

Trotskyists Hounded and Imprisoned By Fascist Terror in Austria, Germany

While the Stalinists Slander Them as "Agents of the Gestapo", the Real Gestapo Makes the Fourth Internationalists Its Chief Victims.

That the slogan "Smash the Trotskyists Agents of the Gestapo" is mere camouflage for a world-wide line of counter-revolutionary activity on the part of the Stalinists, is sufficiently clear to the advanced workers in every country who have been following the policy of the parties of the Communist International from day to day. But even the most simple-minded worker can see through the whole treacherous deception of the Stalinists once he becomes acquainted with this fact: that the revolutionary followers of the Fourth International are the constant prey of the bloody butchers of this self-

same Gestapo (Fascist Secret Police) whose agents they are supposed to be.

Within recent months a whole wave of Gestapo, Nazi and Fascist persecutions has hit the Trotskyist workers in Duesseldorf, in Danzig, in Vienna. The trials in Danzig and in Duesseldorf have been given ample publicity in the press in the past. Now word comes from Hamburg and from Vienna of new trials and new convictions against Trotskyists by Hitler's Gestapo and the Schuschnig Fascists in the Austrian government.

Trotskyist Trial In Hamburg

In Hamburg, the Nazi secret police seized a number of leading fighters of the Fourth International only a few weeks ago. Within a few days of their arrest, the comrades were tried before a Special Tribunal. Needless to say, the comrades courageously upheld their revolutionary views in the face of their Fascist accusers. Each admitted his desire to see the overthrow of the Hitler dictatorship; each one expressed his firm conviction that it would be achieved under the leadership of the Fourth International. The Special Tribunal inflicted upon them especially heavy sentences.

Comrade Hannes Bremer was sentenced to six years of forced labor.

Comrade Herbert G. was sentenced to five years of hard labor.

Comrade Walter B. to two and a half years' imprisonment. Comrade Hans Tapet, to three and a half years' forced labor and comrade Frieda Holbe to two years imprisonment. A number of other arrested comrades have not yet been brought to trial, but the prosecution has demanded "special measures" against them in its indictment—an indication that the Nazi bandits have particularly terrifying brutalities in store for them.

This is how the Trotskyist "agents of the Fascists", "agents of the Gestapo", etc. are being treated by Fascism in Germany.

Four Trotskyist Trials in Austria in One Year

In the Austrian capital, Vienna, no less than four different trials of arrested Trotskyists have been held in the course of the past year.

In November, 1936, comrade Anton Hochrainer, an eighteen year old worker, was arrested for distributing the illegal organ of the Fourth International in Austria, *Der Bolschewik*. He was convicted to five years' imprisonment at hard labor.

In July, 1937, Hochrainer was tried once more in the Court of Appeals. The previous sentence was upheld.

Late in the same month comrade Fritz Niescher, arrested and jailed ever since October, 1936, was brought to trial for complicity in the publication of

the *Bolschewik*. Under cross-examination, Niescher admitted his membership in the Trotskyist organization and declared: "The Trotskyists are a socialist, or if you prefer, a communist group, which has remained true to the teaching of Marx and Lenin." He was sentenced to one and half years' imprisonment at hard labor, beside the one year sentence he was serving after being sentenced in a police court at the time of his arrest.

On August 13 last, the fourth of the trials was held. The sessions lasted a whole day. Among those on trial, were the following:

Comrade Ludwig Auinger, 31 years old, a metal polisher. Charged with circulating twenty-two different items of Trotskyist literature. Sentenced to two years at hard labor.

Comrade Georg Scheuer, 21 years old, unemployed. Charged with participating in the publication of the *Bolschewik*. Sentenced to one and a half years at hard labor.

Comrade Karl Fisher, 18 years old, commercial employee. Charged with participating in the publication of the *Bolschewik*. Sentenced to fourteen months at hard labor.

Comrade Johann Schoeffman, 42 years old, engineer. Charged with responsibility for the publication of the *Bolschewik* and other literature of the Trotskyists. Sentenced to twelve months. Two others, Grand and Meyer, were acquitted because of insufficient evidence.

Prosecutor Beigl expressed his dissatisfaction with the verdict in each case and announced that he would seek their indictment for "high treason", a charge which implies a minimum penalty of five years imprisonment.

Take Militant Stand

Under cross-examination, the comrades took the opportunity to distinguish themselves from the followers of the Second and Third International, declaring that the latter two organizations had betrayed the trust of the working class and made clear that for this reason they considered their task of the moment to be the building of a new party, a party of the Fourth International based upon world revolution and the teachings of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

Replying to the prosecutor's charge of high treason, comrade Auinger said: "Everyone who participates in illegal activity knows that the purpose of his activity is the eventual downfall of the present government."

If that is high treason, then everyone who participates in illegal activity is guilty of high treason. If that is so, why don't you throw the Nazis (the Nazis are illegal in Austria—Ed.) into jail as well as the Reds? However, it never occurred to me that the mere distribution of printed matter constitutes high treason."

In the course of his cross-examination on the witness stand, comrade Scheuer told of his long years in the socialist movement,

of his work for the Communist Party from 1931 to 1933 and of the reasons why he decided to join the Trotskyists. Among other things, comrade Scheuer said in his defense:

"For World Revolution"

"The Trotskyists are the only ones who today stand on the platform of world revolution. Our task is the rehabilitation of Marxism-Leninism, the building of a new party of the working class. But that does not mean that we call for an uprising every day. We are not putschists, but Marxists. Unfortunately, the Austrian proletariat is in such a condition to-day due to the collapse of the Second and Third Internationals, that we must concentrate all our efforts on the building of a new, Marxist workers party." After continuing along these lines, comrade Scheuer concluded:

"The Trotskyists today fight for freedom of opinion, of organization and of press. This fight naturally has to be carried on illegally as well as legally. This implies agitation, propaganda, petitions as well as such means as the Viennese textile workers recently used: the weapon of strike action."

Finally, the comrades protested against the duplication of sentences for political prisoners. Communist, socialist as well as Trotskyist workers have been subjected to the outrage of duplication. The Trotskyists were the first, however, to raise a protest in the form of a demonstration in open court. This initiative on their part had its effect. A few days later, Chancellor Schuschnig declared that police court sentences against political delinquents were illegal.

Trial Gets Publicity

The Viennese press gave wide publicity to all the trials. Front page stories with three-column headlines were devoted to the last of the trials in particular. The speeches of the accused were quoted in lengthy excerpts, their protests emphasized in sub-heads. Public opinion was stirred up by the trials more than at any time in the last few years.

From their cells in Schuschnig's prisons and fortresses, the Viennese Trotskyists have issued a call for solidarity to revolutionary and classe conscious workers in the entire world. They speak not only in their own behalf, but on behalf of the imprisoned comrades in Nazi Germany as well. Protesting against Fascist terror, they also call upon workers everywhere to put a stop to the Stalinist terror, crying out bitterly against the lynching of Anders Nin by the G.P.U. gunmen.

Those whom the corrupt bureaucracy of the Stalinists slander as "agents of the Gestapo" are standing up bravely and courageously in the fight against the Nazi terror, in the fight against Fascist oppression. It is the duty of revolutionary workers everywhere to come to their

Stalinist Union Wrecking Is Discrediting CIO Movement Among Minnesota Unionists

By Carlos Hudson

MINNEAPOLIS.—A month has passed since the Stalinists split the three Machinist Locals in Minneapolis, taking a segment over to the CIO. Important developments have come up since then.

1. The Executive Board of the Machinists' International, led by Wharton came to Minneapolis investigated and under pressure of progressive unionists told the AFL machinists: "You have built an industrial union. You can keep your industrial union. We won't interfere." No accurate figures are available as to the AFL-CIO forces with the exception of Local 1037 in Hopkins; of the 700 members about 455 are with the AFL.

2. John Brophy spoke here at a CIO mass meeting arranged by the Stalinists and endorsed the C.P. move to split and raid the Machinist Local. Before he left town, he explained to progressives that the situation would have to work itself out, and that he was too occupied with the current West Coast imbroglio to go into the matter.

Stalinists Discredit CIO

3. The Minnesota State Federation of Labor held its 55th annual convention in Hibbing, with about 800 attending delegates, by far the largest meeting ever held. Reactionaries were firmly in the saddle. A progressive caucus held about 250 votes, the Stalinist forces about 90. The AFL has formed 133 new locals in the state during the past year. The CIO took a terrific beating at the convention, something that could not have occurred three months ago. This is chiefly explained by the type of self-appointed Stalinist mis-leaders who have been masquerading under the CIO cloak in the state. Their tactics in Hibbing were as though calculated to arouse a lynch spirit against the CIO. On an important test vote, that of permitting Congressman Bernard CIO organizer in the Northern part of the state, to address the convention, the motion was crushingly defeated.

The unity resolution called upon the CIO to accept Green's offer to attend the AFL convention in Denver and remain there until a program of harmony and unity is reached. Dobbs of Truck Drivers' Local 544, with the backing of the progressive caucus, put through an amendment that the AFL convention, when considering unity, should recognize the need for industrial unionism, and the amended motion passed.

Some months ago, Governor Elmer Benson jumped on the CIO bandwagon with both feet. Just in time, he has realized his error—that the overwhelming majority of Minnesota unionists, the backbone of the FLP, are overwhelmingly AFL, and have a bitter contempt for what they have seen of a Stalinized CIO in this state. Benson arrived in Hibbing and made a very skillful speech to worm his way back to the good graces of the AFL. It can be anticipated that he will become more and more cool to the CIO.

aid, to support them in their struggle and to fling the calumny of the Stalinist bureaucrats against them back into the brazen faces of these detestable traitors.

Machinists Resist Raids

4. To return to the Minneapolis machinist situation. The Stalinist CIO forces, who are unable to give one honest reason for splitting the three established Machinists locals, having no merit or logic on their side, have resorted to gangster tactics. In groups of 20 and 30, they are going around the garages and shops, beating up isolated AFL machinists. Some have been severely injured. In one case, a Stalinist gang was unable to catch its victims. But nothing can stop these heroes. They drove out to the victim's house and shot his dog. It is not entirely clear how this benefited the CIO—but perhaps the dog had taken a firm stand against the People's Front. By their splitting tactics, the Stalinists are placing the machinists in an increasingly helpless position before the bosses. Under the cloak of the CIO, the Stalinists have already tried to raid other established Minneapolis unions, among them the General Drivers, the Woodenware Workers, the Flour & Cereal Mill Workers, the County & Municipal Employees, etc.

Every worker in America ought to know the rotten crimes of the Stalinists against the most militant and best organized union movement anywhere in the country. These irresponsible, unprincipled, power-hungry wreckers are dragging the banner of industrial unionism in the mud in Minneapolis. They are raiding unions, not in the interests of the men in the industries, not in the interests of the labor movement, but in the interests of their own selfish clique. They shout about unity, carry unity resolutions in every pocket, only the better to provoke splits and to weaken the working class.

Unionists Aroused

The Minneapolis labor movement is now thoroughly aroused and prepared for action against the Communist blatherskites. The Central Labor Union met Monday evening, Sept. 27, and voted to endorse the AFL machinists. The Minneapolis Teamsters Joint Council sponsored a large mass-meeting in the Minneapolis Armory on Oct. 1, at which speakers relentlessly exposed the Stalinist splitting tactics, carried on under the spurious slogan of unity, and voiced a determination to stop the union raiding. The Minneapolis working class that has emerged victoriously from so many historic struggles that has beaten back the cops, the forces of the Citizens Alliance, the national guardsmen, that has proceeded to organize itself in industry after industry, is not going to be dragged back and permit the Open Shop to be restored. It has rallied and declared: No one is going to wreck our movement. And it is planning the necessary steps to make this slogan effective.

The Stalinist Hungarian daily paper, *Uj Elore*, published in Cleveland for thirty-five years, is to be suspended permanently to make way for a Peoples Front paper "not controlled by any party groups", it was announced by Joseph Feher, managing editor of the new paper, the *Hungarian Daily World*, to be published in New York.