deals with such labor fakers as Homer Martin, the rotten bloc with Stalinism in the Food Workers in Dec. 1940, their unprincipled horse deal with Lewis to gain support for their union in Minneapolis, their participation in the betrayal of the mine strikes, their bloc first with the Dubinsky and then with the Stalinist gang in the A.L.P. among other things. Remember that all this is in the field which supposedly forms the main preoccupation of the R.W.L. who also state that they are going to unmask Trotskyism in action.

As we uncover the facts more and more details of this poisonous Trotskyite "mass work" will be presented in our press. Were we simply to restrict ourselves to analyses of "what Trotsky said or wrote in 1923" as you seem to imply we do then we would be presenting an incomplete and therefore a distorted picture of the role of the Trotsky movement. The point, of course, is that the "present day program" of the Trotsky movement does not develop in a vacuum but is organically linked to its historical roots. The present day Trotsky activity can not be correctly pictured and explained separate and apart from its origin and history. Neither can the Trotsky activity in the past, on the other hand, be adequately analyzed simply by a presentation of Trotsky's role in the incubation and formative period of the Stalinist reaction. Both the present day activity of the Trotsky movement and Trotsky's

past role as a renegade from Leninism and collaborator of Stalinism form one indissoluble whole.

In your final point you posit your own orientation which stresses that action in the workers' day to day struggle constitutes the only correct and efficacious medium for struggling against the influence of opportunism. Presumably through activity in the unions and other mass organizations, the revolutionary workers, by a correct policy of action in the day to day struggle of the workers will automatically expose the opportunists since the workers in these organizations will inevitably come to see the superiority of the activities of the revolutionists as against the fraudulent double-dealing of the opportunist swindlers.

Unfortunately, however, unless the vanguard workers possess a thoroughgoing scientific understanding of the nature of Stalinism, the working class is left without an instrument by means of which it can determine whether an organization follows through a Marxist activity or not. The pseudo-Marxist leaders at times offer the workers plenty of action so as to better disguise their criminal intentions. In the leftist period the Stalinists hooked the workers with all sorts of "action" including strikes, hunger marches, demonstrations, and what appeared to be struggles for class war prisoners. Such "action" seems revolutionary to the workers particularly to those directly under their sway. And what counter-"action" by a handful of revolutionists but that of political exposure of the pseudo-Bolshevik leaders can unmask the criminality concealed behind their seemingly revolutionary action? Only through this political exposure can the crooked activity of the opportunist brigands be uncovered and made comprehensible to the advanced workers. Without the presence of this political exposure the betrayers are perfectly free to operate and lead the workers under their influence by their noses and through them lead the whole of the proletariat to disaster.

For years the streets of Germany rang with the cries of workers battling the Nazi gangs in impromptu street fights in the illusion that they were thereby struggling against fascism, while the Socialist and Stalinist betrayers were allowed to strut about in the guise of enemies of fascism. In the debacle of the German proletariat it was not the power of fascist strength that subdued the workers but the paralyzing influence of opportunism which delivered the drugged workers into the hands of the Hitlermen.

Spain is an outstanding example of workers attempting to physically struggle against the bourgeoisie while allowing the Stalinist and other opportunist forces to roam freely directing the course of the struggle. The result was the victory of the Franco forces. In Germany 1928-33 the workers flocked to Stalinism while it was in its leftist period. In Spain, on the other hand, during the leftist period Stalinism was an insignificant numerical force numbering less than a thousand workers throughout all of Spain exceeded numerically for a time even by the Trotsky followers. Yet when the workers underwent a political awakening they sped in an overwhelming current right into the Stalinist whirlpool. This was during the Rightist phase of Stalinism, when Stalinism in action was openly crying for support to bourgeois democracy and to the labor fakers in all the unions and other mass organizations. Yet as we see such action did not automatically expose Stalinism before the Spanish toilers although there were many forces in that situation which used "anti-Stalinist" talk as a regular stock in trade to corral the revolutionary anti-Stalinist workers. From an insignificant numerical force Stalinism grew by leaps and bounds until it was powerful enough to direct the entire course of the Spanish Civil War imposing its policy on the major portion of the Spanish proletariat. The reason was the lack of a positive

political force in Spain exposing Stalinism in that momentous situation, laying bare its history, and unmasking its consciously counter-revolutionary role.

Note that the particular zigzag (leftist in Germany 1928-33, Rightist during the course of the Spanish Civil War 1936-38) did not at all affect the movement of the workers into the Stalinist organizations when a revolutionary situation developed. The lesson is that the very presence of Stalinism amongst the working class vanguard is a sign that the workers have not learned the true nature of this deadly poison. The toilers are then bound to turn to Stalinism in their hour of need under the illusion (propagated both by Stalinism and the bourgeoisie) that this is the same force which is synonymous with the October Revolution and Lenin's banner.

The talk of exposing Stalinism through pure and simple action in the trade union and other mass organizations remains precisely that — talk. All of the Left-Trotsky tendencies promised such an exposure ranging from the Fields, Weisbords, Oehlers, Stamms, Mienovs, Jorgers, Spencers, and many others. Since all of these tendencies were fundamentally tied to the Stalinist political system such an exposure never materialized. Whatever "work" was ever done in any situation by these people was therefore along the lines of reactionary mass work although no real masses were or could be involved. The first step toward revolutionary mass work is the political exposure of the entire Stalinist system in all of its various branches. This is the absolutely indispensable pre-condition, and as this exposure begins to take effect and the opportunist stumbling blocks are removed then and only then is the path to real mass work automatically opened. You cannot sneak behind the back of Stalinism to conduct any kind of revolutionary mass work. The conditions for such mass work cannot exist as long as Stalinism dominates the ranks of the advanced workers and while the Trotsky political system paralyzes those revolutionary minded workers who have advanced to the point of subjectively breaking with Stalinism.

A tremendous historic responsibility rests on the shoulders of the present day revolutionary workers. History will not stand still and Stalinism will not relax its death grip on the throat of the toilers. As we see, after twenty five years of uninterrupted betrayals by Stalinism, the revolutionary workers particularly in the hot spots in Europe are again flocking into the Stalinist slaughter houses in ever increasing numbers. Only a Marxist force can interrupt this process which will continue in every turn towards a revolutionary situation. The Marxists are obligated to make scientifically clear the fundamental nature of Stalinism and its allies and must unremittingly combat this terrible danger with all their strength. A nuclear beginning for such a Marxist force exists in the U.S. in the form of the comprehensive body of material accumulated and presented by our tendency. This material must become the property of the entire proletariat. You comrades in Detroit must determine to equip yourselves with this material so as to accumulate an ideological arsenal to combat the deadly influence of the deadly Stalinist malady. This is the cardinal, the necessarily first step. Next is the joining of hands with us to light once more the torch of truth and carry it forward into every dim corner darkened by the deceptions of the pseudo-Bolshevik leaders. You must help us uncover the truth and contribute your forces to the task of making it widely known. Only along this road can the road of the revolutionary workers be cleared of all impediments and the great masses correspondingly led to victory.

Comradely,

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 * A LETTER FROM FRANCE *
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Editorial Note:

We print below a letter from a French friend who is associated with the group which publishes the RKD Bulletins in French and German, and other publications.

Paris, June 15, 1946

Dear Comrade Marlen,

We have received and read with the greatest interest your Bulletins which have showed us many new things and which please us a great deal. It is necessary to say that you have studied Trotskyism with the greatest precision and that your articles are of an extraordinary exactitude. We are therefore more surprised that you have not drawn the conclusion which seems evident above all in the evaluation of present day Russia where you remain still, it seems, attached to a position close to that of Trotsky.

Have you received our letter of January 30 and why have you not answered? Have you received the material we have sent:

We continue our public discussion with the RWL whose secretary accuses us, we do not know why, of "Marlenism." It is above all after this characterization that we have studied more closely your documents. We would like to know if you have read our documents and what is your evaluation of them.

We await always with interest news from you and your Bulletin! Send those which concern the RWL, you have not included them in the collection!

Let us hear from you soon, fraternally,

Charles B.

(Translated by M. Lane)

 * * * * *
 * AN ANSWER *
 * * * * *

July 9, 1946

Dear Comrade B.,

It is interesting that the RWL secretary has tagged you with the name "Marlenism," because of all the documents that we have been able to assimilate, that has been sent us from Europe, your position on the treachery and role of Trotskyism in the early stages of the Russian degeneration (from 1922 to the present), most closely approaches our own researches. (We are referring here to material in "Le Drapeau"). The RWL, on the other hand, holds that Trotsky pursued a fundamentally Marxist line until 1934.

1- If the pro-Trotskyite R/WL story is true that means that Trotsky pursued a Marxist line during the Stalinist usurpation of power in Russia, in the German Revolution of 1923, in the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, and again in Germany during the victory of fascism in 1933, to detail the most outstanding points. Documentary evidence proves that Trotsky had a line of collaboration with Stalin in building the bureaucratic pyramid in Russia- support to Stalin at the 12th Congress of the RCP, support to Stalin's fraudulent Lenin levy, suppression of Lenin's Testament, etc. In Germany in 1923, Trotsky supported the Workers Government fraud, compared it to the proletarian dictatorship established in the Russian Revolution, and lied to the workers that the German Stalinists were leading the masses to victory. In China Trotsky supported the bloc with the Kuomintang and in his horse-trade with Zinoviev and Kamenev in 1926 specifically repudiated the perspective of proletarian revolution for China. From all angles in supporting Trotsky's line, the R/WL attaches itself to Stalinism and therefore supports the Stalinist betrayals of the proletariat. The reason for the R/WL tie to Trotsky is quite clear. Since the R/WL did not split from Trotsky until 1934, it therefore covers up Trotsky's line up to that period, as a Marxist line. Otherwise the R/WL leaders would have to admit that their political past was rooted in Stalinist opportunism. Such a course is closed to opportunists who pose as great Marxists before the workers. Thus the R/WL leaders continue on the course of defending the Trotskyite crimes, although we have been presenting them with voluminous documentary evidence for seven years now on the nature and policy of the Stalinist system. The R/WL is then a left-Trotsky group, a satellite in the Stalinist orbit.

2- We define Stalinism as a consciously counter-revolutionary force arising out of the nationalized property relations in the Soviet Union. The R/WL speaks of Stalinism as a new historic form of reformism. Reformism is a force which arises in capitalist countries and directly attaches the workers to imperialism while it moves in a continual rightist direction. Stalinism operates in the form of leftist and rightist zigzags determined exclusively by the needs of the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia. The R/WL spreads the Trotskyite fiction of the Stalinist bureaucrats being simply "mistaken" and therefore committing "errors" due to a presumed ignorance of Marxism. We, on the other hand, have proven that Stalinism is a consciously counter-revolutionary force aiming to prevent proletarian revolution so as to safeguard the domination of the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy.

3. We hold that the Soviet Union, standing on a base of nationalized property created by the October Revolution, is a degenerated Workers State under the Stalin regime. Our criterion stems from the Marxist standpoint: the mode of production and the property relations arising from it. The socio-economic system of Russia rests on nationalized property. This is the historic form which can be established only by proletarian dictatorship and through which the proletariat moves to liberation. The groups adhering to the Workers State concept differ along these lines:

A) The Trotskyites call for "unconditional defense" of the Stalinist bureaucracy "in every effort it makes" to defend its form of property from imperialist attack.

B) The R/WL calls for a line of marching separately and striking together with the Stalinist bureaucracy against imperialism.

Each of the above attributes to Stalinism a line of defending the Soviet Union from imperialism. The fact is that Stalinism works to

prevent proletarian revolution which is the only genuine defense of the Soviet Union. Preventing proletarian revolution means propping up imperialist reaction. Thus the Stalinists work indirectly for a destruction of the Soviet Union because they politically prevent the overthrow of imperialism. Stalin may ward off the imperialists on a pure military basis in this or that specific attack but their political line enables imperialism to stabilize itself for more assaults which will ultimately culminate in the destruction of the Soviet Union if Stalin remains in control.

C) We, on the other hand, explain that the defense of the Soviet Union is conditioned on the exposure of the Stalin bureaucracy; we do not subordinate our struggle to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy; we maintain that only the overthrow of Stalinism and its replacement by a Marxist force can lead to a genuine defense of the Soviet Union. That defense would be the spread of proletarian revolution to overthrow imperialism.

The groups rejecting the Workers State thesis err on the criterion of the class character of the state. These groups establish as the criterion for determining the character of the Russian state, the super-structural factors, such as the line of the leadership, the matter of workers democracy, etc.

We understand that you reject the thesis that Russia is a Workers State. In your documents you speak of the proletariat being expelled from power and seem to date this from 1923 or about that time. The fact is that the proletariat was never expelled from power because it never directly exercised power. From the beginning the Soviet Union was cursed with a bureaucracy which had the power; at about 1921 this took the form of a conscious direction for centralizing this power into the hands of a clique of top bureaucrats. On the criterion of "workers democracy" or the proletariat exercising power, etc. one would have to conclude that Russia was never a Workers State and logically, therefore that the October Revolution was not a proletarian revolution.

Unfortunately, the Trotskyites and Left Trotskyites have given a foul connotation to the Workers State Thesis by identifying it with support to the Stalinist bureaucracy. The very term Workers State seems to arouse the emotional connotation of the workers controlling or directly ruling the state. It is this false idea which makes the whole idea that Russia is a Workers State abhorrent to revolutionary anti-Stalinist workers. All that the term, Workers State signifies is the form of property relations. Of course Marx and Engels never dreamed that on such a historically progressive form of property could arise a counter-revolutionary leadership. But this is what happened in Russia and what gives the Stalinist bureaucracy such a unique character.

The Workers State can move in a revolutionary direction or it can move in a counter-revolutionary direction, depending on the character of its leadership. The character of the leadership determines whether the Workers State is revolutionary or counter-revolutionary. Similarly, the working class, as a class, in capitalist countries is the only progressive force in capitalist society due to its role in production. However, the working class can and does move in a counter-revolutionary direction and counter to its historic interests, when it follows an opportunist leadership. The fact that the workers follow an opportunist leadership today and therefore work to support capitalism does not alter the historic role and function of the working class in capitalist society.

We do not see the socio-economic system in Russia as based on capitalism. Capitalism is based on bourgeois private property. So-called "State Capitalism" is a contradiction in terms; concretely supposed state-capitalism rests on private property relations. The state acts as the organ of the capitalist class, not as a capitalist. Where the state does intervene in the process of production (state control of labor) or when the state takes over and operates such industries as railroads, banks, public utilities, etc. it is only for the purpose of strengthening and stabilizing the fundamental structure of private ownership of the means of production. Thus, even in the capitalist countries, the term state capitalism is misleading because it is implied that the state is acting independently and in opposition to the private property structure. In the Soviet Union the capitalists private property structure was actually overthrown and was replaced by state ownership of property. No kind of capitalism is involved in this new form of property.

3- The bourgeoisie was never misled into believing otherwise about the Soviet Union. That brings us to another point of specific significance. During the so-called "Second World War" the world imperialists were in secret league for the precise purpose of restoring the private property structure of capitalism to the Soviet Union. The Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 had the secret support and aid of world imperialism. The war said to have been in progress between the imperialist powers (England, France, Germany, Italy, U.S., Japan, etc.) was a sham which hid their alliance from the world masses. The fundamental contradiction in the world since the October Revolution has been the one between the capitalist powers and the non-capitalist Soviet Union. One cannot analyze the past and present line of the imperialists without this as a starting point. We have presented detailed documentary evidence on the "Second World War" from 1939 through 1945, some of which we have sent to you.

4- The present immediate task of the proletariat is the struggle against the Stalinist system which is the chief stumbling block to proletarian revolution. The building of a new revolutionary party can take place only in the course of a relentless struggle against the Stalinist misleaders who dominate the most vital section of the advanced workers. In France, this task is especially pressing with Stalinism particularly powerful among the class-conscious workers. The advanced French workers must be made aware of this mortal danger.

The nucleus for the building of a Marxist party in France as elsewhere consists of those revolutionary workers who have already subjectively broken away from Stalinism. However, for the most part these workers have been ensnared by the Trotsky leaders who tie these workers back to Stalinism. For example, the Trotsky leaders urge their followers to support a Stalinist-Socialist government in France, while they cover up the pro-Stalinist meaning of this line by their anti-Stalinist talk. The subjective desires of these revolutionary anti-Stalinist workers must be brought into harmony with objective reality. That means an exposure of the pro-Stalinist line of the Trotsky leaders and winning over the misled rank and file to a Marxist policy. This is the foundation stone for the new revolutionary party and it is along these lines that we are attempting to build our party in the United States.

...

With Comradely Greetings
Workers League for a Revolutionary
Party

*
* AN EVALUATION OF THE *
* "GROUP OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISTS" *
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We have before us the January 21, 1946 of a document called Political Notes, published periodically by a "Group of Revolutionary Marxists." (Chicago) The issue in question contains a single article called "Report on Steel and the New Phase of the Strike Wave," which at first appearance may seem like a review of the purely economic phase of the class struggle in the United States. A close scrutiny, however, reveals the political character of the line of the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists."

That Group realizes that the present leadership of the trade union workers is reactionary. In the unfolding of the present strike wave the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" sees a prospect of a new working class leadership arising which will direct the trade union workers against the bourgeoisie, the government and the union bureaucracy. Two factors, according to the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists," will act on the rank-and-file as driving forces to give rise to this new leadership: (1) widespread violent government intervention in the strikes, and (2) the pressure of the rising cost of living:

"A turning point is at hand. With auto, steel, electrical and meat packing industries tied up, the bourgeoisie would be forced to act more violently against labor and thereby produce a more violent reaction. Most likely this would take the form of widespread government intervention under the war powers. This would usher in the new phase. Possibly it might produce the crisis- decisive battles which will determine the wages issue. More likely it would cause a regrouping of forces with the union bureaucracy going over openly to the role of government agents; it would postpone the crisis until the rank-and-file, driven by the rising cost of living, throws up new leaders to direct it against bourgeoisie, government and union bureaucracy alike." (Political Notes, Jan. 21, 1945, p. 2-my emphasis-G.M.)

Workers who are familiar with the Marxist teachings on how a genuine working class leadership arises will recognize at once that the above formulation by the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" is the very essence of the reactionary political line known for many decades as Economism.

What have both history and Marxist teachings established as giving rise to a genuine working class leadership? Is it such factors as government violence against strikes or a rising cost of living? Neither government violence against strikes nor an increasing cost of living ever operated as factors giving rise to a genuine working class leadership.

Lenin laid the foundation of the proletarian party in Russia precisely through his vigorous fight against just such paralyzing economist illusions as are advanced by Political Notes. Only Marxist leaders can conduct the fight against capitalism, because economic struggles, strikes for rise of wages, or reduction of hours, or any other economic, trade union action of the workers, do not stimulate Marxist consciousness among the rank and file. Lenin explained in What Is To Be Done? (1902) that-

"This consciousness could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., it may itself realize the necessity for combining in unions, for fighting against the employers and for striking to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc. The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories that were elaborated by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. According to their social status, the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. Similarly, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose quite independently of the spontaneous labor movement; it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of ideas among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia."

Are the publishers of Political Notes really so crassly ignorant of this essential groundwork of the Marxist teaching on building proletarian leadership? Don't they know that each historical epoch creates a Marxist leadership not through personal clashes with the capitalists, but, as the example of Marx, Engels, Plekhanov, Lenin, Trotsky, Kautsky and others shows, through the scientific study of capitalism in general, and the systematic knowledge of the particular stage of history through which they are to guide the proletariat? Without such a scientific prerequisite there can be no Marxist leadership. Strikes, no matter how turbulent; high cost of living, even if it reduces the masses to privation and hunger; politically misguided spontaneous uprisings and even civil war (Spain, China) will never through physical action convey the scientific information and tactics which are indispensable in the struggle for Socialism. At the very best, economic struggles can produce militant, self-sacrificing fighters, who, because of a lack of Marxist training and theoretical clarity, will place their zeal and good intentions at the disposal of some pseudo-Marxist organization whose agents are infesting the entire proletariat.

Advanced workers who today, when there is no Marxist international, not even a Marxist Party anywhere in the world, look forward to the trade union rank-and-file to throw up leaders who can actually conduct a fight against the bourgeoisie, (which can only be a Marxist leadership) commit the worst possible tail-endist error. This economist pipe-dreaming leads them to a position which in reality spells the renunciation of the work of organizing a Marxist party, and therefore the renunciation of the struggle for Socialism.

Not because of the immediate physical and economic pressure of the capitalist system, but because Marx and Engels were revolutionary scientists did they work on the Communist Manifesto and Capital, to give the theoretical light without which the proletariat would have remained politically blind and helpless.

What serious advanced worker can believe that if Plekhanov, Sasulich, Deutsch, Axelrod and Ignatov had not become followers of Marx and Engels, had not analyzed the reactionary nature of the Narodnik movement and had not organized the first Marxist Russian group, the group called "Emancipation of Labor" that the Russian workers themselves, under the pressure of severe exploitation of primitive capitalist accumulation, would have thrown up leaders to fight capitalism!

The Plekhanov group had no concrete connection with the mass movement of the Russian workers. Yet Plekhanov realized that it was the proletariat which was to revolutionize Russia. The problem was to bring Marxism into the Russian proletarian ranks.

A naive view would have been that the group should have immediately set itself to conducting strikes and in general to leading the elementary, spontaneous struggles and on that basis develop Marxist consciousness among the Russian workers. The Plekhanov group which was not even in Russia did something altogether different. Stationed in Geneva, it went to work introducing into Russia the scientific ideas of Marx and Engels. The group also realized that unless the romantic, terroristic Populism was eliminated from the heads of the advanced proletarians there would be no Marxism in Russia. The group of "Emancipation of Labor" threw its energies into a determined fight against the Narodniks (Populists) and through powerful ideological blows cleared the path for Marxism. Next it worked out a Marxist program for the Russian proletariat which served as the first step for gathering various study circles and groups into a Marxist party.

No, Plekhanov was not thrown up by the rank-and-file because of Czarist brutality or a rising cost of living! As a student Lenin became acquainted with some Marxist ideas and later joined Fedoseev's Marxist circle. As a mature Marxist, a few years later, Lenin took up the task of gathering the circles of the most advanced workers into a larger body called the "League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class." And those workers, too, were learning how to fight to destroy capitalism not from immediate economic struggles but from the lectures Lenin delivered to them on Marxism.

And immediately when the advanced political workers, armed ideologically with the theoretical weapons of Marxism, were linked through organization ties into a sizeable revolutionary body, Lenin placed on the agenda the passing from propaganda to popular agitation, to give leadership to the economic struggles and thereby to give them a political direction.

Such was the formative period of the Marxist Party in Russia. Such it was in all other countries, with Marxism being brought to the workers from without.

In Russia this work of linking Marxism with the mass movement was relatively a simple and easy task because there was no political force claiming to be Marxist and fighting viciously and violently to exclude the authentic Marxist development.

A new situation sprang up with the outbreak of the World War with virtually the entire leadership of the Socialist International openly going over to imperialism. Unspeakable chaos, confusion and opportunism seized upon the international proletarian vanguard. Yet despite the terrific pressure of capitalism, the unprecedented ravages of war, Marxist light came not from the battlefields, certainly not from the precipitous rise of the cost of living and the widespread misery and starvation, but from the editorial room of Lenin and Zinoviev. And only an ignoramus or a charlatan would argue that if Lenin had not given the proletariat his analysis of imperialism, his masterpiece of theoretical reconstruction of the Marxist teachings on the State, his line on proletarian revolution as embodied in his April Theses, the masses themselves in elementary economic struggles would have thrown up leaders who would have pointed the way to fight capitalism!

Even in the atmosphere of the unprecedented revolutionary enthusiasm which followed the overthrow of the Tzar, the "sectarian" Lenin continued the correct line of relying not on spontaneity but on the vigorous exertion on the part of the politically-educated Bolsheviks to bring Marxist consciousness to the misled masses. He criticized Kamenev for a contemptuous attitude to the correct line. "Is not the work of the propagandists at the present moment the very central issue, since it tends to clear the proletarian line from the defencist and petty-bourgeois 'mass' frenzy?" (Letter on Tactics) Lenin resisted Kamenev's impulsiveness to "remain with the masses" which would have caused the Party to collapse into the general petty bourgeois morass.

"To speak with contempt of a 'group of propagandists' advocating a proletarian does not seem to be very becoming, he replied to Kamenev." Lenin's line won, the Bolsheviks for a while remained in a minority, but gained rapidly later due to the objective changes and their vigorous propaganda. Only that line could and did lead to October. That line appeared as sectarian, but it was really a line to maintain Marxist independence.

Whether the publishers of Political Notes are ignorant or simulate ignorance, the anti-Marxist illusions which they attempt to bolster must be combatted and the advanced workers, whom they reach first, must be warned not to be deceived by the "promising" Economist mirages. It must be explained to the workers that knowledge of the complexity of class struggle, the Marxist evaluation of the forces operating among the masses can never arise from class struggle spontaneity, but is brought to them without, is conveyed to them by an organization of revolutionists.

Since each epoch has its specific problems, we must explain that Marxism today is not confined to abstract formulas, that a revolutionary worker must know more than the theory of surplus value, more than the fact that the proletariat is the grave-digger of the bourgeoisie and that capitalist society will be replaced with a Socialist, classless society.

In 1914 Marxism included the knowledge of imperialism, the nature of Social Chauvinism and Centrism, and in 1917 the fundamental difference between bourgeois and proletarian democracy, and many other questions, such as the meaning of Soviets.

Today Marxism includes all that and more; the knowledge of the political character of the Comintern and of the Trotskyist movement, and the understanding of the imperialist policy in the epoch of the degenerated workers state. Without this body of knowledge it is impossible to fight these opportunist forces, impossible to build a Marxist International, impossible to lead the workers against capitalism. This knowledge can be brought to the workers ONLY FROM WITHOUT. No revolutionary theoretical basis can be described as Marxist unless it possesses and disseminates this knowledge. "Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." (What Is to Be Done)

When the basic Marxist concepts have been arrived at by the initial revolutionary cadres, it is not the trade union rank-and-file which first comes to grasp these concepts. It is the proletarian vanguard, the class-conscious, most advanced political workers who are the first to rally around the basic Marxist ideas in general and of our epoch in particular. It is only from the proletarian vanguard that the Marxist concepts filter down to the more backward layers of the proletariat, such as the trade union rank-and-file.

So far the proletarian vanguard has not accepted the correct line for this epoch. The proletarian vanguard is in the clutches of the Stalinist system of opportunism primarily, and to a lesser extent of Social Democracy. The "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" with its Economism obscures the fact that Marxism takes hold in each epoch through the proletarian vanguard first and foremost.

As we move down page 2 of Political Notes we come upon a really outrageous piece of "optimistic" illusion. A story is told of a strike of three thousand workers in Stamford, Conn. The strike was directed not by Marxists, but by organizations led by agents of capitalism, the A.F.L. and C.I.O. leaders. These agencies, whose job is to head the trade union movement in order to behead it, called out the Stamford workers to a mass meeting not for struggle but in order to paralyze their militancy. Political Notes describes the tranquil mood of the workers and the supposed reaction of the bosses:

"On the part of the workers it was a perfectly orderly- even gentlemanly- affair. They walked into the center of the city with their hands in their pockets, listened quietly to speeches for two hours; no slogan-shouting, singing, milling around or arrests. Yet the bourgeoisie trembled and yelled to high heaven. They understood that a mass street demonstration on a strike issue was an important political event." (My emphasis-G.M)

This is the sort of bunk that the Stalinists used to spread among the workers during the Comintern's wild ultra-Leftist "Third Period."

Who led the workers in this gentlemanly demonstration in Stamford that made the bourgeoisie "tremble"? The AFL and CIO leadership! When the Stalinist fakers in the "Third Period" led their strikes and demonstrations there were insane physical encounters with the police, with the bourgeois state. Workers' heads were cracked, scabs, cops were beaten up, even some lives were lost and Stalinist leaders often went to prison. But only a deceived worker believed that the capitalists really trembled. Behind the scenes, the Stalinist bureaucrats made sell-out agreements with the bosses who knew perfectly well what the Stalinist fury and violence actually represented. And now comes the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" and spreads the fairy tale that a meeting of silent, virtually immobile workers who stood like "gentlemen," lulled to sleep by the trade union skates, the agents of the bourgeoisie, struck terror into the hearts of the capitalists! Even if the demonstration was wildly militant, under the crooked union leadership it would have acted only as a safe channel for letting off the workers' discontent and leaving them paralyzed.

Political Notes simply echoes the Trotsky fakers who "optimistically" write: "The present strike wave already shows that the thinking of the workers has progressed phenomenally." (Fourth International, February 1946) This is pure fraud. Only when the workers show an inclination towards true proletarian politics and begin to indicate that they recognize that their present leaders are betraying them can one speak of the workers' thinking making progress.

On page 2 of Political Notes we saw the economist gem that physical pressure and the rising cost of living would produce a revolutionary leadership out of the rank-and-file. But the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" does not confine itself to the spreading of narrow

economist ideas as it would seem from that assertion. On page 3 they say that a change is due in the character of the strike wave and explain what will contribute to that change and will teach the workers to struggle with a possibility of success:

"A major factor in changing the character of the strike wave will be the impact of revolutionary events abroad -- Indonesian and Indo-Chinese colonial revolts, Civil War in China, present mass protests within the U.S. armed forces. Workers do not struggle merely because of appalling misery and exploitation. There must also be a consciousness of ability to struggle with some possibility of success. Confidence drawn from international events will result in sharper class struggle here." (Our emphasis)

Does it require much thinking to understand that such confidence will be misplaced confidence, for all these international events are betrayals of the masses. What sort of a possibility of success for the masses is contained in the civil war in China misled by Stalinism! If anything, these events should arouse not confidence but alarm, mistrust in the leadership of the colonial revolts and of all the other struggles of the betrayed masses. If the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" were actually Marxist it would have rendered a real service to the workers by baring the political treachery of the leadership and warning the workers not to draw confidence from the betrayals. This group does just the opposite. It glosses over the most essential feature in the Chinese Civil War and other events, the political leadership of the masses!

For an analysis of the actual significance of the strike wave we refer the reader to THE BULLETIN of March-April 1946, containing the article "The Present Strike Wave in the U.S.; an analysis and a policy for the workers."

To sum up so far: -- The Economist deceptions and the distortion of the origin and role of a Marxist leadership is the political line of the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" in the present strike wave. Their political line on this strike wave constitutes a falsification of its total meaning, its historical significance to the working class for the present and the future. A Marxist leadership is brought into existence not through government violence in strikes and a high cost of living, but through the acquisition by certain individuals of a scientific understanding of the main political problems of their own epoch as a whole, as well as of the development of Marxist ideology up to their time. This involves, as a basic point, a scientific understanding of the nature of the chief opportunist currents in the working class. No trade union rank-and-file, under the pressure of strike struggles and a rising cost of living ever did or ever will produce such a leadership. It is the product of prolonged scientific investigation of political problems and currents at their highest level.

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However, is the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" no more than an Economist group, as one would imagine from the appearance of the January 21, 1946 issue of Political Notes? Not at all! It is a group of a definite political category, and its true nature can be clearly detected by examining the contents of another issue of Political Notes.

In this other issue, dated February 1, 1946, there is printed a letter in which the writer raises the question of Trotsky's role in the

Stalinist development, and refers to our investigation of that role. The "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" publishes its reply. Our exposure of Trotsky is completely dismissed as invalid, and in the process a very interesting and familiar method appears. We shall take up a few points in that reply and while we do that let us keep in mind that these people admit they have read our material in THE BULLETIN

Let us begin with the point on "Permanent Revolution" versus "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry." The first was Trotsky's theory, proved correct by history; the second, Lenin's utopia, cast aside by Lenin himself in 1917. It was due to that false theory that the party was travelling an opportunist path prior to the arrival of Lenin in Russia in 1917. Later the Stalin gang used this formula of "democratic dictatorship" to disorient and betray the workers, for this formula serves Stalin in his work of tying the workers to reaction. The reply of the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" shows that its authors disassociate themselves from that entrapping formula. Very well. Now we shall cite what they write of Trotsky's activity during the Stalinist periods: "Trotsky had a brilliant analytical mind, and among his major contributions are analyses of a series of revolutions, revolutionary situations, and imperialist conflicts. We have already mentioned the theory of permanent revolution. The history of the Russian Revolution, analysis and criticism of the economic development during the dictatorship of the proletariat (WHITHER RUSSIA? THE REAL SITUATION IN RUSSIA, etc.), polemics against the theory and practice of socialism in one country, analysis of the problems of the Chinese Revolution, the English general strike, the rise of Fascism in Germany are other highlights of his contributions."

Just a minute, "Group of Revolutionary Marxists", not so fast! You have just said something about Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution and the Chinese Revolution. You know, of course, that Trotsky's Permanent Revolution makes it positive that only the program based on that theory can lead the proletariat, in advanced as well as in colonial countries, to victory. You know, too, that Lenin's attacks on the Permanent Revolution were unjustified, for Trotsky was right. But why don't you mention Trotsky's own admission, written not by Marlen but by Trotsky himself, that in 1926 in order to facilitate a bloc with the Stalinist bureaucrats, Zinoviev and Kamenev, he made a deal with them and announced to the whole Communist International that on the question of permanent revolution he had been wrong and Lenin had been correct! You yourselves state that you have read the material we presented which includes Trotsky's own admission. Why are you silent about it, "Group of Revolutionary Marxists"? Of what interest is it to you to conceal Trotsky's political prostitution of his great theory, committed by him for the sake of tying himself up with the two degenerated scoundrels who confessed to him that a couple of years earlier they themselves had invented the target "Trotskyism" as a means of consolidating the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev power. To refresh your memory, Trotsky made this announcement at the 7th Plenum of the ECCI in December 1926, the sale of the permanent Revolution having been concluded several months earlier during the negotiations for the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev bloc and presented as Marxism to the Opposition ranks. It was published for the whole world to read in Pravda, December 14, 1926. Why do you keep mum about this truly monstrous and conscious betrayal of Marxism on the part of Trotsky? How low Trotsky must have sunk when he deliberately renounced what he knew was the basic programmatic position that could lead the toilers on to the path of emancipation!

As you have seen from the material we published, the despicable statement was not confined to the Plenum of the Comintern and to the Stalin-controlled Pravda, but was officially inserted into the Platform of the Opposition, otherwise known as The Real Situation In Russia which you have just glorified as a contribution to the cause of the proletariat. That platform, as you very well know, stood not on the Marxian position of Permanent Revolution but on the old, discarded, opportunist position of "democratic dictatorship," which served the Stalin gang to keep the world proletariat in perpetual slavery.

You say "The Theory of the permanent revolution was a brilliant application of Marxism, a valuable addition to the arsenal of the revolutionary proletariat, a prognostication which was fully confirmed by subsequent history." No doubt. But why do you hide the fact that when Trotsky, to give Zinoviev a cover for that degenerate's previous fakery against the Permanent Revolution, agreed to condemn before the whole world proletariat the Marxist theory of Permanent Revolution and uphold Lenin's false theory as correct, he acted as a treacherous betrayer of the cause of the proletariat? Why do you hide the opportunist step Trotsky took to square Zinoviev with his deceived Leningrad followers who would not agree to a bloc with Trotsky unless the theory of Permanent Revolution was renounced and dragged in the gutter before the world proletariat by Trotsky himself? You, as well as Cannon and Shachtman, and all the other Trotskyites prefer not to talk about such an embarrassing "detail," but rather call the workers attention to the brilliant fulfillment of Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution in 1917. They can also with relative ease show that Trotsky "defended" the Permanent Revolution after the bloc with Zinoviev had been broken! But while that bloc was in force the Opposition operated with Lenin's disproved, utopian, anti-Marxist formula. And it was precisely during those years of the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev bloc that the Chinese Revolution took place! The Opposition leaders, Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev, consciously created an opportunist trap, essentially the same used by Stalin and Bukharin to deceive and disorient the Chinese Communist workers and lead them to Chiang Kai-chek's execution block!

So -- the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" stands on Trotsky's "Platform of the Opposition"! Well, then that is where that Group belongs. We repudiate Trotsky's "Platform" from A to Z as the document of a political crook designed as a cover for his horse-deal with Zinoviev.

In so far as Trotsky's "Whither Russia" is concerned, on which the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" also stands, that was another piece of completely conscious fakery on Trotsky's part. That is the book in which, by his own explicit admission in the Introduction, he deliberately excluded political factors, confining himself to the citation of "official statistics" in an effort to show that the Stalinist regime was "building Socialism" in the Soviet Union. It was an example of the period of Trotsky's direct peacemaking and conciliation with the Stalin clique, including at that time direct support to their fakery of building Socialism in one country.

The "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" states:

"In reading over Marlen's material, the main impression we get is that nothing new is added. He presents no major positions which were not already in writing and widely circulated by 1936. He concerns himself primarily with details and his loud condemnations of Trotsky are little more than elaborations of the criticisms we made together in 1936."

If that were so you would have performed a great service to the proletariat, and we would have been spared years of work in discovering the shocking truth. The fact is that you, just as Cannon and Shachtman, are denying the truth when it is already unearthed by us and presented as a lesson to the workers who manifest interest in the task of reestablishing Marxism. Where and when did you show by 1936, or at any time that, to take just a few examples, The Real Situation in Russia, i.e., the "Platform of the Opposition," was an opportunist trap which presented an anti-Marxist position on the Permanent Revolution; where have you shown that at the XIIth Congress of the Russian C.P., which Lenin, according to Trotsky's own statements, designated as the battle arena for the removal and destruction of Stalin, Trotsky double-crossed Lenin and united with the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev Trio? Where have you shown that Trotsky united at the 4th Congress of the C.I. with the Troika in launching and defending the opportunist trap, "Workers Government," and in October 1923 when the Social Democrats formed parliamentary cabinets in Saxony and Thuringia on the basis of the bourgeois state and took in three stooges of the Stalinist Trio as a cover, Trotsky lied to the workers that the Saxon "Workers Government" was similar to the government Lenin formed in Russia after the October Revolution, on the basis of the proletarian state.

You read all that; you know that Trotsky peddled the fake "Workers Government" to the deceived Communist workers. You know he compared the government headed by Lenin to the government headed by the Social Democrats. Here is that fraud which drugged the German workers into believing they had already achieved the establishment of a proletarian state. This is Trotsky speaking:

"At the present time the situation is clear. The coalition of the Communists with the Social Democrats in the government of Saxony and Thuringia is comparable to the coalition of the Communists and Left Social Revolutionaries in Russia." (Izvestia, October 21, 1923. Quoted in THE BULLETIN)

It was through this "Workers Government" line that the bureaucrats consciously betrayed the German proletariat. Trotsky supported that line. Where have you, or any of you former political associates, ever exposed this to the workers?

No, gentlemen of the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists," not only have you not shown all this and a thousand other crimes of Trotsky, but you have fought to conceal them and you continue doing it to this day.

A political twister can admit on the one hand that Trotsky upheld Stalin's counter-revolutionary policy and helped the chief bureaucrat to sell the masses down the river, and on the other hand can defend Trotsky by repeating endlessly, as you do, "Trotsky carried on his struggle against Stalinist policy within the party". (Political Notes, Feb. 1, 1946, p.4)

These words of the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists," even if they were repeated a thousand times, can never erase the facts. One fundamental defect in all these white-washing stories about Trotsky is that they lack substantiation. Let us take, for example, the question of the Anglo-Russian Committee. The "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" says that Trotsky insisted "in party circles that the C.I. break with the reformist leaders in the Anglo-Russian Committee. He did not extend this to an

open break with the C.I. policy. Such action was objective betrayal of the British working class." (p.4) Where is the substantiating proof, the "detail" which history demands as a verification, that when the line of betrayal was introduced by the Stalin gang and during the betrayal itself, Trotsky was "hotly opposed to the line followed by the C.I. in Britain"? (Ibid. p.4) If a single document existed to establish such action on Trotsky's part it would have been cited decades ago by his hangers-on. Documents do exist, but they prove the very opposite, namely that prior to, and during the betrayal Trotsky fully supported Stalin's line; that only after the Anglo-Russian Committee had performed its counter-revolutionary function did Trotsky raise the issue of the dissolution of the Anglo-Russian Committee. This ex post facto "criticism" was just a cover-up on Trotsky's part.

The "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" is simply another Left-Trotskyite group. Its line was already stale in the hands of Oehler and Stamm from whom they inherited it. That Group's participation in the class struggle consists of spreading Left-Trotskyite confusion. It does not stand on a Marxist line in the trade union sphere, or elsewhere.

The "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" climaxes its reply with this assertion: "Marlen in 'exposing' Trotsky leaves a vacuum, for he nowhere presents a concrete line."

If by "concrete line" is meant something pursued by the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists," that is, a line of drugging the workers with Economist-dope such as that the rising cost of living will make the trade union rank-and-file throw up leaders to guide the fight against the bourgeoisie, if by a "concrete line" is meant to avoid telling the workers of Trotsky's prostitution of the Permanent Revolution, and to employ Trotskyite equivocations, distortions and outright Cannonite and Shachtmanite fakery to conceal Trotsky's true role in the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Comintern, then we must confess we have no "concrete line" and, in that respect, we definitely leave a complete vacuum. If, however, under the term concrete line is understood the policy of fighting to destroy opportunism within the working class, of tearing the "Marxist" masks off the betrayers and swindlers, then that is our concrete line. And if under the term of concrete line is meant to win the vanguard workers from their Stalinist, Cannonite, Shachtmanite and Left Trotskyite misleaders and organize them into a Marxist party to lead the masses against the bourgeoisie, then this, indeed, is our concrete line. We have no doubt that the "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" would be overjoyed if we abandoned our concrete line and adopted theirs. We'll afford them no such pleasure. They stand on the wrong side of the barricades. By repeating the typical Trotskyite lies and copying the customary Trotskyite evasions they range themselves on the side of Cannon and Shachtman. But it is not difficult for an informed worker to see that Cannon and Shachtman support Stalin and capitalism, that precisely on the basis of concealing the true role of Trotsky, by picturing him as a fighter against Stalinism, they successfully continue the counter-revolutionary work he started in 1923 of capturing the subjectively anti-Stalinist workers and tying them back to Stalin and various labor agencies of international imperialism. We stand on the other side of the barricades. Our concrete line is to break away the advanced workers from Cannon, Shachtman and other props of Stalin and imperialism, to organize these workers into a Marxist force which will lead the masses in a struggle for the Socialist revolution.

In the Political Notes article on the strike wave, on page one, there is a slurring remark on the Trotskyites. This serves that Group as a cover for the fact that to this day they support Trotsky's counter-revolutionary politics and fight against those who have truly exposed the real story of Trotsky in the rise of Stalinism.

On the last page of the Political Notes strike wave article, there is the usual blurb to the effect that only a Marxist party can lead the proletariat to a successful revolution. These holiday phrases act as a cover of the fact that the Left-Trotskyite "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" is a stumbling block on the path of building a new Marxist party. The "Group of Revolutionary Marxists" is simply a smaller edition of the Oehler-Stamm outfits.

George Marlen
March 1946.

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