

'Stalin Renders Commendable Service to Fascism'--Mussolini

tional labor movement—Stalin has learned that neither England, France nor the United States is concerned for a moment with the ideals of "democracy" or with the defense of the Soviet Union. Like Germany and Italy and Japan, they are concerned exclusively with the preservation and expansion of their imperialist position. The "democratic" bloc in Europe, headed by England, is now obviously in a state of dissolution, or more accurately, of reorientation. Instead of establishing unity with Russia against the fascist states, England is moving rapidly towards a Four-Power Pact (England, Italy, France and Germany, supported by Poland), which excludes the Soviet Union, isolates her and is, primarily, directed at her.

Why England Comes In

The recent events in Europe are the background for the timing of the Trial of the 21 to open up when it did. It is the same events which cause Stalin to introduce England, the British Intelligence Service, and "English spies" for the first time in any of the frame-up trials that have been held since the death of

Kirov. Hitherto, only Germany and Japan have been mentioned. Now that Stalin's hopes for an English alliance have been dashed, the trained and well-rehearsed defendants are made to enact the role of "British spies", just as in the previous trials they starred as spies of Hitler and the Mikado.

On the same grounds, France is not mentioned at all, for the simple reason that Stalin still hopes that the Franco-Soviet Pact will be strengthened. Yet, in the 1931 trial of the "Mensheviks," the defendants were depicted as the agents of the French General Staff!

Why America Does Not

The alleged foreign relations of the victims of Stalin's frame-ups have no reference to any reality whatsoever except that of Stalin's own diplomatic policy and its vacillations. If, for example, there are no "American spies" among the defendants today, it is only because Stalin still hopes for an alliance with the United States against Japan. Should those hopes go the way of previous hopes with regard to Germany and then with Eng-

land, it is a foregone conclusion that the next trial will have its quota of confessions by the defendants that they were paid by and worked for the United States Military Intelligence Service.

Not One Will Remain

With Rykov, Bukharin, Rakovsky, Rosengoltz and Krestinsky gone, there will remain apart from Trotsky and Stalin—not a single leader of the Bolshevik Revolution, scarcely a single member of the Central Committee of the Party that functioned in Lenin's lifetime, only one or two members of the Soviet Government from 1917 to 1924, and not a single member of the Political Bureau of Lenin's day—Not one!

The head of the Bonapartist counter-revolution in Russia is consumed with fear and desperation. He knows that behind the obligatory adulation of all who surround him, is a fierce hatred. He knows his unpopularity with the masses. He hopes to safeguard himself against being overthrown by making himself indispensable in the eyes of the Soviet public.

Rome Dictator Thanks Stalin For Purge Of Last Old Bolsheviks

Benito Mussolini addressed to Joseph Stalin... week the felicitations of one butcher to another. He wrote in his own paper, Popolo d'Italia, that Stalin "had become a Fascist" and, in effect, that Stalin was doing more than any other to destroy the faith of the workers of the world in the Communist Movement.

For cutting down thousands of revolutionists as "Fascist spies," Stalin has won the gratitude of the Fascist dictator Mussolini. Let those who still think they can believe in the monstrous frame-up-terror system of Stalin, who think they can ignore the heavy blows the Stalin terror is dealing the whole revolutionary movement, ponder the brutal irony in the words of Mussolini:

"Stalin does not resort to castor oil to punish Communist leaders who are so stupid or criminal as still to believe in Communism, Stalin is unable to understand the subtle irony involved in the laxative system of castor oil. He makes a clean sweep by means of systems which were born in the steppes of Genghis Khan... STALIN RENDERS A COMMENDABLE SERVICE TO FASCISM."

It would be wrong, however, to imagine that Stalin, Vyshinsky and Co. will draw up short before such an accusation. Not at all! Outrageous as it seems, incredible even, it is dead certain that on the road of abandoning all the principles and ideals of the Russian Revolution, Stalin will finally repudiate the very revolution itself as the product of "concealed enemies of the people." That is the inexorable, logical end of his course.

Incredible, we say? Nothing is incredible for the unrestrained madmen who rule the totalitarian Stalinist regime. For already in this trial, according to the reports of the trial, Vyshinsky said "that he suspected Rakovsky not only of having been a British agent after the World War but of having been connected with the German secret service during the war" (N. Y. Post, March 5, 1938).

While Vyshinsky was in the ranks of the White Guards fighting the Bolshevik power in the Ukraine, Rakovsky was organizing and leading the revolution in the Ukraine, establishing the Ukrainian Soviet Republic of which he was the first Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. If Vyshinsky's assertion means anything—and it has a deeper significance than most people will ascribe to it—it means that the Ukrainian proletarian revolution and the Soviet Republic it established were the result of instructions carried out by Rakovsky as an agent-in-espionage of the German Kaiser and the Imperial General Staff!

Relations With Germany

As for the "treasonable relations" between Trotsky, Krestinsky and Rosengoltz with the German Intelligence Service and general Staff officers, Von Seeckt and Hasse, there is of course an element of truth in the story, as Trotsky has already explained in the press, an element which is maliciously distorted into its opposite by the experts in falsification.

After the signing of the friendly Rapallo Treaty between Germany and Russia, cautiously friendly relations were established between the German and Russian Army commands. This, too, has not been a secret for more than ten years.

Early in December 1926, the Manchester Guardian published a sensational (and substantially true) story about the secret establishment on Russian soil of German hand-grenade plants, which clandestinely shipped munitions to Germany in violation of the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty. The story was not only not officially denied by the Soviet Government, but was confirmed immediately thereafter on the floor of the German Reichstag.

Scheidemann's Confirmation

"In the negotiations with the firm of Junkers (airplane manufacturers) on March 15, 1922, in the Reichswehr Ministry," said former Chancellor Philipp Scheidemann, for example, "there participated among others, General Hasse. The signing of the contracts (with Russia) followed with false names, just as the officers who traveled to and from Russia made their voyages with forged passports." (Reichstag Minutes, 252nd Session, 1926.)

The Moscow Pravda took the Guardian revelations quite coolly: "We are not privy to the secrets

of our military authorities and we do not know whether or not these reports correspond to the reality. If we assume that they are not lies, then they have, in themselves, no significance." (Dec. 16, 1926.)

Zetkin's Speech

The foreign political line of the Soviet Union and the line of the Comintern were then anxiously in favor of a close alliance not only between the General Staffs of the two armies, but of the armies themselves. In her speech in the Locarno Pact, which threat-

ened to weaken the ties between Russia and Germany, the Communist spokesman in the Reichstag, Klara Zetkin, argued: "Germany's future rests upon a close community of interests with the Soviet Union, in economic, political and if needs be also military respects... I even believe, contrary to Mr. Deputy Weis, that it is not so hopeless as he imagines, for cooperation to follow, under certain circumstances, between the Reichswehr and the Red Army people." (Reichstag Minutes, 127th Session, 1926.)

Along this line, there is no doubt at all that more than one quiet conversation took place in Berlin and in Moscow between Soviet and German representatives, political and military. All this is old stuff, fairly well known. And this is all there is or ever was to the charge of Krestinsky's or any other Soviet leader's "espionage" relations with Germany, or with Generals Von Seeckt and Hasse, in 1921-1922 and the years following. Anything more is simply the putrid product of a diseased and vindictive police-brain.

6. The 'Plot' Against Lenin In 1918

6. No less foul is the charge that four months after the revolution, that is, in March 1918, "Bukharin and his group of so-called Left Communists and Trotsky and his group, jointly with the Left Social Revolutionists," plotted to overturn the Soviet government by murdering Lenin, Stalin and Sverdlov.

How does it happen that such staunch Stalinists as A. Bubnov, V. Yakovlev, Bela Kun, Alexandra Kollontay, the late Kuibyshev, M. N. Pokrovsky, A. Soltz, J. Unschlicht and numerous others, who never "deviated" from Stalin in the fight against "Trotskyism," and all of whom were in Bukharin's "group of so-called Left Communists"—never in these past 19 years told Stalin of the plot they had organized in March 1918 to assassinate him and Lenin and Sverdlov? And E. Yaroslavsky, "the famous Bolshevik leader and theoretician," as the Daily Worker calls him, who was also in Bukharin's group in 1918, and who is now cabling his execrations upon the defendants to the New York Stalinist press—how does it happen that he continued to conceal the plot from Stalin for the past 19 years? And if he has finally made it public, what exactly was his part in the "murder plot"?

The answer to these questions is that the ex-Left Communists did not need to tell Stalin about the "plot." He knew all about it and said so as far back as 1923. Lenin did not need to be told either, for he knew about it at an even earlier date. The "plot" is not news! All there ever was to know about it, has been known to a fairly wide public for some fifteen years.

The first to make known publicly the story already known in leading Russian party circles, was Bukharin himself, in an address to a party meeting in the Krasno-Pressensk district of Moscow in 1923. It was in the period of the first struggle against "Trotskyism" and Bukharin sought to emphasize the danger of factionalism by pointing to the extremes to which his group was impelled during the signing of the Brest-Litovsk peace in 1918. He reported that the Left Social Revolutionists who were then members of the Council of People's Commissars, and like him, opposed to the signing of the Brest Peace, had approached the Left Communists, jokingly, with the proposal to put Lenin under arrest for 24 hours, launch the revolutionary war against Germany, thus confront Lenin with the accomplished fact, and then re-elect him unanimously as chairman of the Council. It goes without saying that nothing ever came of this "proposal," for even assuming

that it was made seriously, it was not taken seriously.

Leadership Knew

The essential point is that the entire party leadership knew about the episode! On December 15, 1923, Stalin wrote in Pravda: "Never, I believe, did inner-party strife among the Bolsheviks reach such bitterness as during that period, in the period of the Brest Peace. It is well known (!), for example, that the Left Communists, who were at that time in a separate faction, reached such a point of bitterness that they seriously discussed replacing the then existing Council of People's Commissars with a new Council among the ranks of the Left Communists. A number of present oppositionists, comrades Preobrazhensky, Piatakov, Stukov and others, were among the faction of Left Communists."

Now, if all this was "well known" as early as 1923—at the very least—why is it now presented with the air of horror-at-crime? Why, after knowing all this, did Stalin have Bukharin elected editor of Pravda? Why did he put him in Zinoviev's place as chairman of the Communist International in 1926? (And why, by the way, if he knew that Rykov was a counter-revolutionist since 1905, as this repugnant creature Yaroslavsky now writes in the Daily Worker, did he have him elected to take Lenin's place in the government when Lenin died?)

On January 3, 1924, nine ex-Left Communists, including Radek, Piatakov and Pokrovsky, commenting on Stalin's article, elaborated as follows:

Radek, Piatakov Speak

"During the sessions of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet which were held in the Tauride Palace, while Lenin was making a report on Brest, a Left Social Revolutionist, Kamkov, approached Piatakov and Bukharin. In the course of the conversation, which not only did not bear the character of any kind of official negotiations but did not even have the character of a business-like preliminary probing of the ground on both sides, Kamkov, among other things, half-jokingly said: 'Well, what will you do if you attain the majority in the party? After all, Lenin will leave you and then you and we shall have to make up a new Council of People's Commissars. I think that, in that case, we shall have to elect Piatakov as Chairman of the Council.'....

"The 'proposal' of the Left S.R. was not only never rejected with indignation but it was never discussed at all, inasmuch as it was never discussed at all, for there was no proposal from the Left S.R.'s to the Left Communists....

And in the same issue of Pravda, Bukharin, while chiding the signers of the above letter, nevertheless wrote that "the letter of the comrades confirms in essence what I said."

No Plot At All

That is the whole story, made public more than 14 years ago! The entire party membership, at least those who read Pravda, knew about the "plot." Stalin tried to make a hypocritically solemn face over it; Lenin had roared with laughter about it, and afterwards wrote a tender and respectful memorial article on the occasion of the death of Proshyan, the main "instigator" of the "murder plot," who had, by the way, actually (and not fictitiously) taken part in the armed uprising of the Social Revolutionists against the Soviet power in July, 1918.

Whether the episode merits solemnity or uproarious laughter, is of course a matter of temperament or political judgment. But in any case, the reality has no more relation to the Stalin-Vyshinsky dime novel "murder plot" of 1938, than, let us say, the grumblings of Hugh S. Johnson and Raymond Moley against the New Deal have to a plot to assassinate Roosevelt, Farley and Ickes.

7. "If The Charges Were True--"

7. The Trial of the 21 is an obscene, hideous frame-up, a mockery of justice and of the human mind, a brutal blow struck at socialism and the labor movement. It was conceived by a terror-stricken bureaucracy which hopes that the bones of its victims will prop up its tottering rule. The pistol shots of the executioner will ring like the death-knell of the irretrievably doomed Bonapartist clique, for its days are numbered.

Even if the mind of man could assume for a moment that the defendants are guilty, it would be acknowledging the fact that the trials and the accusations are the most murderous possible indictment of the Stalin regime itself. For the trials organized by Stalin are his real confession of guilt!

If the charges are true, it means that collaboration with Stalin is impossible by actual test. For, virtually every person who has ever sought to work together with him, from Trotsky to Zinoviev to Bukharin to Yagoda and Yenukidze and Rudzutak, including thousands of others, have ended up by wanting to murder him. It is Stalin who says so! What is there so unmentionably frightful about Stalin's rule that turns all who

associate with him into assassins?

What Charges Mean

If the charges are true, it means that there is so much terror and intimidation in the party and the government, such a complete absence of any democracy, that everybody who thinks or believes differently from Stalin dares not say so openly, in a normal way, as was the case in Lenin's time, but must needs resort to official hypocrisy of "agreement" with the "line" and actual clandestine work against it. It is Stalin who says so!

If the charges are true, it means that the "socialism" established by Stalin is so horrible and repugnant that all the men who devoted themselves for twenty, thirty, forty and fifty years to the cause of socialism, have decided to renounce it in favor of fascism. By Stalin's implicit confession, it is under his regime that virtually all the old Bolshevik leaders of any significance, and hundreds of the later generation, preferred to work for the Gestapo and the British Intelligence Service rather than to work for Stalin. We always believed that once the proletariat was on the highroad to socialism—to say nothing of having attain-

ed it—its success would attract to its support millions from other classes. Shall we believe now that after "socialism" has been established, it is decadent, fascist capitalism that will attract to its side those who are—or at the very least, were—the best and most devoted leaders of the socialist proletariat? We must believe it, if we believe Stalin's accusations.

Cannot Be Believed

But we cannot believe them, and we do not. We believe only what is so tragically evident. The bloodstained tyrant of the Kremlin is driving a knife through the prostrate body of the Russian Revolution. He is befouling the very name of socialism.

Then we shall redouble our work to restore to socialism its fair name, to that socialism and its ideals which mean not only plenty and peace, but also freedom! Not even the gory hand of the Stalinist reaction can stay us in our march.

3. Documentary Evidence Lacking

3. The present trial has in common with all the preceding trials their most characteristic feature: the complete lack of material evidence to substantiate the countless crimes with which the defendants are charged.

The phenomenon is without precedent, from any point of view. Unlike the international spy organizations to which the defendants at the various trials have allegedly belonged, the famous terrorist organization of the Russian Social Revolutionists, which functioned to wipe out odious representatives of Czarism, never counted more than a couple of dozen persons engaged in conspiratorial work. At the height of its activity and influence, it rose to thirty members! Yet, despite the greatest precautions, they left numerous traces of their work—letters, passwords, documents, telegrams—which fell into the hands of the Czarist police (which was not distinguished by its intelligence or efficiency) and were later used against arrested terrorists.

Thousands Involved

In the present case, however, there are not a mere ten or twenty or thirty persons involved in a conspiracy. There are literally thousands! The activity of all of them goes back to 1932 and 1928; some of them began, as early as 1926; still others in 1921; and some (Bukharin and Trotsky!) in 1918, right after the revolution. The

indictment included among the conspirators—"the underground anti-Soviet groups of Trotskyists, Rights, Zinovievists, Mensheviks, Social-Revolutionists, bourgeois Nationalists of the Ukraine, White Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Central Asiatic Republics." In addition, the Governments of Germany, Japan, Italy, Poland, and England, and their combined Intelligence Services.

Yet, with all these thousands of persons involved, and despite all their years of activity, the G.P.U. and the Prosecutor's Office are unable to produce a single incriminating document, not a sliver of significant evidence!

Little To Show

Human credulity, human imagination, no matter how far they are stretched, simply cannot bridge the gap between such voluminous and widespread activity, and such perfectly flawless conspiratorial efficiency! For them, they would have to bridge the even wider gap between such miraculous, unearthly efficiency in concealment and smooth functioning, and the almost total lack of results produced by the work, for 10, 15 and 20 years, of 100, 500, 1,000, 2,000 and more persons.

And remember that these singularly unsuccessful plotters had at their disposal, on various occasions, and for long periods of time, the entire machinery of

British, Italian, German, Japanese and Polish governments, as well as of the Red Army, the G.P.U., and an endless number of other Soviet Commissariats and governmental institutions. Why should any ruling group put such men to death? What should it have to fear from such a self-avowed crew of wretched and luckless incompetents?

If, as usual, there is no material evidence, there are, as usual, the zealously repeated confessions. They differ from those made before only in that they are more fantastic, less credible. Faizulla Khodzhaev confesses that he had "not an oral nor a written but a silent agreement with Trotsky." This most—how shall we put it?—unusual kind of agreement is solemnly and unquestioningly recorded by the Prosecutor and the Court. Not written, and not oral; just a silent agreement.

And how, pray, even under "socialism," is a silent agreement arrived at between two persons separated by such a trifling as several thousand miles? By a wink or a nod? By ectoplasmic emanations from the two bodies involuntarily, meeting silently at some intermediate neutral point? By means of equally silent mental telepathy? By means of a Ouija board in Khodzhaev's harem? Or perhaps through the medium of Prosecutor Vyshinsky's instructions, not so silently given within the walls of a G.P.U. prison cell?

4. The 'Repudiation' By Krestinsky

4. The testimony of Krestinsky stands, in its most important aspect, in a class by itself. Krestinsky repudiated his previous confession, made in the notorious "preliminary investigation," a confession which formed a keystone in the structure of the Prosecutor's indictment. In none of the "terrorist" trials has anything like this occurred; the reluctant and half-defiant admissions of Smirnov in the August 1936 trial come closest to Krestinsky's outright self-repudiation. In no other case, however, has a defendant thrown the least suspicion upon the validity of these secret examinations during which the self-damning admissions are dictated to the prospective public victims of the frame-up.

It matters not at all, in our opinion, whether Krestinsky's sensational statement on the first day of the trial, was merely a piece of stage-play arranged by the Prosecutor, with the advance plan of a counter-repudiation the next day, or a genuine attempt by Krestinsky to break through the dreadful conspiracy of silence surrounding what goes on in the cells of the G.P.U. For even if it was deliberately planned by the Prosecutor, it had an effect entirely different from the one intended.

"Deliberately Perverted"

In explaining his denial in open court of the statement attributed to him in the records of the pre-

liminary inquiry, Krestinsky declared: "I deliberately perverted my evidence to the prosecutor in the preliminary investigation because I did not believe that if I talked as I am talking now it would get to the ears of our country's rulers."

Now, it is quite true that on the following day Krestinsky repudiated his repudiation. But no counter-recantation can destroy the enormous significance of his statement during the first session of the court. It is a statement which stands on its own feet, regardless of the motive that animated its maker or the Prosecutor. And it throws a glaring light on what goes on in the "preliminary investigation" and how the confessions are extorted.

Would Never Have Appeared

For what was Krestinsky saying in his sensational statement? That if he had not agreed, prior to the public trial, to sign the "confession" written for him by his police-tormenters, he would never have been allowed to appear in open court to make any kind of statement. That the only possibility left him to tell the truth to the workers of the Soviet Union ("our country's rulers"), was to acquiesce in the lies he was forced to sign before being permitted to come into court.

What we have always surmised is thus given unexpected confirmation. The hundreds and even thousands whose executions are

announced, who disappear totally from sight, without being brought to trial, are the men and women who could not be broken to the point where they agreed to anything and everything. And, conversely, only those are allowed into a public courtroom about whom the G.P.U. is quite sure, whom they have reduced to the level of moral wrecks, putty in the hands of the Prosecutor.

A Night In Jail

The repudiation was retracted? Yes. But we agree here with the statement by Dr. John Dewey that the retraction only confirmed and did not weaken the repudiation. It is not difficult to visualize the unspeakable hours that Krestinsky must have spent with the G.P.U. during the night between the first and second days of the trial. What monstrous pressure must have been exerted upon him during that time to force him to retract his first, highly revelatory declaration! What horrendous threats must have been made about the punishment of his nearest ones—hostages held by the police—to cause a man who had made such a clear-cut, meaning statement, to withdraw it the very next day. Wittingly or not, Krestinsky has thrown ten thousand times more light on the "mystery" of confessions than have all the muddled disquisitions on Dostoevsky and the "Russian soul" by the learned Slavologist, Mr. Walter Duranty.

5. Soviet Relations With Reich

5. One of the main points in the indictment charges the defendants in general, and Trotsky, Krestinsky and Rosengoltz in particular, with having been German spies since 1921! What timidity! Why, Kerensky, and with him thousands of anti-Bolsheviks, White Guards, Hearst writers and their similars, long

In fact, Kerensky and Co. made the same charge as far back as the middle of 1917, and even had forged documents to prove that Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Lunacharsky and other Bolshevik leaders, were agents of Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany.

Why does the Prosecution date its charge back only to 1921?

famous calumny of the Russian Revolution, borrowed from the arsenal of the White Guard counter-revolution in which Prosecutor Vyshinsky was so active during the first years after the Bolshevik victory, and charge that the Revolution itself was organized and led by German

Trotsky Reviews Trials

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ningrad "centre" of the Zinoviev group was accused of the murder of Kirov and 13 men were shot. After this, the "Zinoviev-Trotskyist Centre" was accused of the same crime and sixteen people were shot, not counting those shot during the G.P.U. investigation. In January of last year the "Parallel Trotskyist Centre" (Radek, Piatakov and others) was accused of the murder of Kirov, and 13 of the accused were shot. Finally, we now learn that the Right Opposition (Rykov, Bukharin) was likewise occupied with plotting the murder of this same Kirov. Thus all the leaders of the Bolshevik Party, people of great political and revolutionary experience, with names known to the whole world, during a number of years constructed "main", "united" and "parallel" terrorist centres and each of these centres plotted the murder of one and the same secondary Stalinist agent, Kirov, whose name became known only thanks to the trials.

According to the new charges, the terrorist plans of Bukharin and Trotsky began in 1928. In 1924 Trotsky was already secur-

ly plotting with a foreign power (Germany?). The most important of the new defendants were members of the Central Committee of the Party and government and daily met the "victims" marked by them. Moreover, Trotsky held in his hands the unlimited means provided by a military apparatus. And the result? The victim of this infernal conspiratorial activity beginning with 1918 proves to be no more than the same Kirov who was killed in turn by the White Guards, Leningrad Zinovievists, the United Centre, the Trotskyists, and finally the Bukharinists.

Having cut themselves loose from every responsibility, the totalitarian leaders have cut themselves loose from the elementary laws of common sense. The Moscow trials strike one as grandiose nonsense, as the delirium of a lunatic armed with enormous power. It would be no exaggeration to say that this part of the accusation is saturated with the spirit of totalitarian idiocy. We will show in the future that the accusation is no more meritorious in all its other parts.