

# Who Is Leading the Comintern Today?

Continued from Last Issue

By L. D. Trotsky

In his attacks, first against "Trotskyism", then against Zinoviev and Kamenev, Stalin always hit at the same side: against the old revolutionary emigrants. The emigrants are people without roots who think only of the world revolution... But today new leaders are necessary, who are capable of realizing socialism in one country. The struggle against the emigrants, which is in a measure the continuation of Stalin's letter in 1911 against Lenin is an integral part of the Stalinist ideology of national socialism. Only a complete ignorance of history allows Stalin to have open recourse to this manifestly reactionary argument. After every revolution, the reaction commenced with the struggle against the emigrants and foreigners. Were the October revolution to recede to another stage, on the Ustrilovist road, the next, the third set of leaders would certainly set themselves to hunting down the professional revolutionaries in general: for while these cut themselves off from life by taking refuge in illegal work, the others, the new "leaders", were always rooted in the soil!

## Stalin and the Emigrants

In truth, never did the provincial-national narrow-mindedness of Stalin appear so brutally than in this scheme to make the old revolutionary "emigrants" an object of terror. For Stalin, emigration signifies the abandonment of the struggle and of political life. It is organically inconceivable to him that a Russian Marxist, having lived in France or the United States, should have engaged in the struggle of the French or the American working class, not to speak of the fact that most of the time, the Russian emigrants performed important functions in the service of the Russian revolution.

It is curious that Stalin does not observe that in striking at the old "uprooted" emigrants, he strikes above all at the Executive Committee of the International, which is composed of foreign emigrants in the Soviet Union where they are invested with the leadership of the international labor movement. But it is upon himself, as "leader" of the International, that Stalin lets fall the most painful blows: for it is impossible to imagine a more consummate, that is to say, a more isolated "emigrant" than he is toward all the foreign countries. Without any knowledge of the history and the internal life of the foreign countries, without personal knowledge of their labor movements, without even the possibility of following the foreign press, Stalin is today called upon to hammer out and to settle the questions of the world revolution. In other words, Stalin is the most perfect incarnation of the caricatured type of emigrant pictured in his imagination. That also explains why the incursions of Stalin into the field of international questions, beginning with the Autumn of 1924 (the day and the date can be established without difficulty) always have this episodic broken, accidental character, without being any the less injurious for that.

It is not by chance that the thoroughly cynical empiricism of Stalin and the passion of Bucharin for playing with generalizations have marched side by side for a relatively long period. Stalin acted under the influence of direct social collisions, Bucharin, with his little finger, set heaven and hell into motion in order to justify the new zig-zag. Stalin regarded Bucharin's generalizations as an unavoidable evil. In his heart, he believed as before that there was no reason to get excited over theoretical "tempests in a glass of water". But ideas in a certain sense live their own life. Interests become fastened to ideas. Basing themselves upon interests, ideas weld people together. Thus, while serving Stalin, Bucharin fed the Right group theoretically, while Stalin remained the practitioner of the Centrist zig-zags. There lies the reason for their discord. At the Sixth Congress, the discord broke out all the more scandalously the longer it was made.

The real and not the purely formal interest in the International is determined for Stalin by the anxiety to get the necessary support from the leading cadres for the next zig-zag in internal policy. In other words, what is demanded from the International is an apparatus obedience.

At the Sixth Congress, Bucharin read from a letter of Lenin's to Zinoviev and himself in which he warns them that if the clever independent people in the Inter-

national, they will certainly kill it. Bucharin risked bringing forward these lines only because they were necessary to defend himself against Stalin. In actuality, the warning of Lenin, which rings so tragically today, embraces the regime of Zinoviev, of Bucharin, as well as of Stalin. This part of the "Testament" has also been trampled under foot. At the present moment, not only in the Russian Communist Party, but in all the foreign Communist Parties without exception, all the elements that built up the International and led it in the period of the first four Congresses have been removed from leadership and cut off from the Party. This general change of the leading cadres is of course not accidental. The line of Stalin requires Stalinists and not Leninists.

That is why the Peppers, the Kuusinsens, the Martinovs, the Petrovskys, the Rafeses, the Manuilskys and consorts are so useful and irreplaceable. They are made to adapt themselves. In seeking to obtain the obedience of the International, they realize their highest destiny. For many of these pensioners, the supreme bureaucracy has become the preliminary condition for a readiness to make any kind of a right-about-face, on the condition that they feel that they have the apparatus behind them, and at the same time they feel themselves to be the direct heirs of the October Revolution and its harbingers throughout the world. What more do they need? Verily, they are building an International in their own image.

This "work", however, contains a fatal deficiency: it does not take into account the resistance of the materials, that is to say, the living masses of the workers. In the capitalist countries, the resistance appears much sooner, for there the Communists have no apparatus of coercion. Despite all their sympathy for the October Revolution, the working masses are by no means disposed to put confidence in the first stick that is transformed into a leader and to worship the "head of a sardine". The masses cannot and do not want to understand the mechanism of the apparatus. They learn from great events. And they see nothing but mistakes, confusion and defeats. The worker Communists feel the atmosphere growing cold around them. Their uneasiness is transformed into ideological turmoil which becomes the basis for factional groupings.

It is clear: the International has entered into a period where it must atone heavily for the sins of the last six years in the course of which ideas were treated like worthless bank notes, revolutionaries like functionaries, and the masses like an obed-

ient chorus. The gravest crises are still to come. The ideological needs of the proletarian vanguard are breaking through, bursting asunder the ranks of the apparatus. The illusory unity is crumbling to dust in the International more rapidly than in the Russian Communist Party, where the hold of the Party apparatus has long ago given way entirely to economic and governmental repression.

It is needless to point out the danger presented by factional splitting. But up to now no one has succeeded in overcoming factionalism by lamentations. The conciliationism about which they complain so much in all the resolutions, is still less capable of weakening factionalism. It is itself a product of the factional struggle and at the same time its semi-manufacture. Conciliationism is unavoidably called upon to differentiate itself and to be reabsorbed. Every palliation or concealment of differences of opinion will only increase the chaos and give the factional formations a more durable and painful character. The growing turmoil of factionalism can be overcome only by means of a clear line of principle. From this standpoint, the present period of avowed ideological struggle is a profound factor of progress. Only it must not be compared with the abstract ideal of "unity" but with the bitter reality of these last years.

## The Three Basic Lines

Three basic lines have come to light on the international scale. The line of the Right, which is an hopeless attempt to resuscitate, under new conditions, the pre-war social democracy, in the best case of the type of Bebel (Brandler and others). The line of the Left, which is the continuation and the further development of Bolshevism and the October revolution. That is our line. Finally, the line of the Center, which is suspended between the two principal lines swerving now from the one, now from the other, devoid of any principle content of its own, and in the last analysis, always serving as a screen for the Right wing (Stalin and his partisans).

Personal regroupings will take place, even in the higher circles. As for the bulk of the Communist masses, inside and outside of the Party, their self-determination is still entirely to be accomplished. The problem is, therefore, to win the masses. This struggle must be endowed with the greatest intransigence. The masses will never be won by hints or by half-words. The dialectic of development is such that the International can be saved from the peril of factional collapse only by a bold, firm and intransigent grouping together of the international faction of the Bolshevik-Leninists.

THE END

# A Stalinist Defeat in Staunton

By Albert Glotzer

On November 10, one week following the Belleville conference, the Staunton sub-district conference of the National Miners Union went into session to act on the decisions of the state meeting. The Staunton conference is of tremendous importance because it is the largest sub-district of bona-fide adherents to the N. M. U., and because the bulk of the delegates that walked out of the Belleville conference came from this section of the organized coal fields.

Resentment prevailed in the conference to the methods of internal policy promoted by the Party. The antagonism of a large section of the delegates to the decisions of Belleville on Watt, gave sufficient proof that you cannot transplant the methods of internal factional struggle of the Party when attempting to organize mass unions of the workers.

The conference meeting to act on the decisions of Belleville, had just finished with a reading of the report of the organizational committee, and voted acceptance of the Report on Program and Demands, when Kamenovich proposed that the conference instead of proceeding with the remainder of the Belleville decisions should halt and take up the reports of the locals and act on those. The purpose of this proposal was to draw out the proceedings, until it was too late to take up the matter of Watt. The proposal was accepted but it did not prevent discussion of the remainder of the decisions.

The attitude of the delegates was, that they did not object to the Party partic-

ipating in the Miners' union and aiding in the struggles. What they did protest against was the new miners union becoming a forum for the internal machinations of the Communist Party. They foresaw in the present situation in Illinois the possibility of building the N. M. U., but recognized that it could not be done by a narrowing down of the forces that go to make up the union and the forcing of a narrow policy upon the new union by the introduction of artificial dissension and strife. It was recognized that the main fight at the present time must be made against the operators, Lewis, Fishwick, and that unless this was the line of the N. M. U. it would be doomed to failure at the outset.

## Protest Daily Worker Lies

When the resolution on the Press was introduced, the secretary of the conference Morgan, protested against the series of deliberately false stories that have appeared in the Daily Worker for the past few weeks concerning the situation in the National Miners Union. The stories contained in the Daily Worker, that Watt was refused the floor in the Livingston local, were refuted by delegates present from that section. The charge that Watt was setting up a new district office in Staunton was likewise refuted by the Staunton delegation. The conference instructed to send a statement of protest to the Daily Worker demanding that these charges be publicly retracted and the correct situation be published, namely that the Livingston local did not refuse Watt permission to speak, but on the contrary that Watt did speak

there, and that Watt's activity in Staunton was that of a loyal member of the Union whose activities were commended by the miners of Staunton. The delegates in addition protested the charge that Watt engineered the walkout at Belleville and added that it was thru the efforts of Angelo and Watt that a split situation was prevented and that the miners went back to their respective localities to intensify their activities in behalf of the union.

Toward the close of the conference the resolution of the Belleville conference on Watt was read. The contents of the resolution stated among other things, that Watt was a renegade, opportunist, enemy of the workers and an agent of Lewis! It concluded by demanding that Watt cease his activities in the union pending the action of the National Board on these charges. It was on this particular section that the delegates expressed their dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in the union. Watt, who had been sitting at the conference all day without once taking part in the proceedings rose at this point to give his position to the miners. His speech gave the lie to all the charges against him. What he said in the main consisted of the following:

## Watt Declares Position

"Brothers, the issue of Watt has been raised in this conference. It has been stated that Watt is a traitor, an enemy of the miners, an opportunist seeking only something for himself. I have been told to keep my hands out of the affairs of the union. That is the decision of the Belleville conference. I am not going to go against those decisions. I am not going to allow the issue of Watt to stand in the way of the building of the Union. If the miners think that Watt should not be the president of the union and that he should not interfere in the activity of the union then Watt will abide by these decisions. But I want to tell you this, men: you must build the union. It is your only solution. There is no other hope except the building of the National Miners Union, and you must do this. It has been said that we must adhere to the Red International of Labor Unions. Lewis has said that the Red Union is unfit for us. He says that we must join the Amsterdam International, that is the place for us. I want to tell you men, that if Lewis says the Red International is unfit for us and that we must join the yellow Amsterdam International then we must tell him our place is with the Red International and against the Yellow International. What is good for Lewis and what he advises us to do, cannot be good for us, or advisable for us to do. In closing, brothers, let me ask you again, not to allow the issue of Watt to divide you. You must go forward united, build the National Miners Union. The charges against me I do not agree with; they are false, but that is the decision of Belleville, and since that is so, I must carry it out. Your hope is your union and you must build it or you are lost."

This speech of Watt is an answer to all the false charges made against him in recent weeks. The position of the Party is one that will not build a miners union, on the contrary it will split it asunder. When Party organizers approach non-party leaders in the union and demand: "You must either join us or we will crush you", then it exhibits a fundamental misconception of the role that Communists must play in the organization of new unions and in the mass organizations. The attempt to create a "pure" leadership of Communists in the new unions spells defeat since it can only be done at the expense of the widest variety of elements that will participate in the building of the new unions. This is particularly evident in the miners union. Communists must strive to give leadership to these workers, to formulate policy for them, but it cannot force the Party down their throats, it cannot prevent them from taking a leading part in the creation of these unions or else it reduces the idea of new unions to a caricature. Unless the Party makes a complete reversal of internal policy, the result will be the destruction of the union.

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