

"Assassination" by Postcard, or the New Stalinist Frame-up

Use Incident in Effort to Deport Leon Trotsky

Under the screaming headline: "Death to Stalin! Slogan Raised by French Trotskyist," the Saturday issue of the Daily Worker (February 15) reprints a facsimile of a postcard, as "evidence" of a Trotskyist plot to assassinate Stalin "himself!"

Driven to the wall by the revelations of Tarov and Ciliga, and by their inability to continue their own Trotsky-Hearst frame-up, Browder, Bodenz and Co. now seek to hide behind "evidence just received from France."

More than four months ago (on November 6, 1935) Fred Zeller (secretary of the Socialist Youth Alliance of the Seine District) sent a postcard to a young friend of his, a Stalinist.

This "incident" was made the subject of a rabid campaign by the Stalinists throughout all European countries, particularly Norway, the only country that offered Trotsky the right of asylum. But it was at that time hardly mentioned in America, because the fraud was so obviously patent, that it was hopeless to try to foist it upon the American workers. Elsewhere in this issue we print Zeller's own answer published months ago in France. Below we reprint the use made of the "postcard incident" in NEW MILITANT.

On December 12, 1935, Arbeideren came out with a sensational

headline charging a "death plot" against Stalin, and citing the same "freshly arrived postcard from France." The Norwegian Stalinists (upon instructions from Moscow) first charged that Trotsky's agitation "culminates in the propaganda for terrorist attacks against the Soviet Union and its leaders and is aimed above all against the greatest leader of the world proletariat in our time, Stalin." The Norwegian pen substitute then proceeded to translate the postcard, and to charge Zeller with "calling for the murder of Stalin."

Then, followed the revealing comment: "...it was no accident that the conspirators in the plot against Kirov were former members of the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev Opposition, who came forward as the agents of Fascism and counter-revolution..."

"This is the same Trotsky whose books are now being issued by a Socialist Publishing Society in Norway..."

"This is the same Trotsky whose interviews are being featured in the headlines of the Labor Party press..."

"How long more will the Norwegian workers tolerate this?"

"What has the Socialist Youth in Norway to say about the fact that expelled members of the French Socialist Youth are using Oslo as the base for their open propaganda

to murder the leaders of the Soviet proletariat?"

"What has the Central Bureau of the Norwegian Labor Party to say? 'What has the Norwegian Government to say?'"

The Stalinists in Norway did not have to wait long for their answer. On December 16, 1935, Oslav Scheffo, in a leading article in The Soerlandet, one of the organs of the N.L.P., said the following:

"Under the headline: 'Trotsky's Henchman etc.' last Friday's issue of Arbeideren prints an article which it is impossible to characterize as it deserves without resorting to the harshest epithets." Scheffo then quotes from the Arbeideren, and comments as follows:

"We believe that the Arbeideren and the Communist Party of Norway will be given to understand in unmistakable terms what the N.L.P. thinks of the type of journalism that they have perpetrated in their paper. Even though the knowledge of the French language is not so wide spread among workers as might enable them to understand absolutely that the expression 'Tod ueber' (a mort) in reality means 'Away with!' 'Down with!' they are nevertheless in a position to see clearly whether Trotsky... had planned the murder of Stalin, would have dealt with such a conspiracy in an ordinary postcard."

"We brand the man who wrote this article in the Arbeideren as an unconscionable rascal. He knows very well what he is perpetrating. He knows well that a full-blooded revolutionary like Trotsky is a ruthless opponent of assassination and

individual terror. He also knows very well that no one who really contemplates murder plots would put them down on a postcard... And what is the aim of the article? Yes, its aim is to make the Norwegian workers believe in a lie, and to mislead them. Moreover, the aim is to compel the Norwegian Labor Government to place Trotsky under arrest."

"Well, gentlemen, neither will happen."

"Neither the Norwegian workers, nor the Norwegian Labor Government are so easily made fools of, as the central organ of the C.P. obviously believes."

"But this article will not remain without consequences. One of its consequences will be that the indignation against the C.P. and the distrust in the honesty and sincerity of the Communists which are already so widespread in the Labor Party will become only strengthened and even more widespread. We said before and we repeat again: It is impossible to have any dealings whatsoever with people who set out deliberately to mislead the workers. Against such people we declare War, and only War!"

Small wonder, that after such an answer to their initial attempt in Europe, the Stalinists in America preferred not to make use months ago of the "photostatic evidence from France."

Hearst Frame-up Used in Norway

But meanwhile, the Daily Worker here did find itself compelled to parry the revelations of Tarov and Ciliga in the NEW MILITANT. The Trotsky-Hearst amalgam was

concocted, and it is not at all accidental that it was immediately cabled to the pacyune Arbeideren in Norway, to supply the Norwegian agents of Stalin with "fresh" sensations to use in their local slander campaign, and in their drive to expel Trotsky from his asylum in Norway.

This is not the first time that the Stalinists resorted to frame-ups, in their hatred and persecution of revolutionists.

To mention only one, years ago, in July, 1931, the Polish rag "Kuryer Codzienny" carried a patent fraud on its front pages, purporting to be an article by Trotsky. The Moscow Pravda immediately reprinted a facsimile of this article under the headline: "Pilsudski's New Agent." Trotsky established that this article was concocted and supplied to the Polish reactionary rag by an agent of the G.P.U. It is the obvious intention of the usurping Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow today to reply to the revelations of its bestial persecutions of revolutionists in the Soviet Union by to launch such a campaign of slander on the basis of a personal card addressed to a friend. Besides, sincere communists and socialists find it an exaggeration to give such publicity to a joke at which they were the first to laugh.

We want to know: Upon whose orders was Hearst supplied with the articles lifted from the NEW MILITANT? Were they the same people who were behind the Polish frame-up in 1931? Were they the same people who send "photostats" from France to America, while other "photostats" are being sent from America to Norway?

Fred Zeller Uncovers Real Motive of Campaign

By FRED ZELLER
(From Revolution, Organ of the Revolutionary Socialist Youth of France)

For the last two weeks the Central committee of the Young Communist League has redoubled its slanders against the Young Socialists of the Seine District. They "pounced" on a little postcard which I sent from Oslo to an old army friend, comrade Robert Fol, secretary of the 18th Section of the Y.C.L. By this method they hope to mobilize a few "naive" souls for physical struggle against us. Tens of thousands of leaflets have been distributed announcing that I am a Trotskyist and want... imagine, to assassinate Stalin! This last minute discovery is so coarse and stupid that they must be completely lacking in arguments against us to launch such a campaign of slander on the basis of a personal card addressed to a friend. Besides, sincere communists and socialists find it an exaggeration to give such publicity to a joke at which they were the first to laugh.

Allow me to remark in passing that the communists were a good deal less violent about me when they were trying to make use of me to start a Stalinist faction in the Young Socialists.

(If l'Avant Garde—organ of the French Y.C.L.—persists in its campaign I may be obliged to calculate on this point.)

What the Drudges Feared

But why all these hysterical slanders and lies?

Guyot, Lechaux, Graujon, Ancelle and the other leaders of the Y.C.L. are not idiots. They are simply drudges doing their eight hours a day. They know very well that at any moment they may be ordered to make a "new turn" and that they will have to obey. I know enough of their past to substantiate such a statement. But for several months they have been aware that the Y.C.L. has ceased to be a true revolutionary youth organization and that the Y.C.L. is liquidating it into a "movement of the younger generation of Frenchmen."

The only danger facing them and the Stalinist policy is the Revolutionary Entente of the Socialist Youth of the Seine.

We alone, in reality, are ripe for fusion with the Communist Youth on the basis of revolutionary Marxism as embodied in their old formula. But it is also only us that they attack with the greatest violence because in reality the Young Communists have abandoned the path of revolution and thrown their glorious and heroic past to the winds. That is the truth and that is what they are trying to hide at any price.

Besides my visit to Trotsky had a political significance. Not that the Seine Young Socialist Federation is Trotskyist! There is no such thing as Trotskyism! And there are no Trotskyists! There is only the revolutionary policy carried on by revolutionary militants and that's all.

"Proofs?" Where are the "Proofs?" What the Young Communists fear above all is the information I might bring back after an interview with Lenin's loyal collaborator.

Like everyone else we once really believed that Trotsky was an agent of the counter-revolution, a politician living in a mansion surrounded with flunkies, secretaries, etc. I wanted to know the truth and for months I asked Guyot and Michaud to give me the "proofs" that the "Trotskyists" were policemen and government agents. Several times we went to 120 rue Lafayette to get facts and documents. I even said to Guyot, "If you really have irrefutable proof about them I personally will demand the expulsion of the guilty ones from our ranks." They put me off innumerable times, saying that they were preparing a complete file on the subject, but they never managed to bring us the slightest palpable proof, the smallest document, the tiniest scrap of paper, because in reality they had nothing, nothing, nothing to show us!

Maurice Thorez announces that I have been vacationing in Trotsky's "mansion." What a miserable slander.

In a little village lost in the

mountains I saw the little wooden house in which the great strategist of the October Revolution, the founder and organizer of the Red Army has rented two rooms for himself and his wife Natalie, the admirable and faithful companion of his magnificent life. (Two little rooms, which besides were cold.) In this house where they reside they have a bedroom and a little office. No "flunkies", no "secretaries". Natalie takes care of the house and helps the "old man" to arrange the newspapers and magazines he receives from all over the world every day.

I expected to see an arrogant man, full of hatred. I found a man, sometimes grave, sometimes brightening when he spoke of his heroic struggle at the side of Lenin and "the bolshevik old guard" in the seizure of power by the workers and peasants. I expected to see a man filthy with money; Trotsky is poor.

Trotsky on Stalin

I expected to hear him speak of Stalin with blind hatred... not at all. He hates Stalin no more than the others because for him his struggle against the bureaucracy is not and cannot be reduced to a miserable personal quarrel. For him, his expulsion from the country, where he organized the armed struggle of the workers against feudal Czarism is the result of a profound movement among the masses, exhausted by a heroic struggle and the retreat of the workers on an international scale.

I expected to find a discouraged and sour man. I saw a tired and sick man, but full of confidence and faith in the revolutionary destiny of the world working class. I saw a tireless worker, following the daily rise of fascism with anguish, and with joy the progress of the workers who are learning little by little that the two international have collapsed and who are reorganizing themselves on the basis of revolutionary Marxism for a real offensive against imperialism.

Above all I found a man hunted by the governments and suffering terribly from his inability to be physically active in the service of the revolutionary workers.

With what admiration and what fervor, Trotsky spoke of Lenin.

Why They Hate Trotsky

Then I understood the Stalinist hatred of Trotsky. But truth and justice will triumph. Sooner or later when the great uprising comes, the exploited workers of the world will do him justice and give him the place in the history of the last years of the workers movement that he has held with so much grandeur and beauty amid the worst physical and moral suffering.

That is what they were afraid I would say. I say what I think. Henceforth the leaders of the Y.C.L. want to prevent me from speaking by violence. The socialist bureaucracy wants to strangle us but you don't know us. We shall stand up against the pack and we will not give way an inch before the agents of Stalin, no more than before the agents of Vandervelde. You lick the boots of the reactionaries and you want to bar the revolutionary militants from the struggle. What infamy!

The sincere young socialists and communists will know now that in the approaching decisive battle which will be decided in the streets against the fascists, we boldly proclaim today as yesterday the first place in the first ranks of the battle: No violence among workers! No enemy, fascism! Long live the revolution in France!

Long live the International proletarian revolution!

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WPA Wage Raise Won

(Continued from Page 1)

W.P.A. Workers Union have been demanding the increase. They have demanded also that hours of work be changed and that no lost time on the jobs be made up."

An article in today's Toledo News Bee declared, "The increase authorized by Dr. Carl Watson, state WPA director, eliminates the threat of a state-wide W.P.A. workers strike."

Possibilities for such a strike, however, have not been eliminated but enhanced by the victory. The winning of this concession has pointed the road of militant action to the W.P.A. workers of this state as the means of gaining further concessions. Confidence in organization and workers' action has been heightened. The fear of mounting lay-offs, discrimination, and generally bad working conditions, and the knowledge that further pay-booster can be won by fighting organized action, has evoked a genuine response in the WPA workers in this part of the state, and a highly successful conference is expected this coming Sunday by the WPA Workers Union. Response to the conference call has already come from numerous towns and counties where the workers are crying for a real fighting union.

reference is expected this coming Sunday by the WPA Workers Union.

Unity the Vital Need

The need for unity of the Unemployed League and the Workers Alliance is strikingly emphasized by the developments in this state. It is generally admitted that such unity been established several months ago, this increase and other concessions would have been won long ago by a solid state-wide fighting front. The bickering and factional back-biting which has been largely the cause for keeping thousands of unemployed and projects workers from joining either organization. As the NEW MILITANT has been pointing out for the past two months, for both organizations to permit further sabotage of unity on a correct program through the actions of a few individuals at this crucial period would show a criminal lack of responsibility toward the real needs and desires of the unemployed and relief workers of this nation.

Rumanian "Peoples Front" Finds 'Democracy' in Military Dictatorship

BUCHAREST—Following the 3rd period of adventurist policy—whose culminating point was reached in the bloody events at Grivitzia (1)—the resolution adopted in February 1935 by the C.C. of the Rumanian Communist Party marked a new turn: this time in a completely opposite direction: the party founded in the opportunist swamp. In this resolution it is said that the party must struggle for the formation of a united front and of a broad people's front, against the bosses' attacks, war and fascism."

Let us skip over the question of the "United Front" for the moment. This revolutionary tactic, clearly formulated by the 3rd and 4th Congresses of the C.I. and which moreover the Stalinists have stripped of all its fighting content, serves them only in order to better shuffle up the cards so as to mask the rotten turn: the complete abandonment of the class struggle which has since been replaced by a new criterion: the status quo on all fronts. The revolutionary struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie gives way to an alliance from above with the most corrupt democrats for the preservation of the present regime (a military dictatorship) against fascism, revolutionary actions are replaced by legal actions on the pretext that it is necessary to "utilize legality"; and, in the legal press, in order not to frighten the "democratic" allies, the Marxist term "proletariat" is replaced by the vague term (so dear to the fascists) of "laboring people!" In its content the illegal press distinguishes itself in no way from the legal press, except if it be by still more reactionary language.

"Traces" of Democracy

To obtain the alliance with the bourgeois "democratic" politicians in the "struggle" against Fascism, the People's Front became the defender of the existing regime in Rumania, that is, of the military dictatorship which serves it, which condemns the workers to repression and complete misery. For this purpose they have discovered in it... traces of democracy! (2) Yesterday these gentlemen were shouting that there was a fascist regime in Rumania, today, on the orders of Moscow and, microscope in hand, they discover "traces" of democracy to justify their putrid bloc with such odious personal ties as M. Dobresco, former mayor of Bucharest, or M. Petre Pandrea, the living example of the political "chameleon" (3).

Practically speaking, the People's Front has been realized only partially. The "unitaries" have rejected it, by opposing to it the proletarian united front. (4) The social democrats, in basic agreement with the communists on the question (collaboration with bourgeois parties) but not desiring joint action with them at any cost (despite the efforts of the communists who have made all the concessions to obtain their adherence) have rejected the People's Front counterposing to it the "democratic front" (that is joint action of the "democratic" parties without the communists). The Peoples Front in Rumania consists of the alliance of the Communist Party with some of the elements of the National-Peasants Party (they sought to involve the leaders such as Mihalache, etc. but to date without success), the "Junianists", the party of George Brat-

and, and diverse "democratic" personalities.

Supplication to His Majesty

Let us now observe the People's Front in action. The first action undertaken was the securing of amnesty for political prisoners, instead of embarking on a campaign of vigorous agitation in the ranks of the proletariat, they substituted legal action for this revolutionary struggle. People such as Mm. Ella Necruzai, "foremost woman lawyer" (as the Balkan Correspondence—C.I. organ—recently proudly called her) supported by "all the democratic forces of the country" began a campaign of supplication to King Carol for the amnesty of political prisoners on the June 8th celebration (5). Thus even if amnesty had been granted, it would have appeared in the eyes of the masses as a stroke of generosity on the part of the King and contribute in restoring his prestige. Of course, no amnesty was granted.

A second action of the People's Front, of much greater importance, was the demonstration of the National-Peasants Party which was to have been held on the eve of the opening of parliament. The National-Peasant satraps (6) announced a great demonstration in which several tens of thousands of peasants were to meet in Bucharest for the purpose of overthrowing the Tataresco government. The Communist Party decided to support this demonstration because it represented "an expression of indignation of the masses!" The government naturally prohibited the demonstration as well as that of the Christian-Nationalists which was to have been held on the same day (this second demonstration had as its aim the neutralization of the first). Despite this prohibition, the National-Peasant leaders announced that the demonstration would be held.

Demonstration Called Off

Then, four days before the date set, frightened by the Christian-Nationalists on the one side, probably also having received the assurance of King Carol that they would soon be returned to power and under the pretext that "after this audience the situation has completely changed", they countermanded the order for the demonstration.

Large sections of the peasants were aroused by this demonstration having promised that the victory of this "revolution" would redound to their benefit—and all this with the support of the communists! Naturally the indignation of the peasants, adroitly exploited by fascists of all stripes, turned into a boomerang not only for the National-Peasants Party but also for its ally, the communist party. Highly illustrative of the decay of the Communist party and its crawling before the National-Peasants is the fact that after having noted that "this attitude constitutes a betrayal" (Balkan Correspondence) instead of denouncing this party to the proletarian masses and the poor peasants, it clung to its coat tails (for reasons of foreign policy) on the pretext that "it is necessary to aid the National-Peasants to understand the gravity of the decision of its leadership which is conniving with the camarilla and to make it understand the necessity of its participation in an anti-fascist mobilization!" (Balkan Correspondence, Nov. 1935, page 196)

And Lothar Rudeanu (social democratic leader) writes an article in "Lumea Noua" expressing his satisfaction that "the Communists have learned the value of collaborating with a bourgeois party" but at the same time regretting that they still do not know "when and how" to support a bourgeois party.

Fascist Gain

That is how matters stand in the prosecution of an opportunist policy which can only benefit the fascists. The ever-growing discontent of the poor peasants against the "democratic" leaders, under the impact of the crisis, grows constantly worse. Not seeing any solution on the left, because they see the communists allied to their persecutors, they are turning to the fascist gangs and the latter are already demanding power (the Vaida-Gaga bloc in parliament).

This process of radicalization in the country, which is including ever larger masses, is only in its first stages. But the defeated proletariat in Rumania, betrayed by the social democrats and the Stalinists, is not in a position to draw behind it the poor peasants of the villages and the oppressed petty bourgeoisie of the cities in the struggle against the bourgeoisie. The task of the hour, in order to revive the proletariat, is the same as everywhere else: the creation of a revolutionary party. It will be created in the struggle against Stalinism and social democracy on the one hand, against "unitary" centrism on the other. The Rumanian Bolsheviki-Leninists have already begun this struggle and are confident that the correctness and intransigence of their principles will lead to victory.

Notes

(1) In February 1933 a strike broke out in the factories of "Grivitzia", over economic grievances. After a bitter battle the railroad workers succeeded in winning some concessions; but since the Moscow resolutions had characterized the situation as "revolutionary", as well as for reasons of prestige (the strike had been led at the beginning by the social democrat Bogatolu), the flunkies leading the Rumanian Communist party forced them on the road of an adventure by presenting political demands such as "A Soviet Rumania". In reply, the government only awaited a convenient pretext to shoot several scores of workers.

(2) Here is the declaration of a bureaucrat of the Rumanian Communist party: "Since such legal papers as... are allowed to appear, democracy still exists."

(3) His biography, given in a fascist paper "Axa" ("o lichen de stanga") shows a very wretched character who has changed his theory several times corresponding to different policies.

(4) Despite their correct position "in principle" on the problem (the Popovici group was even expelled as partisans of the People's Front), the "unitaries" cling at all price to bourgeois legality (their paper has been banned by the government) and do not raise their smallest finger to struggle for these positions!

(5) On June 8th, 1930, King Carol returned to Rumania.

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