

Stalin on His Own Frame-Ups

The Real Prosecuting Attorney Finally Presents Another Explanation of the Moscow Trials with Arguments That Do Not Discredit Those Fighting Against the Despotism Of the Bureaucracy, but Which Are a Merciless Indictment of the Political Regime of the Bureaucracy Itself

By Leon Trotsky

With his habitual boastful cynicism Hitler gives away the secret of his political strategy. He writes: "A great leader's genius also consists in the fact that he always depicts even the most widely divergent adversaries as belonging to the same category, because an inkling as to the difference between the enemies very readily becomes for weak and unstable characters a source of doubt as to their own correctness." (Mein Kampf). This principle is diametrically opposed to the principle of Marxist politics as well as scientific knowledge in general, for science begins by articulating, counterposing and laying bare not only fundament-

al differences but also transitional nuances. Marxism in particular has always opposed the treatment of all political opponents as "a single reactionary mass". The difference between Marxist and Fascist agitation is the difference between scientific education and demagogic hypnosis. In its method, Stalinist politics, which received its most finished expression in the judicial frame-ups, coincides completely with Hitler's prescription, while in its sweep it leaves Hitler far behind. Anyone who refuse to bow before the Moscow ruling clique is henceforth a representative of "a single Fascist mass."

innocent and patriarchal a ring to be applied to this moralist, who compelled his victims to give obviously false testimony, murdered them on an obviously false accusation, and then proclaimed

as liars not Yagoda, Vyshinsky and himself but Zinoviev and Kamenev whom they had shot. But it is precisely here that the master of frame-ups allows himself to be caught red-handed.

Why the Prosecution Completely Changed the Charges in the Indictment

The point is that at the first trial in January 1935, Zinoviev together with all the other defendants confessed, according to the official reports, that he and his friends had been guided in their activity by a "secret intention to restore the capitalist regime". That is how the goal of the alleged "Trotskyites" was then formulated in the indictment. Does his mean that the accused told the truth at the time? But sad to say, no one would believe his officially established "truth". That is why in preparing the second Zinoviev-Kamenev trial (August, 1936) they decided to discard the program of restoration of capitalism as something too absurd, and to boil the whole matter down to "a lust for power." A philistine would be more readily inclined to believe this. The new indictment was made to read that it was "established beyond doubt that the only motive for organizing the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc was their striving to seize power at all costs..." The existence of any kind of special "platform" among the Trotskyists was at the time denied by the State Prosecutor himself. The especial degeneracy of the Trotskyists consisted precisely in this fact! It is immaterial whether the hapless defendants had lied or not. The Stalinist judiciary itself had established "beyond doubt" that the "only

motive" of the Trotskyists was "their striving to seize power." For the sake of this they allegedly resorted to terror.

But this new version, on the basis of which Zinoviev, Kamenev et al, were shot, did not produce the expected results. Neither workers nor peasants had any special cause to rail against "Trotskyites" for wanting to seize power. In any case, the "Trotskyists" could not prove worse than the ruling clique. In order to terrify the population, they found it necessary to add that the Trotskyists wanted to return the land to the landlords and the factories to the capitalists. Moreover, the bare accusation of terrorism in the absence of terrorist acts placed too great restrictions on future possibilities of annihilating adversaries of the regime. To widen the circle of the accused it became necessary to include sabotage, wrecking and espionage in the case. But sabotage and espionage could be investigated with even a semblance of meaning only by establishing a connection between the Trotskyists and the enemies of the U.S.S.R. Neither Germany nor Japan, however, would give Trotskyists support solely for the sake of their "lust for power." Nothing else remained therefore but to order a new group of defendants to return to the program of "restoration of capitalism."

tember 12, i.e., three weeks after Radek's article, Pravda unexpectedly proclaimed in an editorial that the defendants had "...tried to hide the true goal of their struggle. They circulated the story that they had no program. In reality, they did have a program. It is the program of battering down socialism and restoring capitalism." Pravda, of course, did not offer the slightest fact to corroborate these words. What facts could there have been!

Thus, the new program of the defendants was not arrived at on the basis of documents, facts or confessions of the accused, nor even of the logical deductions of the prosecution. No, it was established by a pronouncement from Stalin over Vyshinsky's head, after the execution of the accused. Evidence? That was to be supplied after the event by the G.P.U. in the sole obtainable guise—the guise of "voluntary confessions". Vyshinsky immediately proceeded to execute the latest instruction: to alter Radek's formulation from the hysterical into the juridical, from the pathetic into the criminal. But the new schema—and this Radek did not foresee!—was applied by Vyshinsky not to the sixteen defendants (Zinoviev et al)—they were no longer among the living—but to the seventeen defendants, and therewith the author of the schema, Radek, proved one of the first victims.

Stalin Finally Comes Forward to Explain Away The Moscow Trials

During the Moscow trials Stalin withdrew demonstratively to the side-lines. It was even reported that he left for the Caucasus. This is wholly in harmony with his style of procedure. Vyshinsky and Pravda received their instructions from behind the scenes. However, the miscarriage of the trials in the eyes of world public opinion, and the growth of alarm and doubt within the U.S.S.R. forced Stalin to come out into the open. On March 3, at a plenary session of the Central Committee, he delivered a speech, which after painstaking correction was published in Pravda. It is beyond human prowess to speak of the theoretical level of this speech. It is beyond not only theory but also politics in any serious sense of the term. It is nothing more than a fiat on the utilization of frame-ups already perpetrated and the preparation of new ones.

form. As early as the latter part of 1927, the G.P.U. linked Trotskyists—lesser known ones, to be sure—with White Guards and foreign agents. My exile abroad was officially motivated by the alleged fact that I was engaged in preparations for an armed uprising. It is also true that Stalin did not then dare to make public the fantastic decision of the G.P.U. Already in 1929, to justify the shooting of Blumkin, Silov and Rabinovich, Pravda printed reports of train wrecks organized by Trotskyists. In 1930 a number of exiled oppositionists were charged with espionage because they were corresponding with me. In 1930-1932, the G.P.U. made several attempts to extort from Oppositionists, again little known ones, "voluntary confessions" of preparing terrorist attempts. Documents pertaining to these early and rough sketches of future amalgams were presented by me to the American Commission of Inquire. However, the thing is that seven to eight years ago Stalin had not as yet smashed the resistance of the party or even of the bureaucratic tops and was therefore compelled to confine himself to intrigues, poisonous slanders, arrests, exiles and occasional "experimental" shootings. Thus he gradually educated his agents—and himself. For it is a mistake to think that this man was born an accomplished Cain.

Stalin Sets the Pace and the Comintern Follows All His Zig-Zags

This supplementary frame-up is so instructive that it is worth while dwelling on. Any literate person, by equipping himself with a file of any of the Comintern newspapers, could without difficulty trace three stages in the evolution of the accusation. A Hegelian triad of frame-up sui generis, with its thesis, antithesis, and synthesis! In the period after January 1935, the hirelings of Moscow the world over ascribed to the executed chairman of the Comintern, on the basis of his own "confession", a program or restoration of capitalism. Pravda, the private organ of Stalin, set the pace. But upon command issued by Pravda itself, the press of the Comintern jumped from the thesis over to the anti-thesis and during the trial of the sixteen, in August 1936, branded the Trotskyists as murderers, bereft of any kind of program. Pravda and the Comintern kept to this new version for only about a month, up to September 12. The

zig-zags of the Comintern only reflected the gyrations of Vyshinsky who, in his turn, aligned himself in accordance with Stalin's successive orders.

The pattern of the final "synthesized" indictment was suggested by Radek, unwittingly. On August 21, 1936 his article against the "Trotskyite-Zinovievite Fascist Gang" appeared. The hapless author set himself the task of digging between himself and the defendants as deep a moat as possible. In his attempt to draw from the alleged "crimes" the most fearsome internal and international consequences, Radek had the following to say about the defendants, especially myself: "They know that... by undermining the confidence in the Stalin leadership they bring... only grist to the mill of German, Japanese, Polish and all other kinds of Fascism. All the more so are they aware that the assassination of the gifted leader of the Soviet peoples, Stalin, implies working directly for a war..."

A Sinister Reality

A nightmare? No, this is the reality. The chief defendants in the new trial resemble those pious collaborators of the Inquisition who went about zealously digging graves, making coffins and preparing maledictory epitaphs for others and then discovered that the Inquisitor intended to enter their own names into the text of the epitaphs and to measure the coffins for them. Once this procedure was concluded, Stalin emerged from the shadow and in the character of an infallible judge issued a declaration about Zinoviev and Kamenev: "They both lied." Nothing more sinister has yet been conceived by human fancy!

(Concluded in the next issue)

Accusations That Discredit the Regime and Not Those Who Fight It

"The principal method of Trotskyite work nowadays," continues Stalin, "is not an open and honest propaganda of its views about the working class but the camouflage of its views... a perfidious trampling in the mud of its own views." Already ten years ago, those who were initiated avoided looking at each other when Stalin used to indict his opponents on the grounds of a lack of "sincerity" and "honesty"! In those days the sublime principles of morality were being grafted by Yagoda... Stalin refrains, however, from explaining how "open" propaganda could be carried on in a country where criticism of the "Fuehrer" is punished far more beastially than in Fascist Germany. The urgent need to hide from the G.P.U. and carry on propaganda secretly compromised the revolutionists but rather the Bonapartist regime.

people to sacrifice their lives for the sake of these views. The speech together with its author rests completely on the plane of the reactionary press which has always insisted that Stalin's struggle against "Trotskyism" was of a spurious nature; that in reality we were mutually bound by a secret conspiracy against the capitalist order, and that my exile abroad was merely a cloak to cover our collaboration. Indeed, is it not really true that Stalin executed Trotskyists and seeks to trample their views "in the mud" in order better to hide his complete solidarity with them?

The orator exposes himself most glaringly on the question of the program of the Opposition. He says: "You will recall that in the 1936 trial, Kamenev and Zinoviev flatly denied having any kind of political platform... There can be no doubt that they both lied in denying that they had a platform." In point of fact they had a platform. It was the "platform of the restoration of capitalism." The word "cynicism" has far too

Radek Fails to Foresee

Later on, Radek went one step farther along the same road. He wrote: "It is not a question of destroying ambitious men who stooped to the greatest of crimes. It is a question of destroying agents of Fascism, prepared to set ablaze the conflagration of war and facilitate victory for Fascism even if to receive from its hands only a wraith of power." These lines constitute not a

juridical accusation but only political rhetoric. Heaping horror on horror, Radek did not foresee, of course, that he would have to pay for them himself. In the self-same spirit and with the self-same consequences Piatakov and Rakovsky wrote.

In preparing the new trial Stalin seized upon the journalistic productions of the mortally frightened capitulators. On Sep-

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