

T H E **BULLETIN**

THE ITALIAN CRISIS and the TROTSKYITE LINE

THE BETRAYAL OF THE MINERS

By ARTHUR BURKE

OEHLER REVOLUTIONIZES STALIN'S ARMY

SHACHTMAN CLINGS to the TROTSKYIST MYTH

NEW CAMOUFLAGE FOR OLD TRAPS

By GEORGE MARLEN

THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION

AN HISTORICAL FABLE

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CONTENTS

	Page
The Italian Crisis and the Trotskyite Line	1
The Betrayal of the Miners Arthur Burke	6
Oehler Revolutionizes Stalin's Army A. B.	14
Shachtman Clings to the Trotskyite Myth	16
New Camouflage For Old Traps George Marlen	21

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An Historical Fable	24
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**THE ITALIAN CRISIS
AND THE
TROTSKYITE LINE**

THREATENED with collapse by its internal rottenness after two decades of bloody rule, the Italian Fascist regime has taken some rapid and drastic steps to bolster the capitalist system in Italy. Whisked aside from on top by the Italian imperialists whose mere office-boy he was, Mussolini has given way to another Mussolini named Badoglio. A Fascist "house-cleaning" from within is being presented to the masses by the capitalists as a new day of happiness.

Despite the fraudulence and demagoguery of this maneuver, the result has been a certain loosening of the situation for the Italian masses. An opportunity has arisen for the masses of Italy to surge to the forefront in a struggle against their oppressors. The strikes and demonstrations, many of which the Badoglio gang was powerless for the moment to prevent or stop, show clearly that the foundation of capitalist rule in Italy has at least developed some cracks which may be widened by the masses till the whole structure of bourgeois oppression topples to the ground.

A Socialist Republic of democratically-elected toilers' Soviets is the only real salvation for the Italian masses, the only escape from the misery and torment which they have suffered and are suffering under the rule of the capitalists. The knowledge of this, however, while necessary, is far from sufficient for a fulfillment of the revolutionary needs of the masses. In the concrete achievement of the socialist goal, the problem boils down in the main to the question of the political parties within the working class, their character, program and policies. All talk of a socialist revolution which does not have as its kernel the nature of the political tendencies within the working class is just so much empty, abstract chatter. It is only through a Marxist party that the masses can achieve their libera-

tion, and conversely, every revolution and every revolutionary situation has been either misled or deliberately betrayed by non-Marxist, opportunist political parties.

Within the working class not only of Italy, but of the entire world, the chief opportunist disease is the Stalinist system. This structure of renegacy and corruption palms itself off as the inheritor of the great October Revolution and as the builder of a Socialist society in the Soviet Union. Stalinism fears and consciously prevents proletarian revolution and Socialism, for no matter where the liberating process may begin it represents the greatest single danger to the ruling bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union, that huge edifice of oppression, robbery and deception which was foisted on the Soviet masses by the degenerated leaders.

Why is Stalinism the main danger within the working class? Because, masquerading in the usurped glory and traditions of Bolshevism, because, pretending to speak as the authoritative inheritor of the October Revolution, Stalinism attracts the most militant sections of the masses. In every revolutionary crisis since the degeneration of the Comintern, the vanguard sections of the working class fell into the trap of Stalinism. The militant vanguard is the key to the whole mass of toilers, and Stalinism which is able to seize this key exercises the function of the chief betrayer. When the bourgeoisie, or the Social Democrats, the Anarchists or other opportunist tendencies lose their hold on the masses by virtue of a sharp leftward sweep, the Stalinists, disguised as "Communists," grow to their greatest power and influence within the working class. Millions of workers, disgusted with the liberals, Social Democrats or Anarchists, are swept into the clutches of Stalinism which they mistake for the old Bolshe-

vik tendency. The most vivid illustration in recent years is that of Spain where from 1931 to 1936, the Stalinists, thriving on the growing revolutionary crisis, swelled from a handful to a tremendous party with millions of followers throughout the country. Indeed, the line followed in the Spanish Civil War by the whole body of the toiling masses, namely the ultra-rightist Popular Front which betrayed them to Spanish capitalism, was laid down by Stalinism, officially at the 7th "Comintern" Congress in 1935.

Stalinism in Italy has been only dormant, not dead. It lies in wait like a hungry beast, and at the first major leftward swing of the masses which takes an organized form, it will leap up in full strength. From the very day Mussolini was removed, the reports came in of "Communists" being in the forefront in the strikes and mass demonstrations. This no doubt includes both honest rank-and-file workers who cluster around the Stalinist movement and the treacherous bureaucrats who are coming out into the open to take the lead. If the situation develops to a point of great growth of the leftward sweep, there is not a shadow of a doubt that Stalin will send in some of his more important flunkies now "in cold storage" in Moscow. A carload or two of Ercolis posing as "old Bolshevik exiles" will return in triumph to Italy — with Stalin's treacherous instructions learned by heart to be carried out unswervingly. These swindlers will put themselves at the head of the so-called Italian "Communist" Party; they will prate about the "many years underground struggle," and will claim and win the following of the key sections of the Italian workers. Stalinism has not been exposed to the Italian workers; its counter-revolutionary nature is not known to them; there has never been a Marxist tendency in Italy which could perform the function of combatting Stalinism. If Stalinism is not exposed and destroyed, the Italian masses will be led to another bloody defeat. The path may be that of China or Germany or Spain or France; whatever the specific form, the betrayal and crushing of the Italian masses, however great the leftward sweep may

become, is assured unless the influence of Stalinism is wiped out by the growth of a genuine Marxist current.

* * *
THERE are those who assert that they represent a Marxist tendency which combats the influence of Stalinism. The claims of such people must be investigated with the utmost care, and precisely by the anti-Stalinist class-conscious workers. First and foremost, the Trotsky movement must be submitted to the closest scrutiny for this tendency has come down in history under the claim of being the anti-Stalinist, revolutionary movement.

Though the Italian crisis is still new and the Trotsky leaders have not had an opportunity to unfold their line, one sinister note of a characteristic type has already appeared in the Trotsky press. This takes the form of playing down the danger of Stalinism in Italy. In a speech, "The Beginning of the Italian Revolution," G. Breitman, editor of The Militant, declared:

"I don't want to underestimate the menace of Stalinism, which is more than ready to repeat the role it played in Spain, but I don't think the Stalinists will get the same chance to repeat it. Stalin has dissolved the Communist International and said there is no longer any need for a revolutionary international. But the masses haven't forgotten either the tune or the words of The Internationale, and we can assume they haven't forgotten the meaning either." (The Militant, August 7, 1943, p. 4. Our emphasis.)

The Trotskyite leaders are neither naive nor idiotic. They know very well that the Italian masses are full of the wildest bourgeois-democratic illusions which play directly into the hands of the present Stalinist ultra-rightist line in Italy. The Trotskyite leaders know that Stalin's "dissolution" of the C.I. is a fraud; the Trotsky press has stated so itself and has shown that Stalin has his international apparatus of flunkies intact and ready to be shipped to any crucial

spot at a moment's notice. As for The Internationale, even this revolutionary song has been made use of by Stalinism for two decades, and it was never sung so lustily as, for example, during the "Third Period" when Stalin was preparing the betrayal of the German workers to Hitler and during the betrayal of the Spanish revolution. Years of Fascist stifling, years of Stalinist, Social Democratic and bourgeois-liberal poison have not given the Italian masses political clarity. The Trotskyites' minimizing the danger of Stalinism in Italy is grist to the Stalinist mill.

This minimizing of the Stalinist danger is by no means the first instance in the history of the Trotsky movement. In Spain, for example, after the Stalinist Party had already mushroomed to a gigantic force, the Trotsky leaders, a few months after the outbreak of the civil war, assured the workers that the lessons of the betrayal of the German proletariat had entered the consciousness of the Spanish toilers:

"Fortunately for the world proletariat, Stalinism in Spain does not command the forces it held in leash in Germany — and precisely because the lessons of Germany have entered the consciousness of the Spanish proletariat." (Socialist Appeal, October 1, 1936)

This statement was completely the opposite of the truth. The Spanish toilers had not learned the least particle of the lessons of the German betrayal. Stalinism was the dominating force in Spain. Stalinism laid down the line for the whole of the Spanish toilers, the ultra-rightist zigzag of Popular Frontism. Stalinism was the chief trap into which the Spanish toilers fell and the main betraying force in the ranks of the Spanish proletariat. To the extent of their influence the Trotsky leaders were blinding the workers to an epoch-making betrayal which was imminent.

The Stalinist system today is in an ultra-rightist zigzag. In Italy the Stalinists, according to the re-

ports, have formed a so-called "National Front" composed of the "Communist," the Social-Democratic, the Liberal, the Christian-Democratic and the Action Parties. This hodgepodge of political demagogues is howling for a "democratic regime." The kind of "democratic regime" envisaged by this "National Front" is well brought out by the fact that two of the parties, the Liberal and Christian-Democratic, are described by the Stalinists themselves as "at present, the most extreme right-wing parties." (Daily Worker, July 31, 1943) In a word, the Stalinists are playing a second edition of the ultra-rightist game of "Popular Front," with a view to tying the masses to some kind of bourgeois-democratic regime which will betray them to some Italian military gang, and of course, to the international imperialists, the German to the north and the Anglo-American to the south. The Stalinist bureaucrats will begin to shout about "democracy-versus-fascism" or some such demagogic slogan, using this deception to conceal the fact that the bourgeois-democratic regime secretly operates hand in glove with the Fascists and international imperialists.

The Spanish Civil War is an excellent example of how this Stalinist ultra-rightist line functions. Under the cover of the slogan "democracy-versus-fascism," the Spanish bourgeois-democratic regime ("Popular Front" government) brought the Fascists into one part of Spain after another in order to save Spanish capitalism from the threat of the workers. The workers in the Loyalist army were paralyzed and ordered to retreat when the smashing of the Fascists was an easy matter until Franco's hordes covered all of Spain.

What was the Trotsky line in that period? They knew that all the Stalinist noise about "democracy-versus-fascism" was a sheer invention, that there was no such relation of forces as bourgeois-democracy against fascism, since bourgeois-democracy paves the way and opens the path for fascism. Verbally, the Trotsky leaders admitted this indisputable fact. In a widely

distributed pamphlet, the Trotskyites stated this principle in unmistakable terms:

"If we examine social questions historically, as Marxism does, we find in a sense the contrary: fascism is the resultant of bourgeois democracy in the period of capitalist decline; bourgeois democracy is the precursor of and the preparation for fascism." (James Burnham, The People's Front, pp. 16-17. Pioneer Publishers, 1937)

The whole idea of an "issue" of democracy-versus-fascism was known by the Trotskyite leaders to be a myth:

"The People's Front justifies its policy by stating that the fundamental issue at the present time is 'Bourgeois democracy vs. Fascism.' We have seen that there is no such issue, that the only issue is 'Socialism vs. Capitalism.'" (Ibid., p. 32)

All these correct declarations, however, were merely verbal camouflage for their real political line.

Their actual policy was a word-for-word repetition of the Stalinist thesis. Trotsky himself elevated the poisonous Stalinist thesis to the plane of a general principle:

"Immediately after the accession of Hitler, Trotsky wrote that the issue presenting itself to the masses was no longer Bolshevism versus fascism, but fascism versus Democracy." (The New International, October 1935, p. 301)

Directly in regard to Spain, Trotsky seconded the Stalinist thesis:

"In the Spanish Civil War the question involves democracy or fascism." (L. Trotsky, Internal Bulletin of the S.W.P., October 1937)

Such was the Trotsky thesis on the Spanish Civil War, loyally carried out in practice by Cannon and Shachtman.

The Trotskyites never lost the

correct understanding of the true character of bourgeois democracy as the paver of the way for fascism. Two years after the Spanish Civil War, the Trotsky paper had occasion to repeat this truth:

"To admit the truth would be to confess that bourgeois democracy is not the opposite of fascism, but paves the way for fascism in this epoch of capitalist decay." (The Militant, May 24, 1941)

At the same time they never repudiated their fundamental line of support to bourgeois democracy in the Spanish Civil War. On occasion they even brazenly admitted this line of support. In the very same issue of The Militant which contains the above formulation of bourgeois democracy as the builder of fascism, the Trotskyites openly proclaimed their support to the bourgeois-democratic "Loyalist" outfit during the Spanish Civil War. Unblushingly referring to themselves as revolutionary Marxists, they declared:

"In that struggle, by the way, the revolutionary Marxists were in favor of giving material support to the Spanish Loyalists because we recognized it to be a struggle between fascism and capitalist democracy and between the two we prefer the latter." (Ibid. Our emphasis.)

Of course, the Trotsky leaders knew perfectly that there was no real struggle between bourgeois democracy and fascism in Spain where the bourgeois-democratic forces, led by Stalin's flunkies were sabotaging the struggle of the workers and clearing the way for the advance of Franco's forces. It was only by inventing yarns about the existence of a real struggle between bourgeois democracy and fascism that Stalin could corral the Spanish masses behind the Popular Front Loyalist sabotaging government, and it was only by repeating Stalin's "democracy-versus-fascism" fakery that Cannon and Shachtman could tie the honest Trotskyist rank-and-file to the treacherous Stalinist-backed bourgeois democracy in Spain. By their political role the Trotsky leaders helped to pave the way for the Franco regime.

Our warning to the revolutionary workers: Beware of the Trotskyite line! As the situation in Italy unfolds and the policies of the Stalin gang become more crystallized, Cannon and Shachtman, under the cover of "revolutionary" phraseology, and violent-sounding verbal attacks against Stalinism, will come out with a subtle version of the Stalinist fakery to help divert the Italian workers from the revolutionary path. Let the costly lessons of Spain sink into the mind of the revolutionary workers. Today the Trotskyite leaders are writing glibly about a "Socialist Italy." They wrote glibly about a "Socialist Spain," but tricked their trusting followers to give support to capitalist democracy

which opened the road to Fascism.

In the Italian crisis, if the Stalinist Popular Front comes dominantly to the fore by virtue of a collapse or very great weakening of the present military regime, it is a dead certainty that the Trotsky leadership will politically take its place in the Stalinist orbit and, under the cover of "criticism," add its mite to the general Stalinist rightist uproar. The past performances of the Trotsky leaders are a concrete forecast of this, and the fundamental opportunist nature of the Trotsky leadership is an absolute guarantee of it.

August 8, 1943

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THE BETRAYAL OF THE MINERS

- 1) Lewis' Strike-breaking Policies
- 2) Trotskyite Support of Lewis

DESPITE the fact that the overwhelming mass of the coal miners was heartily in favor of a nationwide strike and that the sentiment of the big majority of all trade union workers was with the miners, the crisis in the mine fields has been resolved in a profound and ignominious defeat for the miners.

At no point did the rank-and-file miners show the least sign of weakness or wavering on the question of the only feasible tactic, the strike. What, then, accounts for the utter rout which the miners have suffered? The answer lies in the nature of the leadership, its policy and tactics.

Since the question of leadership is crucial, every tendency in the working class which intervened in or expressed itself on the mine crisis must be held to accounts in the first place for its attitude toward the mine union leadership.

The leadership of the United Mine Workers is completely concentrated in the hands of John L. Lewis. The history of Lewis, in some of its highlights, is worth reviewing briefly as a necessary background to his role in the recent mine crisis.

Lewis began his career in the union movement as a personal emissary of the reactionary Samuel Gompers who labored prodigiously and successfully in establishing the policy of class collaboration as the official policy of the A.F.L. In 1919, Lewis broke the miners' first great strike after the imperialist war and stated as his dictum: "We cannot fight the government." In 1920 he finally succeeded in officially gaining the presidency of the United Mine Workers by a vote conducted through the mails and counted by his friends at union headquarters. In 1922 Lewis broke another large scale mine strike by signing separate agreements with the mine operators in Ten-

nessee and Kentucky and officially established the policy of separating the bituminous and anthracite miners, a policy which has hamstrung the miners to this very day. In this same strike in 1922 a walkout of 100,000 non-union miners in southern Pennsylvania was betrayed by Lewis at the strike's conclusion under the excuse that the industry included "twice too many mines and twice too many miners." From 1925 to 1933 the Mine Workers lost two-thirds of its membership, in part because of the disgust of the miners with the Lewis bureaucratic machine and its policies. It was only the passage of section 7A in the N. R. A. that enabled Lewis working hand in glove with Roosevelt, to recoup his losses and extend his organization amongst the miners.

In the political field, which is decisive, Lewis has always supported one of the two openly capitalist parties of the American bourgeoisie. While Lewis occasionally may have switched political support from one set of bourgeois politicians to another, he has consistently practiced class collaboration.

Lewis' conduct in the recent crisis is very revealing as an expression of his line. On March 10, 1943 negotiations were opened with the operators. The miners, starving from price gouges and frozen wages, were in a militant mood, determined to get their demands from the bosses even if it meant striking. The operators, however, were unimpressed with the strike threat and rejected forthwith the very modest demands made. The line of the arrogant operators was simply to dump the issue into the lap of the strike-breaking War Labor Board which explicitly meant a rejection of any wage increase, since the WLB had officially committed itself to maintaining the infamous 15% Little Steel formula. Instead of calling for a strike at the expiration of the negotiations with

the owners, Lewis in the latter part of March 1943 acceded to a request by Roosevelt and extended negotiations for another thirty days. During this period, the operators continued adamant in their position, making obvious their strategy of playing for time and thus demoralizing the miners. The expiration of this period saw nothing accomplished, and the miners still determined to strike.

On May 1, 1943 the day immediately following the termination of the negotiations, Roosevelt took over the mines primarily to intimidate the miners. Lewis replied the next day, May 2, 1943, not with the announcement of a strike, but with an announcement of a fifteen day "truce" with what he dubbed "the new employer," the United States government. This again sidetracked the miners who were all keyed up for a strike, and drugged them with the pernicious illusion that Wall Street's government was somehow a thing "apart" from the mine owners. The "new employer" soon showed its hand by reiterating the demands of the bosses for placing the issue in the anti-working class hands of the WLB. Lewis' answer was — another fifteen day "truce."

On the expiration of the second truce at the end of May, the miners remained out of work a few days and on June 5th they were ordered by Lewis to return to work while another truce extending to June 20th was declared. When this third truce expired, the miners again went out on strike. Naturally, the game of "truces" could not be kept up indefinitely by Lewis and the bosses. The question of calling a fight-to-the-finish strike was constantly hanging fire. Obviously, Lewis' policy was to prevent a genuine strike. Consequently, on June 22 Lewis ordered the miners back to work with the demands definitely thrown out and the terms set by the WLB left as the conditions of work. Lewis named October 31 as the new "deadline," a four month period which clearly gives the capitalists and their government agents plenty of time to maneuver and completely break the back of the rank-and-file miners.

With the miners in high spirits at the start and eager for a decisive struggle, Lewis, behind a smokescreen of "anti-administration" noise, pursued a tactic of dragging out negotiations, frittering away the energy and enthusiasm of the miners, pretending to be for a strike but always appearing on the scene with a "truce" at the crucial moment, at no point consulting the rank-and-file in any democratic form whatsoever, leaving the offensive completely in the hands of the bosses, paralyzing the miners with manufactured retreats and opening the path of the capitalists to inflict a crushing defeat on the miners. One would have to search hard to find a more vivid picture of a treacherous union leadership than that of the Lewis gang in the mine crisis.

THE CANNONITES IN THE PICTURE

WHILE scattering the fighting ability of the miners to the winds by his repeated "truces," every one of them negotiated behind the back of the miners, Lewis used a face-saving device. He persisted in his refusal to appear before the War Labor Board. This was simply a maneuver to lead the rank-and-file to imagine that he was actually leading a genuine struggle against the wage-freezing policy of the government. Nothing more than a face-saving maneuver was involved, for Lewis actually is not opposed to bourgeois "labor" boards. Indeed, in the very midst of the present coal crisis, Lewis showed his real policy when he proposed, not the complete and principled withdrawal of labor representatives from the WLB, but the setting up of another board with members "more friendly" to labor. This, of course, is an old trick, which gives an opportunist the appearance of opposing the capitalist state machinery, while actually giving it, or attempting to give it a coat of whitewash. This was the typical act of a union bureaucrat.

During the early part of the mine crisis, the Trotskyite press clearly indicated this double-dealing tactic of Lewis on the question of the War Labor Board.

"Despite the fact that the War Labor Board's policies and activities have made it necessary for the miners to denounce it and refuse to submit to its jurisdiction, Lewis right now, in the midst of the present coal controversy, proposes the setting up of still another board. Apparently he does not break with the idea of labor being imprisoned in such bodies; but he has a quarrel merely with their personnel. He is only asking that these boards grant slighter concessions to labor and especially to its officialdom." (The Militant, April 3, 1943, p. 4)

As we see clearly from this statement, the S.W.P. leaders recognize that Lewis is not opposed in any basic sense to the bourgeois "labor" board machinery which is a means of tying the workers hand and foot to the bosses. But does this recognition form the fundamentals of the S.W.P. line on Lewis and his attitude towards the WLB? Not in the least. The Cannonites in colorful language present Lewis as actually combatting the governmental anti-labor machinery. What do the S.W.P. leaders seize upon to make their story seem plausible? They seize upon Lewis' face-saving pose, his refusal to appear before the WLB. The fiction of Lewis-the-hero is spun by the Trotskyite paper in these words:

"But from the very first day of the current coal negotiations, Lewis challenged this repressive machinery, studiously ignored the WLB, unlike every other trade union leader, conducted himself as the spokesman of a sovereign power, as if his headquarters suite in New York were fully on a par with the White House. This one act of courage of one union leader threatened to topple the whole intricate labor relations edifice and upset Roosevelt's coalition with the labor movement." (Fourth International, June 1943, pp. 168-169) *

It is a most significant fact that at no time during the entire course of the coal crisis did the Trotskyite leaders issue so much as a syllable of condemnation against Lewis'

repeated "truces" which shattered the miners' fighting front.

Concealing the fact that Lewis' role in the whole coal crisis has been one of strike-breaking, of alluring the miners with a seeming strike policy while dousing them with cold water at each crucial moment, the Cannonite paper pictured Lewis' treachery as an "aggressive and independent" policy:

"Thanks to his aggressive and independent policies, Lewis has done much to rehabilitate his reputation." (The Militant, May 15, 1943, p. 3)

By June 5th, when Lewis issued his third "truce," thousands of miners, eager for a real struggle which could only be a fight-to-the-finish strike were in a state of open revolt against the Lewis gang as a result of being dragged from pillar to post by the union leadership. Lewis actually had to engage in frantic moves to get the miners back to work. The bourgeois press was compelled to drop its pretended hostility toward Lewis for the moment and showed considerable concern for Lewis and the plight in which he found himself. Capitalist reporters at great length and in sympathetic tones described the antics in which Lewis indulged to drive the miners back into the pits. Under a headline, "Lewis Facing Crisis as Rebellious Men Return to Mines," the New York Post reported:

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

"It was the most serious crisis faced by the United Mine Workers'

* When the coal crisis had cooled down after Lewis declared his last "truce," he agreed to appear before the same WLB he had been "denouncing" so vehemently. This only proves how his "refusal" to appear before the WLB was a face-saving maneuver indulged in to tide him over during the heat of the crisis. And it also proves the fakery of the Trotskyites' song of praises for Lewis.

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

The New York Daily News headlined the affair: "Lewis Fighting to Get Miners Back to Work," and related:

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

This dissatisfaction amongst the rank-and-file, of course, had been developing throughout the crisis and could have been foretold by any objective observer of the development of the situation. The Cannonites, however, were shouting for Lewis at the top of their lungs, with the result that they actually came out with the yarn that Lewis' alleged "masterly conduct" of the mine crisis was strengthening his prestige with the rank-and-file:

"By his masterly conduct of the miners' battle Lewis has won greater support from the miners than he has ever had during the past twenty years." (The Militant, May 22, 1943, p. 4)

Thus while there was growing a healthful tendency of rank-and-file revolt against the corrupt, double-crossing Lewis gang-machine, the Cannonites were spreading propaganda in the direction of augmenting the bonds which chain the miners to their present betrayers. Here we have a vivid example of the reactionary function of the Cannonite leadership in the trade union movement. This function is one of helping to stifle any movement to break with the wretched bureaucrats who pollute the unions.

The Militant in one of its issues presented material to prove that the

rank-and-file miners were in favor of a strike. This fact was perverted by the Trotskyites into a defense of Lewis, that the strike sentiments of the miners were guiding Lewis in his activities. In this vein the Trotskyite paper wrote:

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

This brazen fabrication is the best whitewash Lewis could desire. Did the miners' sentiments dictate Lewis' repeated "truces"? Were the miners' sentiments guiding Lewis when he called for the formation of another War Labor Board? Did the sentiments of the miners guide Lewis in his behind-the-scenes maneuvers with the agents of the Wall Street government? Did the miners have anything whatsoever to say about any of Lewis' machinations? Any thinking worker honestly answering these questions will admit that every one of Lewis' actions was against the sentiments and interests of the miners. Only the most corrupt apologist for the Lewis clique will identify the policy of Lewis with the sentiments of the rank-and-file, either in general or in the specific situation of the mine crisis.

When Lewis struck his final blow by ordering the miners back to work on June 22 with the four-month period to October 31 given to the bosses to finish off the miners, the Cannonite paper came out with a long apology for Lewis. The main headline of the June 26th issue of The Militant reads: "Union Forced To Call Off Strike." Immediately the question arises, Why was the union forced to call off the strike? Who forced it? Was the factor which "forced" the union to call off the strike perhaps some weakness on the part of the rank-and-file miners? The Trotskyite paper answers a resounding No to this question:

"The miners proved again the stuff they are made of. Threats did not deter them. Neither were they frightened by the might which the

federal government was prepared to hurl against them." (P. 1)

The miners, states The Militant, gave an "unexampled demonstration" "of unbreakable solidarity, of working class heroism."

The question still remains unanswered: Why, according to the Trotskyites, was the union forced to call off the strike? At long last, on the second page of the issue, a reason is given. It would seem, according to the Trotskyite paper, that the miners were isolated from the rest of the labor movement.

"The first weakness of the miners is their isolation from the rest of the labor movement."

But everybody knows that the miners had the overwhelming sympathy of the working class and particularly of the trade union workers. In fact the atmosphere amongst the masses was so strongly in favor of the miners that even the bourgeoisie could not openly attack the miners themselves. The bourgeois spokesmen had to adopt the indirect tactic of attacking Lewis who they pretended was "fomenting a strike." The Stalinist bureaucrats also could not attack the miners directly, but had to adopt the bourgeois trick of shouting against the "strike agitator," Lewis. Everything speaks for the fact that the miners were not isolated from the rank-and-file of the general labor movement by any intra-class hostility. How were they isolated, according to The Militant? The AFL and CIO leaders refused to back a strike by the miners, says the Trotskyite paper:

"No other international union has repudiated the War Labor Board thru its official leadership, has defended labor's inalienable right to strike, has given full, unstinted support to the miners and their fight. The main responsibility for this disgraceful state of affairs rests upon the AFL and CIO top officialdom." (p. 2)

Here then, we have the "reason" given by the Trotskyites for their statement

that the Lewis leadership was "forced" to call off the strike. Does this "reason" bear the slightest relation to the actual facts in the case, or is it an attempt to whitewash Lewis by making Green-Murray the chief villains of the piece?

The miners were in a courageous, militant mood; they had huge numbers and forces, a powerful organization and, what is more, the overwhelming sympathy of the big majority of the whole working class. But the miners would not take the offensive, according to the Trotskyite "Marxists," because the bureaucrats of the AFL and CIO were opposed to a strike! This recalls to mind the arguments given by the Stalinist fakers when accused of letting Hitler into power in Germany without a struggle. When it is pointed out that the Stalinists had huge forces in Germany, that the Social-Democratic rank-and-file feared Hitler and wanted to fight the Fascists, the Stalinist swindlers reply: But the leaders of Social Democracy refused to fight. Thus, following the Stalinist apologetics, the German workers had to wait until the Noskes, Kautskys and Zorgiebels would become honest leaders of the masses before the battle against the Fascists could be undertaken. By thus pointing an accusing finger at the Social-Democratic betrayers the Stalinists covered up their own treachery.

The Militant's "reason" for its allegation that the miners' union was forced to give up the strike is a cover-up of Lewis' treachery. Lewis forced them to give up the strike by reason of his role as a bribed flunkey of Wall Street imperialism. The Trotskyites, who have been licking Lewis' boots ever since he gave them a berth in the CIO during the squabble with Tobin in Minneapolis, are whitewashing Lewis by making Green-Murray appear as the villains. Any thinking worker will realize that in a situation where the ranks of the powerful miners union were virtually one hundred per cent in favor of a strike and where the workers as a whole throughout the country were sympathetic to the miners, the only correct course was to call a real

strike, thus inspiring the rest of the masses and turning them against Green-Murray. These latter gentlemen would soon have had not merely to talk against the strike, but would have had to take action. To expose them would have been a simple matter. But, when the miners were forced by Lewis to abandon the strike weapon, the entire issue was left confused in the mind of the workers, Green-Murray were left unexposed, and the bourgeoisie were triumphant.

To top off the whole matter, at the very peak of Lewis' betrayal of the mine workers, the Trotskyite paper shouted:

"Lewis and the Policy Committee fought stubbornly and courageously."
(The Militant, June 26, 1943, p. 2)

This licking of Lewis' boots is a direct slap in the face not only of the miners in general but in particular of the more than 250,000 miners who rebelled against Lewis' treacherous stab in the back and refused to obey Lewis' orders to return to work. Cannon and his gang are concealing the fact that there was actually an open revolt in the mine union against the strike-breaking Lewis. Cannon and Company are working with might and main to prevent the ousting of the crooked Lewis leadership. Their whitewash of Lewis amounts to strike-breaking in the most direct sense of the word in the specific situation in the mine field. Cannon's clique, to the extent of its influence, has assisted Lewis in paralyzing the miners and has opened the path for the bourgeoisie to take the harshest repressive measures against the miners.

* * *

The Cannon gang is composed of experienced opportunists. They know that their peddling of the Lewis-legend may "bounce back" at them in the future when the tragedy of the sell-out of the miners will be felt with full force. Hence Cannon has already laid the basis for wriggling out of his present shrieking for Lewis. In the very article cited above, the lengthy apology for Lewis, the germs

of Cannon's future trade union flip-flop can be seen. The article ends with the significant observation that the "Lewis type of trade union leadership" is not sufficient for the workers:

"In pondering the lessons of the miners' struggle, the militants in the auto and rubber unions, as throughout the whole labor movement will come to the conclusion that what is necessary today is to go beyond the Lewis type of trade union leadership. They will see the necessity for building a type of leadership which is aware of the irrepressible conflict that exists between labor and capital. This new leadership will not practice company unionism on the political field." (Ibid., p. 2)

So, after all the Trotskyite boosting of Lewis, it would seem that Lewis is a practitioner of "company unionism on the political field." And what does he practice in the "economic field"? Or do the Trotskyites pretend that there is a Chinese Wall between the political and the economic field? As a matter of fact, their whole line in the mine crisis has been precisely such a pretense. They create the fiction that a John L. Lewis who is a whole-hearted supporter of imperialism in his basic outlook and concrete policies and a close personal friend of a host of wealthy bourgeois businessmen and politicians is at the same time a real friend of labor in such a crucial situation as that which arose in the mine field. The Trotskyite leaders conceal the fact that Lewis acts on the directives of the capitalists and their government agents, that he arrives at an understanding with them and works out a common line with them in secret negotiations and private discussions and that his "anti-administration" and "pro-labor" noise is the merest demagoguery without which he could not inveigle the workers to follow him. Amongst the radical workers, the Cannon clique acts as a link in the chain which transmits the influence of Wall Street through the Lewis-type of labor faker into the body of the proletariat.

THE SHACHTMANITES ADD THEIR BIT

If anything, the Shachtmanite leaders are even more shameless in their support to Lewis than are the Cannonites. We may rest assured, however, that the Shachtmanites are just as fully aware as Cannon of Lewis' class-collaborationist line. During the negotiations in the mine crisis, the Shachtmanites were constrained to take note of Lewis' machinations with the reactionary farm bloc:

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

Further, Labor Action showed that the results of a Lewis proposal offered during the negotiations would be of little benefit to the miners but of tremendous profit to the owners:

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

Still further, Labor Action showed that Lewis supported capitalist legislation which would have had the effect of raising the cost of food by nineteen per cent.

"In the move by Lewis to win the support of the reactionary farm bloc in Congress he has come out in support of the Bankhead and Pace bills, which would raise the cost of food by nineteen per cent." (Ibid)

It must be noted that all these moves by Lewis, such as a government subsidy to the mine operators, support to the open capitalist legislation which would raise the price of food, a proposal for the setting up of a new War Labor Board, came not in the past, but during the recent mine crisis.

What does Labor Action tell the workers in the light of all these strikebreaking moves of Lewis? That Lewis is waging a battle for all labor — and waging it properly:

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

According to the Shachtmanites, then, a proper battle for all labor presumably consists not in a militant strike democratically conducted and governed by a revolutionary policy which raises the class consciousness of the workers, but in backdoor negotiations, bureaucratically conducted and governed by a class collaborationist outlook!

CANNON-SHACHTMAN "MASS WORK"— A PROP TO REACTION

Cannon and Shachtman engage their followers in "mass work" of various sorts. This gives the workers in the S.W.P. and W.P. the impression that in day-to-day actions they are combatting the bourgeoisie and the opportunists of various shades. Mass work, however, does not exist in a vacuum. It is an organic outgrowth of a political line. Concretely, the Cannon-Shachtman "mass work" consists in giving aid to various forms of reaction and to a variety of betrayers of the masses. The instance which we have dealt with in this article, the support given to John L. Lewis' double-dealing maneuvers in the coal mine crisis, is but one example of the opportunist character of the day-to-day "mass work" in which Cannon and Shachtman involve their followers.

Cannon and Shachtman have a long history of support to rotten labor fak-ers. The most predominant note of this history is Trotskyite support to the Stalinist bureaucrats. While Cannon-Shachtman called themselves a "faction of the Comintern," (1928-1933) they gave open aid to the Stalinists in their various "mass work" adventures and sell-outs. After becoming "Fourth Internationalists," they widened and deepened this policy of support to la-

bor fakers. An outstanding example is the Cannon-Shachtman line of boosting Homer Martin, the notoriously putrid careerist in the auto workers union (1938). The seasoned labor bureaucrat, Lewis, has been supported time and again by Cannon and Shachtman. The Stalinist bandits came in for support in the New York Food Workers Union at the end of 1940 when the Trotskyites entered a Stalinist-led electoral bloc and helped a collapsing bureaucratic leadership back into power.

The political line which the Trotskyites pursue in the trade unions must be viewed as an organic expression of their line as a whole. This line in its essence is unbreakably tied to the Stalinist zigzags which are designed to prevent proletarian revolution. At present, the Stalinists are in the midst of a rightist swing and as a consequence are vociferously backing the most corrupt and open labor fakers. By attaching their followers to people like Murray, the Stalinist bureaucrats tie the workers directly to a policy of class-collaborationism and hamstringing any movement in a revolutionary direction.

The Trotskyite line in its fundamentals is fashioned to conform with this Stalinist line. However, to satisfy the anti-Stalinist sentiments of the Trotskyite rank-and-file, an appearance of opposition to Stalinism must be given. Thus, while the Stalinist bureaucrats tie their followers to labor fakers like Murray, the Trotskyite leaders attach their followers to Lewis. Since the Stalinists are at present leveling a barrage against Lewis with every conceivable epithet, it seems on the surface that Trotskyite support to Lewis indicates an opposition to Stalinist policy. However, when one investigates the fundamental line guiding the actions of Lewis and Murray, one sees the same basic class-collaborationist line. Through dif-

ferent and conflicting clique interests in the trade union movement Lewis and Murray at present are in a bureaucratic gang fight for power and prestige among the trade union workers. Nevertheless, the line of class-collaborationism remains common to both.

In attaching themselves to trade union fakers of the type of Lewis, the Trotskyite leaders tie their followers to the present Stalinist rightist swing which is expressed in one aspect in open support to the trade union bureaucrats. Support to Lewis in place of Murray is simply a means by which the Trotskyite leaders express a sham opposition to Stalinism.

At the present stage of class relations in the United States and England, the opportunist union bureaucrats are the chief strike-breaking agency utilized by imperialism. In fact, there is not the slightest doubt that without the restraining influence exercised by Green-Murray-Lewis-Bevin and their whole retinue, both the United States and England would be swept with nation-wide strike struggles for the improvement of workers' living conditions. In such a situation to support any of the opportunist union leaders means directly to support strike-breaking.

Regardless from what angle the problem is approached, whether from the standpoint of the "broad historical" political line of Cannon-Shachtman or from that of its reflection, their day-to-day "mass work," the Trotsky tendency is a stumbling block in the political development of the proletariat. The Trotsky groups act to frustrate the gravitation of the class conscious workers toward a true Marxist line and the crystallization of a genuine Marxist party.

Arthur Burke
June 1943

OEHLER REVOLUTIONIZES STALIN'S ARMY

THE Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union has brought many aspects of the Stalinist degeneration into sharp focus before the advanced workers. In particular, attention is drawn to Stalin's Army. This army shows marked contrast to the Red Army of 1917-1921. In place of the revolutionary program of struggle against world imperialism, the Stalinist leadership pursues a policy of collaboration with imperialism. In place of the Bolshevik policy of fraternization on the basis of a revolutionary program, the Stalinists deliberately repel the blinded and gagged German workers and peasants in uniform with the epithets of "beast" and "Hun."

The Stalinist bureaucrats have thoroughly strangled the voice of the rank-and-file soldiers and have reinstated the standard bourgeois military privileges and abuses.

Interestingly enough, the Stalinist perversion of the old Red Army has not gone unobserved among bourgeois writers. On appropriate occasions, they gleefully enumerate the changes in the Red Army and point out the enormous differences between Stalin's Army and the original Red Army. C. L. Sulzberger, an unusually shrewd writer of The New York Times, on a tour in the Soviet Union, gave a clear, concisely formulated summary of the trend which Stalinism has set in its army. Sulzberger, writing with extreme frankness, described the resemblance of Stalin's army to "the traditional armies of czarist days" as well as "those of the capitalistic Western world":

"The attitude of the Soviet Government toward the Red Army Guards units strongly indicates a desire to cultivate what could conceivably be called a military aristocracy. In the ranks of the Guards themselves a spirit of superiority prevails. An elite military class is clearly developing, with the distinction between soldier and officer constantly increasing. Gradually the Red Army is maturing and

drawing away from its earliest concept as an amorphous organization of workers and peasants and developing along tight new lines resembling not only the traditional armies of czarist days, but those of the capitalistic Western world." (June 28, 1943)

Another article in the Times, gave some details of the bureaucratic transformation which characterizes Stalin's Army:

"Junior officers are not permitted to sit down in public conveyances while senior officers are standing and must receive permission from their superiors to sit. Officers are expected to insist on their juniors and other ranks saluting and the standard of saluting in the Red Army is among the highest the writer has ever seen. . .

"Finally a regulation standard orderly system has been introduced for all officers from the rank of platoon commander upward. In taking this step, it was officially explained that Peter the Great had first recognized the importance of orderlies, whose main duties was caring for officers' personal affairs, food and clothing.

"It is officially stated that a good Red Army orderly assists his officer in the field and in campaigning life, as well as protecting him as a personal bodyguard. He takes meals to his officer, makes tea for him and polishes his boots...

"All these steps combined represent an enormous change from the initial days of the Red Army, which, when organized, abolished the name officer or permanent rank and had only elected commanders, who held temporary posts." (June 6, 1943)

* * *

The bitter military struggle which the Stalinist bureaucracy has or-

ganized is conducted by the Stalin clique exclusively in the interests of the bureaucrats, for the preservation of their privileges, wealth and usurped power. Naturally, the character of this struggle is covered up demagogically by a pretense that it is for the real interests of the Soviet Union and of the toilers all over the world. The bureaucrats and concealed Stalinists put forth arguments which seem very plausible. This is the Red Army, it is fighting the Nazis in defense of the Soviet Union, the bureaucrats cry. Many workers swallow these illusions and thus fall under the spell of Stalinism. The workers lose sight of the reactionary policy on which Stalin's Army is based and which it enforces against the workers wherever it exists or moves.

* * *

Pro-Stalinist illusions are often spread by sources which on the surface seem infinitely remote from Stalinism and even ferociously anti-Stalinist. A good illustration is the line of the Oehlerites. The Fighting Worker of May 1943 points out many workers hope "the Red Army" will defeat the imperialist forces and establish a Socialist Europe:

"Workers by the millions hope that the Red Army will beat the imperialist armies to Berlin and thus establish Socialism in Europe."

How do the Oehlerites analyze this hope? Do they point out that this hope is a dangerous illusion, that the counter-revolutionary policy of Stalin's Army makes it an instrument against Socialism, that Stalin's Army crushes every tendency toward Socialism in whatever territory it enters? It is clear that only an army which has a revolutionary policy and leadership can carry Socialism forward. How do the Oehlerites explain the nature of Stalin's Army? By some feat of magic they discover a "revolutionary content" in Stalin's Army. The above-quoted sentence is immediately followed by this remark which gives backing

to the illusory hopes of the millions of workers:

"Despite Stalinism a large section of the masses understand the revolutionary content of the Red Army, its revolutionary aspirations which even Stalinism can not entirely obliterate." (Ibid.)

If one attempts the trick of pleading that the fact that Stalin's Army is composed of workers and peasants who may desire socialism is what gives it a "revolutionary content," then one simply resorts to sophistry and demagoguery. The rank-and-file workers in the German C.P. led by Thaelmann also desired Socialism. Can one argue that therefore Thaelmann's party had a "revolutionary content"? Oehler knows that it is the policy of the party, of its leadership which gives the party its revolutionary or counter-revolutionary content. A counter-revolutionary policy imparts a counter-revolutionary content to a party, regardless of the hopes and aspirations of the misled rank-and-file. Stalin's Army, led and completely dominated by the treacherous, reactionary bureaucracy, has a counter-revolutionary content. Concretely, it fights against Socialism in its everyday actions.

* * *

Only when the present leadership of the Army of the Soviet Union is removed and the poisons of Stalinism eliminated by the victory of a Marxist leadership, will this army have a revolutionary content. Oehler obliterates this fundamental principle when he states that Stalin's Army has a "revolutionary content." Oehler contributes to the confusion of the workers who falsely hope that out of the present black situation will emerge the spread of Socialism led by Stalin's Army. Oehler's line thus aids in tying the workers to the Stalinist counter-revolution.

A.B.
July 1943

SHACHTMAN CLINGS TO THE TROTSKYIST MYTH

STALIN'S formal "dissolution" of the Comintern is a fitting occasion to call to accounts those who fostered the degeneration of the Communist International which arose after the Russian toilers' triumph of October 1917.

It is especially vital to examine the claims of people like Max Shachtman who present their tendency as the Leninist expression of the struggle against the Stalinist corruption of the Comintern.

In one of the most recent of his articles, published on the eve of the so-called "dissolution" of the Comintern, Shachtman states that the Trotsky movement was born in a struggle against the Stalinist degeneration of the revolutionary movement:

"The Trotskyist movement in this country, as in every other, was born in a struggle against the poison of bureaucratism and nationalistic degeneration in the Communist Party and the Soviet Union. In one country after another, once the full truth about the fight in Russia became known, the best communist elements rallied under the banner raised by Trotsky and his comrades against the virus of Stalinism. At bottom, their fight was and remains a fight to reconstitute the revolutionary socialist movement on a world scale." (Max Shachtman, Labor Action, April 26, 1943, p. 4)

This is a gross misrepresentation of the actual character of the Trotsky movement and of Trotsky's role in the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern.

As a matter of fact, the full truth about what was going on in Russia not only did not become known when the Trotsky groups were formed in the vari-

ous countries, but was actually concealed by Trotsky and his Shachtmans and Cannons. It is being concealed by Shachtman and Cannon to this day.

Material evidence establishes that in the early phase of Stalinism Trotsky fully collaborated with Stalin in entrenching the bureaucratic regime in the Russian Communist Party and in the Comintern. It was only when the "Trio" composed of Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev organized a plot to remove and discredit Trotsky politically and organizationally, that the latter adopted the guise of an "Oppositionist," while fundamentally continuing to support Stalin's policies in an effort to appease him and find a basis for "collective work," as Trotsky called it in those days.

To take a glaring example, in January 1925, a year after the death of Lenin, when Stalinism was already solidly entrenched, poisoning the life of the Soviet Union and the Comintern, Trotsky in an official declaration to the Stalinist Central Committee made his position abundantly clear. He assured the Stalinist Central Committee that after the XIII Congress of the R. C. P., held in May 1924, several months after Lenin's death, — a congress which was but a gathering of the top bureaucrats of the Stalinist bureaucracy, a congress which concealed Lenin's Testament, and other anti-Stalin documents of Lenin, a congress which passed the notorious "Leninist Levy" bureaucratizing the R.C.P. still further — he had no program of any kind which would be contrary or opposed to that of the Stalinist Central Committee:

"After the XIII Congress there grew up or became more clearly defined new problems of economic, Soviet and international character. The aspiration to counterpose any kind of 'program' to the work of

the Central Committee in the task of solving these questions was absolutely alien to me. This affirmation requires no proofs to all the comrades present at the sessions of the Politburo, the Plenum of the Central Committee, the Soviet of Labor and Defense, or the Revolutionary War Council of the USSR." (L. Trotsky, Pravda, January 20, 1925. Our emphasis.)

This abject declaration of complete support to the Stalinist Central Committee was but the culmination of Trotsky's previous line of collaboration with Stalin in bureaucratizing the Soviet Union and the Comintern.

One of the most important historical landmarks in this collaboration was the situation around the XII Congress which took place in April 1923, almost two years before the above declaration was made by Trotsky. Lenin was preparing a struggle against the Stalinist clique and its bureaucratic policies. The official opening and launching of this struggle was intended by Lenin to take place at the XII Congress. This has been substantiated by Trotsky himself in many of his writings. Lenin entrusted Trotsky with the task of leading the fight against Stalin and his henchmen at the XII Congress and provided Trotsky with documents drawing up the case against Stalin. Due to illness, Lenin was unable to lead the fight himself and could not even appear at the XII Congress. In the eyes of the entire world, the central figure at the XII Congress was Trotsky whose prestige and eminence were second only to Lenin's. The official minutes of the XII Congress, published by the Russian Party and circulated in the Comintern, reveal not a trace of any struggle on the part of Trotsky against Stalin. The minutes reveal that at that Congress Trotsky, instead of carrying out Lenin's policy of exposing and removing Stalin, established complete unanimity with Stalin. Lenin's anti-Stalin documents were buried by the entire Stalin leadership, as well as by Trotsky.

* * * *
TROTSKY'S policy of concealing Le-

nin's line of struggle against Stalin was continued for many years. An excellent example is provided by his brazen denial of the existence of Lenin's Testament. In that declaration of denial of Lenin's Testament, incidentally, Trotsky also shielded the Stalin clique against the charge that other Lenin documents against Stalin were being suppressed. In later years Trotsky explained that his whitewash of the Stalin gang had been "an integral part of our then line toward conciliation and peacemaking" (See The New International, November 1934, p. 125). Naturally, this policy of conciliation was directed toward the Stalin clique and was on Stalin's grounds, as is clear from the vociferously pro-Stalin nature of Trotsky's denial of Lenin's Testament and other documents.

This treacherous policy pursued by Trotsky not only prevented the workers of the Comintern from learning the "full truth," but made them imagine that the bureaucratic Stalin Central Committee was a bonafide Leninist tendency. This conscious and deliberate deception was all the more insidious and powerful because it came from the pen of so illustrious a figure amongst the leaders of the Comintern as Trotsky.

* * * *

TROTSKY'S practice of loudly protesting that he had no policy different from Stalin's Central Committee was a fairly consistent one. The declaration of January 15, 1925 which we have already quoted was not an isolated case. On August 11, 1927, Trotsky and his group declared: "We will carry out all the decisions of the Communist [read: Stalinist] Party and of its Central Committee." (Inprecorr, August 18, 1927, p. 1079.) On December 3, 1927, again Trotsky proclaimed his lack of programmatic difference between himself and the Stalinist organization. "There are no programmatic differences between us and the party." (Declaration of Trotsky and 120 other "Oppositionists," Inprecorr, January 12, 1928, p. 65.) In this same statement these "Opposition" leaders, including Trotsky announced: - "We hold it to be the undeniable duty of every member of

the Party to submit to the decisions of the Party Congress, and shall fulfill this duty." (Ibid., p. 66.) This chloroform, designed to teach the workers submission to the Stalin leadership had a profound effect in politically paralyzing particularly the anti-Stalin workers and delivering them bound hand and foot to Stalin's jailers and executioners.

This base treachery of Trotsky's is palmed off by Shachtman as "a struggle against the poison of bureaucratism and nationalistic degeneration in the Communist Party and the Soviet Union."

* * * * *

TROTSKY'S repeated offers of conciliation with Stalin — every one of them a knife in the back of the workers — only opened the path for the power-mad Stalin clique to centralize all bureaucratic domination in its own hands. Finally it came to the point where so outstanding a figure as Trotsky could actually be thrown not only out of the Party but even out of the Soviet Union.

As a matter of record, upon his exile from the Soviet Union, Trotsky openly declared that he did his best to avoid a struggle with the Stalin gang. (See L. Trotsky, What Happened and How, Six Articles for the Bourgeois Press, Russian Edition, Paris, 1929, pp. 34-35, quoted in our pamphlet, "The Cannonites 'Answer' the Shachtmanites," p.2.)

* * * * *

WHEN Cannon and Shachtman formed their American Trotsky group, they faithfully carried out the established deception that Trotsky and his tendency represented a Leninist struggle against Stalinism, at the same time taking over Trotsky's basic line of support to Stalinism.

Today Shachtman writes that the Trotskyite groups were formed in one country after another "once the full truth about the fight in Russia became known." How many revolutionary workers knew that Trotsky's "fight" was based upon a policy of conciliation and

peacemaking towards the most brutal renegade and usurper in the history of opportunism! What worker knew in 1927 or 1928 that the "Leninist Levy" maneuver of Stalin to which Trotsky gave open and complete support was what Trotsky many years later described as a death blow to the Party! Was there a single worker in the United States who realized that after Stalin introduced his fake theory of Socialism in one country (1924) Trotsky declared (1925-1927) that he had no platform separate and apart from the program of Stalin's Central Committee — a counter-revolutionary program, if there ever was one foisted upon the masses. Shachtman lies when he says that the full truth about the political situation in Russia was known in 1928. Not even a fragment of the real story of Trotsky's secret collaboration with Stalin at the XII Congress was known to the workers. Not a single worker in the world had even an inkling of suspicion that the XII Congress was designated by Lenin as the battlefield for exposing and smashing Stalin and Stalin's gang. By now the truth — and by far not all of it — is beginning to break through the conspiracy of silence, of suppression, of lies. That conspiracy Shachtman upheld from the start and supports it to this very day.

Along with Trotsky, Cannon-Shachtman wove an elaborate self-protective cover of what appeared to be criticism directed against the Stalinist organizations. At the same time, the kernel of the Trotskyist position constituted direct political support of Stalin's "Party" and "Comintern."

Right after Lovestone's Central Committee kicked Shachtman and Cannon out of the Stalinist party, these sham Leninists immediately turned to the workers and assured them that the rotten Stalinist party, whose "basic program" was the Stalinist fraud of "Socialism in one country" would lead them to emancipation. Calling the Lovestone-ridden organization "our party" Shachtman wrote:

"The fundamental healthiness of our party, its proletarian composition, its basic program are a guar-

antee that despite the difficulties, the errors, and the shortcomings it will win the masses and fulfill its revolutionary mission." (Max Shachtman, The Militant, December 1, 1928. Our emphasis.)

The Trotsky group leaders consistently chose such events as popular elections, when the workers' attention was directed to politics more than usual, to spread the most poisonous illusions about the Stalinist organization. Here is a glaring sample of the kind of deception fostered by Shachtman-Cannon concerning the counter-revolutionary Stalinist "Party":

"The Communist (sic!) party is the only one that has not waited for the elections to give 'promises' to the workers. Alone it has endeavored to mobilize the hard-pressed labor movement for militant resistance to the capitalist offensive, day in day out. It alone embodies the link between the daily struggle of the workers and their final struggle for complete emancipation from capitalist oppression. It alone has earned the suffrage of the working class. It is for the principles of Communism, for its militant struggle against the capitalist class, because of the fact that it is our party, the only fighting revolutionary party, the only workers' party, that it behooves every worker to support it in the elections." (The Militant, Oct. 24, 1931, p. 1.)

What was the actual character and record of what the Cannon-Shachtman group was advertising as "the Communist Party," and which was in reality the machine of renegacy, betrayal and treachery, completely in the hands of Stalin? In 1923 it had supported the Stalinist betrayal of the German proletariat. In 1925-27 it had participated directly through its agent, Browder, who was sent to China, and through its political line, to the bloody Stalinist sell-out of the Chinese toilers. In 1926 it helped place the British workers on the executioner's bloc in the interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In 1931, it aided in the betrayal of the growing Spanish revolu-

tion. And when the Trotskyites in that year published the above-quoted eulogy of "the Communist Party," this instrument of counter-revolution and the "International" of which it was a part were preparing the direct steps for turning the German proletariat over to Hitler's hangmen. Such was "the Communist Party" of which the Trotskyists proclaimed, "It alone has earned the suffrage of the working class."

* * * *

THE epoch-making Stalinist betrayal of the German proletariat to Hitler in 1933 made it impossible for the Trotsky leadership to go on as it had in the past with its constant open shouts of support to the Stalinist "Parties." Cannon-Shachtman, following Trotsky's lead, adopted a new "anti-Stalinist" cover, the pretense of complete independence from all the Stalinist organizations. This pretense was embodied in the forming of "independent" Trotsky "Parties" and eventually of a Trotsky "Fourth International."

In the period from the launching of the "independent" Trotsky "Parties" to Shachtman's formation of his own group in 1940, the outstanding betrayal of the workers consummated by Stalinism was that in Spain. The line of the Trotskyites, Cannon and Shachtman still working hand-in-glove politically, was a version of the "Democracy versus Fascism" fraud of the Stalinist Popular Front:

"In the Spanish Civil War the question involves democracy or fascism." (L. Trotsky, Internal Bulletin of the S.W.P., October 1937)

Indeed, this Stalinist "thesis" was elevated by Trotsky, after Hitler's rise to power, to a general historical principle. The New International, of which Shachtman was then one of the editors, made the following statement:

"Immediately after the accession of Hitler, Trotsky wrote that the issue presenting itself to the masses was no longer Bolshevism versus Fascism but Fascism versus Dea-

ocracy." (The New International,
October 1938, p. 301)

treachery to the workers.

* * * *

This support to bourgeois-democracy,
echoing the treacherous Stalinist Popu-
lar Front, constituted a fundamental
precept of the Shachtman-Cannon line.

THIS in condensed form is Shacht-
man's contribution to the de-
generation of the working class move-
ment from its high point of brilliant
victory in October 1917 to its present
stage of utter paralysis and imminent
crushing by Fascism on a world-wide
scale.

* * * *

FOR all his organizational separ-
ation from Cannon, Shachtman continues
to plow along the path followed by the
Cannon organization in many fundament-
al respects. At the end of 1940, when
Cannon and Company participated in a
Stalinist-led bloc in the N. Y. Food
Workers Union, Shachtman supported
this policy in principle. Indeed,
Shachtman even declared that he had in-
dependently urged this line upon mili-
tant workers in the union. (See THE
BULLETIN, Jan.-March 1941 and Septem-
ber 1941.) In 1941 when Cannon urged
support of the Stalinist A.L.P. stooge,
Connolly, Shachtman obligingly provid-
ed an affirmative "principled" basis
for the general opportunist line of
backing Stalinist candidates in elec-
tions. (See THE BULLETIN, May 1941)
In 1942 when Cannon ran a couple of
his flunkies, Breitman and Carlson, in
certain popular elections, Shachtman
pleaded for workers' support to these
Cannonites. (See THE BULLETIN, Decem-
ber 1942.) Right now both Shachtman
and Cannon are shouting lustily for
John L. Lewis in the coal mine situa-
tion though Lewis is perpetrating one
of the greatest sell-outs of a strike
in the history of his long career of

Shachtman, like Cannon, is one of
the careerists who came to be discard-
ed by Stalin in the process of central-
ization of power in the Soviet Union
and the Comintern. There are many such
ex-Stalinist bureaucrats. Some are out
of politics completely; others have
adopted various political "labor" dis-
guises and continue to poison the wor-
kers with opportunism. The particular
species of "labor" fakery carried on
by Shachtman (and Cannon) is the pre-
tense of being Leninists and particu-
larly of having conducted and still
conducting a revolutionary struggle
against all forms of reaction.

For a class-conscious worker it
is absolutely essential to break with
these opportunists who stand in the
way of reviving the revolutionary move-
ment. They are a stumbling block in
the path of a new, genuine Marxist-Len-
inist Party.

June 1943

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SHACHTMAN AS AN HISTORIAN
HOW TROTSKY EMBARRASSED CANNON AND SHACHTMAN
WHITHER SHACHTMAN
THE CANNONITES "ANSWER" THE SHACHTMANITES
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NEW CAMOUFLAGE FOR OLD TRAPS

GRADUALLY, but with unmistakable energy, the disgust and resentment of the American trade union workers toward the hardships of the present situation are reaching a point where conventional economic struggles for reforms will no longer suffice to keep them in leash for bourgeois exploitation. The reformist trade union leaders therefore are lading out "stronger medicine" to keep their hold on the rank-and-file. The agents of Wall Street imperialism, the Greens and Murrays, are talking more and more about the "post-war world" and the wonderful life which they allege is to be created for the masses under the capitalism "of the future." In line with this growing tendency, the Executive Board of the UAW-CIO has come out with a program for the "post-war world."

The Trotskyite press has hailed this program in generally favorable terms. It is significant to observe what the Trotskyites approve, what they criticize and how they propose to improve the program. First, let us cite The Militant's description of this program:

"The International Executive Board of the CIO United Auto Workers, the largest union in the country, has formally sponsored a post-war program. Its key plank, made public on July 3, calls for government ownership and operation of the basic industries. This will make it possible, in the opinion of the UAW board, to ward off unemployment and assure social security, along with adequate housing, schools, highways, hospitals, recreational, public power and conservation projects, etc. The plan further envisages a solution of the farm problem, ample provisions for the veterans, including a bonus of \$2,500, and the establishment of a 30-hour week." (The Militant, July 10, 1943, Editorial)

An experienced eye will at once detect in the above-cited "program" the old reformist hokum of the Right-wing Social-Democratic leaders who

proved themselves masters of the technique of deceiving the workers. Marxism, of course, exposes this swindle and explains to the proletariat that the "government ownership and operation of the basic industries" periodically advocated by the opportunists is a trap, for no abolition of capitalist class rule and exploitation is contained in such a "key plank." This "program" has nothing in common with the Marxian conception of the socialization of the means of production and distribution through the overthrow of the capitalist class and the establishment of a Soviet government. What the anti-Marxist trade union leaders picture to the workers as a solution of their problems is hailed by the Trotskyite self-styled Bolsheviks as a "sound idea"

"The basic idea of this program is absolutely sound." (Ibid.)

Naturally, the Trotskyite leaders cannot let themselves appear in the light of giving unqualified, one hundred per cent support to such reformist clap-trap as the "program" of the UAW, else how would their self-styled "Bolshevism" look. Hence they offer some criticisms:

"However, it is not enough to advocate a sound idea. One must in addition have equally sound means for realizing it in life. The UAW Board falls down precisely where the task begins." (Ibid.)

Having raised the problem, the Trotskyite editors offer the solution:

"Here we come to the second important point: How to attain the abolition of monopoly. According to the UAW board, this is to be accomplished by making 'demands on the government.' Every militant knows that the most justifiable union demand remains an illusion if not backed by the full strength of his organization. The monopolies never fail to back their demands by their strength which is so thoroughly or-

ganized that they are the ones who dominate the government nationally and locally. How? Through their control of the only two powerful political parties on the scene today, the Democratic and Republican. The struggle to abolish monopolies is a political struggle. Where is the political weapon — the Independent Labor Party — without which the workers cannot even talk of realizing any kind of program, let alone the one proposed by UAW? Yet the sponsors of the latter remain strangely silent on this all important point." (Ibid.)

Now we see the Trotskyite criticism of the UAW's reformist "program" and the Trotskyite remedy. The criticism is that the UAW does not propose a concrete vehicle for what the Trotskyites term the "basically sound" idea. The remedy is the "Independent Labor Party." But what is this Trotskyite remedy, in fact? The slogan of forming an "Independent Labor Party" based on the reformist trade unions was periodically blessed and officially sanctioned in the eyes of the class conscious workers by the Stalinist bureaucrats during the ultra-rightist zigzags of the Stalinist. It is through Stalinism that the anti-Marxist slogan of forming and building a Labor Party first came to be foisted on the advanced workers who, before the degeneration of the Comintern, were taught to repudiate the whole concept of a Labor Party and to work for the elimination of the existing Labor Parties to clear the path for building a genuine Communist party.

To summarize the Trotskyite reaction to the UAW's "post-war program." The Trotskyites hail a piece of stale reformist demagogy as having a basically sound idea, and cover up their support to this reformist swindle with a criticism and remedy which upon examination turns out to be a piece of shameless pilfering from the old Stalinist bag of ultra-rightist tricks.

According to the Trotskyites, this Independent Labor Party is to be composed of the trade unions and led by the present trade union leadership. What kind of "program" this leadership really has in mind is strikingly re-

vealed in the very issue of the UAW-CIO paper which prints in full the "program" hailed by the Trotskyites as a basically "sound idea." At the head of the program stands a big cartoon showing the Statue of Liberty from whose torch emanates a stream of light labeled "Atlantic Charter's 8 Points" and "Roosevelt's 4 Freedoms." Such is the fakery of the UAW leadership, the essence of their "program." It is this crew of bootlickers of Wall Street imperialism which is hailed by the Trotskyite pseudo-Marxists as advancing a "program" with a "basically sound idea."

Due to the bureaucratic degeneration of the October Revolution and the Communist International, the great Marxist principles and the entire revolutionary experience of the past have been trampled deep into the mud by the present-day sham Bolshevik organizations. The lesson of Lenin's struggle against Menshevism and against international Kautskyism has all but faded from the memory of the most advanced workers. That the monopolies are not to be abolished but taken over by a Marxist Soviet Government established by the workers under the leadership of a true Marxist revolutionary party is obscured by the Trotskyite editors.

The fact that in this era of decay the capitalist class leans for support not only upon the openly pro-capitalist organizations such as the Democratic and the Republican Parties, but also upon all sorts of "Labor Parties" and at times entirely upon such opportunist parties is carefully concealed by the Trotskyite editors. No better examples exist of the services a "Labor Party" performs for imperialism than the examples of England, Australia and Scandinavia. Indeed, it is the opportunist parties within the working class, whether they are labeled "Labor," or "Socialist" or "Communist" (Stalinist), that have sabotaged and betrayed the toilers and thus have preserved the rotting capitalist system. The pseudo-Bolshevik parties in particular are responsible for the terrible calamities that have been befalling the international proletariat in the last two decades or more.

The Stalinist Comintern, with the indirect aid of the pseudo-opposition groups, the Trotskyites, and others, while building false hopes in the mind of its victims, shoved the masses into numerous traps. These traps included the "Labor Party." It was defended with the same logic, now quite rusty in the files of the Comintern publications, with which the Trotskyite leaders defend it today.

The path toward the solution of the vital problems of the proletariat, toward the abolition of wage slavery and of all oppression lies in the opposite direction from the one into which the Trotskyite leaders are pushing the workers.

George Marlen
July 1943

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AN HISTORICAL TABLE

I N the initial phases of the Stalinist process of bureaucratic entrenchment and centralization in the Soviet Union, the national question necessarily assumed a key importance. The development of the Stalinist bureaucratic pyramid required the strangulation of the miner Soviet Republics and their conversion into bases of the centralized bureaucratic power of the renegade Stalin clique, the "trio" of Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev.

Because of its importance in the genesis of the Stalinist development, knowledge of the behavior of the leading figures influencing the events of this period is of crucial importance to the revolutionary workers.

In an article by John G. Wright entitled "Lenin on the Problem of Nationalities" published in the Fourth International of January 1943, the three-cornered relation of Stalin, Trotsky and Lenin, the three major figures of that period, is presented as Lenin-Trotsky versus Stalin. Wright states categorically that Trotsky's line on the national question merged with Lenin's during the first period of the Russian Revolution and the first four congresses of the Comintern and represented a direct continuation and extension of Lenin's line after the latter's death:

"Trotsky's work on the problem of nationalities parallels that of Lenin for 1903 to 1917. It merges with the latter in the first period of the Russian revolution and the first four Congresses of the Communist International. It represents a direct continuation and extension of it after Lenin's death." (p. 18)

Wright asserts further that Trotsky remained a consistent orthodox Leninist on the national question until his death:

"Trotsky remained to his death a

consistent orthodox Leninist on the national and colonial question." (Ibid.)

We reject as a falsehood any assertion or implication that in the period beginning with the rise of Stalinism Trotsky's line merged with Lenin's. To prove our contention we will examine — 1) Lenin's struggle against Stalin on the national question, and 2) Trotsky's line in this struggle.

LENIN VERSUS STALIN
ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

ACCORDING to all available material it was precisely on the national question that Lenin intended to give his first major battle to Stalin and his bureaucratic partners and assistants. In this sphere, Lenin observed the indissoluble connection existing between Stalin's policy on the national question and his drive to bureaucratize the party. We shall cite Trotsky's own testimony on this point:

"The bureaucratic degeneration of the state has rested like a millstone upon the national policy. It was upon this question that Lenin intended to give his first battle to the bureaucracy, and especially to Stalin, at the 12th Congress of the party in the spring of 1923." (L. Trotsky, "The Revolution Betrayed," p. 170)

In Soviet Georgia, Stalin, assisted by his henchmen Ordzhonikidze, Dzerzhinsky, Kamenev and others effected a typical bureaucratic coup d'etat by thug methods, installing a crew of his bribed flunkies to dominate the Georgian party and government.

Lenin was outraged by this maneuver and perceived in this Georgian scandal the falseness of Stalin's whole course on the national question. Trotsky was a close witness of these his-

toric developments.

"Vladimir Ilyich attached enormous importance to the 'Georgian' question not only because he feared the consequences of a false national policy in Georgia — a fear which had been wholly confirmed— but also because in that question was revealed to him the falseness of Stalin's whole course on the national question." (L. Trotsky, "The Stalin School of Falsification," p. 63)

Despite the fact that he was incapacitated by illness, Lenin immediately began a fight against Stalin on this question, making it the springboard of a fight against Stalin's whole role in the party. To the Georgians, Lenin dispatched a note stating that he was following their struggle against Stalin with all his heart. (Ibid., p. 69)

On his sick bed Lenin composed a letter on the national question condemning Stalin, and this document combined with other notes formed what Lenin termed a "bomb" against Stalin. Lenin intended to have this "bomb" hurled at Stalin at the 12th Congress of the Russian Communist Party to be held in April 1923. (L. Trotsky, "My Life," p. 482)

In general, according to Trotsky, the whole period of the last half year of Lenin's political life right up to the eve of the 12th Congress was filled with a sharpening struggle against Stalin:

"Thus it would be no exaggeration to say that the last half year of Lenin's political life, between his convalescence and his second illness, was filled with a sharpening struggle against Stalin." (L. Trotsky, "The Suppressed Testament of Lenin," p. 29)

Because of unmistakable signs of Stalin's dishonesty Lenin came to the position of rejecting any compromise with Stalin even on a correct line. Trotsky records this point which was established in his discussion with Fotiyeva, one of Lenin's secretaries.

Trotsky added:

"Then the thing has gone so far that Vladimir Ilyich no longer thinks that we can compromise with Stalin even on the right line?"

Fotiyeva replied:

"Yes, he does not trust Stalin, and wants to come out against him openly before the entire party." (L. Trotsky, "My Life," p. 484)

In excluding the possibility of compromise, Trotsky was told of Lenin's belief that "'Stalin will make a rotten compromise and then deceive us.'" (Ibid.)

As a consequence, Lenin was preparing not only to remove Stalin from the post of general secretary but to disqualify him before the party as well. At the Twelfth Congress, Lenin intended to hurl a crushing blow at Stalin:

"Lenin was now preparing not only to remove Stalin from his post of general secretary, but to disqualify him before the party as well. On the question of monopoly of foreign trade, on the national question, on questions of the regime in the party, on the worker-peasant inspection, and of the commission of control, he was systematically preparing to deliver at the twelfth congress a crushing blow at Stalin as personifying bureaucracy, the mutual shielding among officials, arbitrary rule and general rudeness." (Ibid., p. 480-1. My emphasis -A.B.)

Let us reestablish the course of development at this juncture and keep it clearly before us. The last half year of Lenin's political life was filled with a sharpening struggle against Stalin. Stalin's introduction of thug methods in bringing the Georgian Soviet Republic under his sway formed the keynote for a struggle against him by Lenin. Stalin's manifestation of Great Russian nationalism and his concomitant drive to bureaucratize the party resulted in the crea-

tion of a "bomb" against him by Lenin with the intent of annihilating him politically at the 12th Congress of the RCP where the case of the persecuted Georgian leaders was to be brought into the foreground. Lenin's struggle against Stalin reached such a stage as to preclude any compromise whatever, not even one on a formally correct line.

TROTSKY'S AWARENESS OF
LENIN'S STRUGGLE

THAT Trotsky knew of Lenin's struggle against Stalin is already apparent, since the evidence we have adduced has been selected from Trotsky's own writings. The crucial point to establish here, however, is whether Trotsky knew of Lenin's struggle in the period immediately preceding the 12th Congress and what Trotsky's line was.

All evidence unmistakably points to Trotsky's knowledge of this struggle. For one thing, Trotsky states that he was authorized by Lenin to fight Stalin at the 12th Congress. As a consequence, Glasser, another of Lenin's secretaries, was instructed to turn over to Trotsky all the manuscripts that were to make part of Lenin's "bomb" against Stalin:

"And he (Lenin) instructed me to hand over to you all the manuscripts that were to make part of his bomb for the twelfth congress." (Ibid., p. 484)

Further, continues Trotsky, Lenin's intentions with reference to Stalin were quite clear to him:

"Lenin's intentions now were quite clear to me: by taking the example of Stalin's policy he wanted to expose to the party and ruthlessly, the danger of the bureaucratic transformation of the dictatorship." (Ibid.)

Thus, there is no mistaking the fact that Trotsky was fully aware of Lenin's uncompromising intentions with reference to Stalin on the eve of the 12th Congress.

HOW TROTSKY REPRESENTED
HIMSELF TO LENIN

FACTS indubitably indicate that Trotsky gave Lenin the impression that he would work shoulder to shoulder with him in the struggle against the Stalin clique. Trotsky, in his auto-biography quotes a conversation he held with Lenin prior to the latter's second stroke about three and a half weeks before the 12th Congress. Trotsky states that in this conversation he agreed to form a bloc with Lenin against bureaucracy in general and against Stalin's organizational bureau in particular:

"After thinking it over for a moment, Lenin put the question point-blank: 'You propose then to open fire not only against the state bureaucracy, but against the Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee as well?' I couldn't help laughing, this came so unexpectedly, 'That seems to be it.' The Organizational Bureau meant the very heart of Stalin's apparatus.

"'Oh, well,' Lenin went on, obviously pleased that we had called the thing by its right name, 'if that's the case, then I offer you a bloc against bureaucracy in general and against the Organizational Bureau in particular.'

"'With a good man, it is an honor to form a good bloc,' I replied." (Ibid., p. 479)

The impression, therefore, that Trotsky gave Lenin was unmistakably one of a bloc against Stalin.

TROTSKY'S ACTUAL LINE

THE basis for the struggle against Stalin and his bureaucratic aides was thereby laid by Lenin. A "bomb" on the national question was prepared by Lenin with the intention of crushing Stalin politically and disqualifying him before the party. Organizationally this line was to be implemented by the removal of Stalin and the placing of Trotsky as Lenin's deputy and successor to the post of chairman of the Soviet of People's Commissars:

"He Lenin planned to create a commission attached to the Central Committee for fighting bureaucracy. We were both to be members. This commission was essentially to be the lever for breaking up the Stalin faction as the backbone of the bureaucracy, and for creating such conditions in the party as would allow me to become Lenin's deputy, and, as he intended, his successor to the post of chairman of the Soviet of People's Commissaries." (Ibid., p. 479)

The 12th Congress was selected by Lenin as the battleground for the struggle against Stalin. As the eve of this Congress approached the struggle between Lenin and Stalin reached its sharpest form. At this time Lenin wrote his note to the persecuted Georgian leaders proclaiming his solidarity with them against Stalin. Almost immediately afterward Lenin wrote a note rupturing all relations with Stalin. At this juncture, Lenin's illness ripened into its most critical phase paralyzing him and completely eliminating him physically from this struggle. The burden of the struggle obviously then passed to Trotsky, to whom Lenin had turned over his political ammunition.

Trotsky reacted to the news of Lenin's paralysis by summoning Kamenev, one of Stalin's partners, for a discussion. Kamenev had seen Lenin's note to the Georgian leaders. As a consequence, says Trotsky, he was completely at sea, for Lenin's note cut into the plan which Zinoviev, Stalin and Kamenev had concocted to crown themselves legitimate successors to Lenin:

"Kamenev came an hour later. He was completely at sea. The idea of a trio — Stalin, Zinoviev, Kamenev — had long been established. The whole plan of the conspirators was that after they had mustered enough support in the organizations, they would be crowned legitimate successors to Lenin. The little note cut into their plan like a sharp wedge. Kamenev did not know what to do, and admitted it to me quite frank-

ly." (Ibid., p. 485. My emphasis—A. B.)

Trotsky relates that he then gave him Lenin's manuscript on the national question to read over. In addition, Kamenev had learned from Krupskaya of Lenin's note rupturing all personal relations with Stalin. Trotsky then describes Kamenev's reaction to this succession of events: "Kamenev was quite pale and agitated. The ground was slipping away under his feet. He did not know what to do next, or which way to turn."

And, indeed, the outlook appeared to be very dark for the Stalin clique. Trotsky, however, reassured this badly worried conspirator as follows:

"I gave him my opinion of the situation. 'Sometimes,' I said, 'out of fear of an imaginary danger, people are capable of bringing real danger down upon themselves. Remember, and tell others that the last thing I want is to start a fight at the congress for any changes in organization. I am for preserving the status quo.'" (Ibid., p.485-6)

There can be not one iota of doubt that Trotsky's line as expressed here to Stalin's partner, Kamenev, was completely opposed to Lenin's line as it was laid down in the "bloc discussion" with Trotsky. The central feature of Lenin's line was precisely a fight against Stalin at the forthcoming party congress on the organization question. Trotsky himself wrote in connection with the "bloc discussion" with Lenin "the organizational bureau meant the very heart of Stalin's apparatus." No one who actually intended to carry out Lenin's line could say as Trotsky did "the last thing I want is to start a fight at the congress for any changes in organization."

To make it absolutely clear to the Stalin clique that he had no intentions of carrying out Lenin's uncompromising line of wiping out Stalin organizationally and politically, Trotsky made the following unequivocal and very reassuring statement to Kamenev:

"I am against removing Stalin, and

expelling Ordzhonikidze, and displacing Dzerzhinsky from the Commissariat of transport." (Ibid., p. 486)

We see, therefore, two clearly defined political lines clashing with each other. One, for removing Stalin and breaking up his clique — Lenin's line; the other, against removing Stalin or disrupting his clique and against any fight for any changes, in organization at the forthcoming party congress — Trotsky's line.

Having revealed the essence of his line, Trotsky curiously enough says he told Kamenev: "But I do agree with Lenin in substance." (Ibid.)

The discerning reader will readily see that Trotsky's statement to Kamenev voicing his opposition to the removal of Stalin was his real line and his story about agreeing with Lenin in substance was simply window-dressing, a self-protective cover. The discerning Kamenev understood Trotsky very well. Trotsky relates that at the end of their discussion — "Kamenev gave a sigh of relief." (Ibid.)

In order to understand the real meaning of Trotsky's actions in this period, it must be clear that the Central Committee of the RCP had already undergone a profound change in a reactionary direction. Indeed, from Trotsky's own testimony it can be learned that already in this early period of 1922-23, the Central Committee was a Stalin Central Committee:

"They became, Zinoviev and Kamenev with Stalin they created the so-called 'Troika,' or triumvirate, which was the directing body of the Central Committee of the Party and of the country during the period from the end of 1922 to 1925." (L. Trotsky, statement in "The Case of Leon Trotsky," p. 77. My emphasis—A. B.)

The line which Trotsky laid down to Kamenev was soon concretized in practice. Some days prior to the convening of the 12th Congress, the VII-All Ukrainian party conference was

convened in Kharkov. To prepare for the 12th Congress, the Stalinist Central Committee dispatched a leading member of the Politburo to this conference. The manifest intent was obviously to hide the facts about Stalin's Central Committee and Lenin's opposition to its policies and to dupe the Ukrainian party conference into approving the treacherous policy and leadership of the Stalin clique. Who was selected for this dirty and fulsome task? None other than Leon Trotsky.

Trotsky's report was of such a nature as to get this conference to approve what was termed the "correct line" of Stalin's Central Committee and its "firm and capable leadership."

"The business of the conference began with the hearing of Comrade Trotsky's report on the tasks of the xii Congress of the RCP... As a result of Comrade Trotsky's report a resolution was adopted in which the conference greets the correct line of the C.C. of the RCP and with satisfaction records the firm and capable leadership." (Izvestia, April 11, 1923. My emphasis, A. B.)

Thus, the "sigh of relief" which the conspirator Kamenev emitted after his conversation with Trotsky proved well-founded. Far from heralding the removal of Stalin and the forming of a Lenin-Trotsky bloc, the atmosphere of this conference was permeated with the idea of a Stalin-Trotsky bloc. Indeed, one Stalinist delegate, Petrovsky, coupled the names of Stalin and Trotsky:

"Let us hope that Ilyich will recover from his illness. Now the old guard must rally around his name and also around our experienced leaders, Comrade Trotsky, Stalin and others." (Izvestia, April 7, 1923)

A few days after the VII All-Ukrainian party conference, the 12th Congress of the RCP was convened. This was the battleground which Lenin had selected for the crushing of Stalin

politically and organizationally. All the leading characters were present but one. Lenin's absence was physical, not political, for his "bomb" on the national question was in the possession of Trotsky, his alleged partner in the bloc against Stalin. We have already given some portents of Trotsky's real line revealed in his conversation with Kamenev and in his behavior at the VII All-Ukrainian Party Conference.

At the 12th Congress of the RCP, the Stalin, Zinoviev, Kamenev Trio successfully carried out its policy against the Georgian party leaders and consolidated Stalin's grip on the party. Mdivani, one of the Georgian leaders present, complained bitterly against Stalin and demanded the publication of Lenin's letter on the national question. This cry for the publication of Lenin's letter was raised by another delegate, Yakovlev. Trotsky, present all the while, having the letter in his possession, uttered not a syllable. To extricate the conspirators from this unsavory predicament, Zinoviev took the floor and "explained" the reason for the suppression of Lenin's letter:

"Comrade Yakovlev demanded that the letter in question from Comrade Lenin should be published. The Presidium of the Congress of the Party adopted on this question a unanimous decision: not to publish for the time being this document in view of the character of those instructions given by Vladimir Il'yich himself. If the letter up to now has not been published, it is exclusively because of the indicated reasons." (Stenographic Report of the proceedings of the XII Congress. Russian Edition, p. 522. My emphasis - A. B.)

Zinoviev thus referred the delegates to a unanimous decision on this question by the Presidium buttressed by the excuse that Lenin himself did not want this letter to be published. This latter phase of the question was dealt with by Trotsky — not on the floor of the XII Congress — but many years later in a book. Here is what

Trotsky revealed concerning Zinoviev's alibi:

"The exhaustive and fundamental letter of Lenin on the national question is concealed from the party to this day. The pretense that Lenin did not intend this letter to be read to the party is false to the core." (L. Trotsky, "Stalin School of Falsification," p. 68. My emphasis - A. B.)

Plainly, then, when Zinoviev pretended that Lenin did not want his letter on the national question to be published, he was brazenly lying with the intention of shielding Stalin against whom Lenin's letter had been overwhelmingly directed. This letter, as Trotsky states, has never been published to this day, an indictment not only of the Stalin clique, but also of Trotsky who was a member of the Presidium which unanimously prevented the publishing of the letter against Stalin.

Obviously, no one but a person guided by ignorance or dishonesty can fail to label Trotsky's line for what it actually was — a stab in the back of Lenin.

The results of this Congress represented a victory for Stalinism and a betrayal of Bolshevism. Far from being the medium, as Lenin intended, for the crushing of Stalin politically and organizationally, the 12th Congress bolstered the Stalinist Central Committee by approving the political and organizational line:

"The Twelfth Congress fully approves the political and organizational line of the Central Committee which assures the party serious success also for the present year." (Izvestia, April 20, 1923)

This approval was unanimous!

"All our resolutions have been adopted unanimously." (Pravda, April 26, 1923)

Further, a unanimously adopted resolution went so far as to speak of an im-

provement of the organizational apparatus:

"The Congress remarks with satisfaction the improvement of the organizational apparatus of the Central Committee and the entire organizational work of the Party central in general." (Resolution on the Report of the Central Committee, Izvestia, April 23, 1923)

Thus we see that Trotsky's line expressed in his conversation with Kamenev, and at the VII All-Ukrainian Party Conference, and at the 12th Congress of the RCP followed a consistent pattern. A betrayal of Lenin's trust, a conscious deceiving of the revolutionary workers and collaboration with Stalinism. In the Stalinist development Trotsky played the repulsive Judas role, pretending to Lenin that he was in bloc with him and then betraying him.

TROTSKY'S "ORTHODOX" LENINISM"

JOHN G. Wright asserts that Trotsky remained an orthodox Leninist on the national question until his death. How orthodox Trotsky's Leninism was is demonstrated by his characterization years later of the pro-Stalinist 12th Congress as a Bolshevik Congress: "In reality the last Congress of the Bolshevik party took place at the beginning of 1923, the 12th party Congress. All subsequent congresses were bureaucratic parades," (The Soviet Union and the Fourth International, p. 24-25. My emphasis - A. B.)

Far from being an "orthodox Lenin-

ist" to his death, Trotsky continued to betray Leninism to his death and never faltered in the policy of concealing his betrayal of Lenin's line. Trotsky to his death pushed the lie that he had supported Lenin's line against Stalin:

"We have indicated above the signposts of the final struggle between Lenin and Stalin. At all stages Lenin sought my support and found it." (Suppressed Testament of Lenin, p. 32. My emphasis - A. B.)

This mendacious concealment of Trotsky's real role is an organic part of the general Trotskyist line. The purport of this line is to conceal Trotsky's renegacy from Bolshevism and collaboration with Stalinism. John G. Wright's falsifications in the sphere of this phase of history is a congenital and necessary aspect of the Trotskyite system.

Revolutionary workers desiring to combat and defeat the Stalinist reaction must be thoroughly clear as to the origins of the deadly Stalinist disease and the leading participants which made this deadly malady possible. Obviously, people like J. P. Cannon, John G. Wright and Max Shachtman, who all affirm in common that Trotsky pursued a struggle against Stalinism in the spirit of Bolshevism are distorters of the truth and can therefore only prevent workers from moving in the direction of a new revolutionary Bolshevik party.

A.B.

July 1943

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