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Debate of People's Frontism

Events of world significance crowded into the brief space of two weeks and occurring in the Soviet Union, Austria and Spain, have served to emphasize with all the sharpness of historical reality the horrible bankruptcy of the People's Front policy in reply to the continuing decay of world capitalism and the mad onrush of the dark forces of fascist reaction.

The brutal heel of Hitler trends mercilessly on the bowed backs of the Austrian workers, whose social-democratic and Stalinist leaders smoothed the road for Hitler via the dictatorships of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg. The Austrian coup of the "iron chancellor" of the Third Reich, whose advance to one conquest after another could not be stayed by the allegedly invincible People's Front, has given fresh heart to Franco's fascist forces in Spain. Using troops sent by Mussolini as the spearhead of a new drive, Franco is threatening Republican Spain with imminent annihilation.

Closely linked to the Austrian and Spanish events is the recent Moscow trial, in which Stalin, displaying his ardent love of democracy, has extirpated eighteen of the few remaining representatives of the October Revolution. This latest bloody deed of the Kremlin Bonaparte has sent a shudder of revulsion and horror through the ranks of world labor and contributed enormously to weakening the revolutionary struggle against fascism and war at a crucial turning-point in world history.

This, then, is the balance of all those policies summed up in People's Frontism. It spells only one thing—political bankruptcy. The entire world movement of labor is threatened with annihilation by the forces of fascism and imperialist war. The fraud of bourgeois democracy stands completely exposed in the era of declining capitalism as the precursor of fascism and war. Policies built upon the preservation of bourgeois democracy not only cannot bar fascism and stave off war—they actually pave the way for these twin evils.

Liberalism Gets Indigestion

Among the rats sent scurrying for cover by the latest trial, we notice conspicuously those two prime specimens of American liberalism, the Nation and the New Republic.

Navy Departs For Pacific War 'Games'

(Continued from page 1)

operate in the vicinity of Kingman Reef and others may approach Howland and Baker Islands, near the Equator, or steam even farther south. A squadron of six naval patrol planes now permanently stationed at Sitka, Alaska, and other planes and surface vessels to be temporarily based on Kodiak Island, Dutch Harbor or other Aleutian Island points, will join in the exercises. Detachments of the army garrison of about 20,000 men on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, the defenses protecting the Hawaiian naval base at Pearl Harbor and the cable and radio stations and Pan-American Airways station on the Midway Islands are also expected to participate directly or indirectly.

These doughty knights of journalism found themselves able to digest the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial with scarcely a murmur. By swallowing hard, they kept down the Radek-Piatkov successor, the execution of the generals, and the continuous purge.

Indeed, they performed even greater services by attacking and slandering every attempt to get at the truth of the trials and the purge, or to defend the conscience and future of mankind against them.

But, somehow, the trial of the 21 seems to have affected them with at least a touch of nausea.

"At the time of the Revolution and ever since, its enemies have said that it was conducted by traitors and mad-men. This is now the official view of the Stalin government," writes the New Republic. "When one looks at Bukharin's picture and reads his words, the whole past of the revolution clamors for defense and vindication," says that pious and noted defender of the Revolution, the Nation.

"The Moscow trial is a world issue," remarks the Nation in passing, after having told us for two years that the trials were a local Russian question over which we should not be concerned. In its March 9 issue, the New Republic protests that "there is no real reason to believe that it (the U.S.S.R.) has been seriously weakened by recent events"; and states exactly the contrary in the issue of the week following.

After having concluded two years ago that a hundred years would be needed to make up our minds about the trials, the Nation now concedes that "the coming weeks in European diplomacy and the next decade in the development of radical thought and action, will determine the real significance of the Soviet trial."

After having on a hundred occasions sung the perfections of Kremlin justice, the New Republic now discovers that the entire judicial system and procedure is worthless and "unconvincing."

A prime function of liberalism is to defend the status quo by providing a critical sauce to make it appetizing to those who might not otherwise find it palatable. Can it be that the Nation and New Republic are losing confidence in the unshakability of the Stalinist status quo?

Then the pay-off: After having proved publicly by their own written words, their own one hundred percent intellectual (not to speak of moral) helplessness and bankruptcy in the face of the challenge of the trials, they conclude that now "political thinkers" must "examine the premises of revolutionary doctrine."

Pardon us if we are in a hurry. And may we suggest that if our liberal contemporaries really want to do some "honest examining," they have given in their own pages a fairly convincing proof that the "premises" which require it are precisely those of that liberal (not, God forbid, revolutionary) doctrine which motivated, among other things, their "honest record on the trials."

On The Hippodrome Meeting

There have been called to our attention two phrases in the article published in the Appeal last week on the "Keep America Out of War" rally which are in error from the points of view both of fact and of political interpretation.

The article referred to the audience as "liberal." Whatever the conscious political opinions of the majority of the audience, it was in considerable part working class, and it was undoubtedly genuine in its anti-war sentiment. The crime of the "Keep America Out of War" committee, and all such movements, is precisely to exploit this sentiment, and to divert it into ineffective and downright reactionary channels.

The article also stated that the committee represented "the last attempt of the desperate pacifists..." Unfortunately, this is far from likely. In the deepening war crisis, we may expect this committee or other similar organizations to continue and to extend their perfidious role.

Coming immediately after the adoption of the more than one billion dollar navy budget by the House Naval Affairs Committee, and considered in conjunction with the unmistakable war policy of the administration, the annual naval maneuvers this year have much more than a mere routine significance—so much so that Hanson W. Baldwin, naval expert of the New York Times, is moved to describe them as a "rehearsal for war."

Diplomatic Moves
Other indications of the drive towards war are to be observed in the "peaceful" diplomatic moves of the Roosevelt ("I hate war") government directed toward securing the exclusion of Japanese trawlers from the fisheries in Alaskan waters and like efforts to settle with Great Britain the question of sovereignty over the tiny Phoenix islands of Canton and Enderbury in the South Seas.

The war program of the American imperialists, which is first of all designed to establish American hegemony in the Pacific and to guarantee investment and profit opportunities for American capitalists in the Far East, proceeds under the usual smoke-screen of pacifist propaganda intended to deceive the American workers into believing they will be fighting for "freedom and democracy."

Mask Is Off
For weeks on end, the Stalinists refrained from taking any clear and unequivocal position either for or against Roosevelt's big navy program. But at Chapel Hill, N. C. on March 3 Earl Browder made the C. P. position perfectly clear. He was replying to Representative Maury Maverick of Texas, an opponent of the navy bill who stands for "isolation." Speaking in Congress, Maverick had said, and said quite truly, that "every one of the Communists I know is in favor of the bill and the reason is they think we are going to take our navy over there and fight Japan and get Japan out of China because that is a me-

Stains That Won't Come Off



Stalin Saves Rakovsky For New Frame-up Trial

BY LI FU-JEN

In sparing the lives of three of the eighteen defendants in the Moscow frame-up trial, the counter-revolutionary Stalin regime displayed neither a sense of justice nor a disposition to be merciful. The prison sentences imposed on Christian G. Rakovsky, S. A. Bessonov and Dr. Pletnev were calculated to serve purely practical ends.

Role of Rakovsky
Secondly, that phase of the recent frame-up which relates to an alleged Trotskyist conspiracy with Japan against the Soviet Union, the United States and China was not completed. Rakovsky was the only defendant-witness used for the unfolding of this angle of the "crimes" of the Trotskyists. He said just sufficient to indicate that there was a "plot" and then it was left hanging in mid-air.

When he arrived in Tokyo in September, 1934 (after having spent six years in jail and exile) as head of a Soviet delegation to the International Red Cross Conference, he was, he said, met by "an important Japanese public figure." The pair discussed drawing Rakovsky "into work as a spy, an informer of a certain government." Rakovsky's reluctance to specify the Japanese government surrounds the "plot" with the necessary aura of mystery.

There were more mysterious conversations, and Rakovsky mentions the names of C. C. Yuranev and Dmitri Bogomolov, former Soviet ambassadors to Japan and China, respectively, who have been lodged in Stalin's jails for several months and who, reportedly, may be brought to trial in the near future.

How He Spied
Then Rakovsky relates how he returned to Moscow "with the credentials of a Japanese spy in my pocket." What spying activity did he thenceforth engage in on behalf of Japan?
"During 1935 and in the first half of 1936, i.e. prior to the trial of Kamenev and Zinoviev, I handed over through Naid five reports to the Japanese secret service." What was the nature of the spy information thus transmitted? (Vyshinsky was not interested, of course, in asking who "Naid" was.)

I handed over material regarding the influence of the abolition of the rationing system, on the level of wages, on the condition of the collective farms, on the fulfillment of the industrial and financial plan. Statements and conclusions were deliberately made sharply pessimistic in thick black colors. I did this in order to whet the appetite of the aggressors."
Spy Information
Rakovsky had nothing to say regarding the payment he received for this wonderful "spy information," which, incidentally, the Japanese imperialists could have gotten quite cheaply and easily by reading the New York Times' Moscow dispatches, the International Press Correspondence, the Moscow Pravda, or the Izvestia. This is unimportant, anyway. What was important was that Rakovsky involved the jailed Soviet ambassadors to China and Japan and thereby laid a basis for a new trial.

trial. This is why Rakovsky's life has been spared.

An obvious question occurs: If the trial was honest and above-board (which no honest and intelligent person believes), why were not Yurenev and Bogomolov confronted in court with Rakovsky's testimony? Why did they not occupy the defendants' bench with the twenty-one?

Victims Not Ripe
The answer is simple: the G. P. U. has not had sufficient time in which to break them and force them to confess. When that stage is reached they will be hailed into court, broken, to be confronted by the broken Rakovsky, who is being "saved" for that purpose and that purpose alone.

Rakovsky, the ex-oppositionist, last of the capitulators, had, of course, to involve Leon Trotsky, too. Trotsky, through the Communist League of China (Fourth International) was needed by the Japanese imperialists "to create an incident in China" which would give the Japanese imperialists "a desirable ground for being able to intervene in Chinese affairs." Meanwhile, a furious campaign of provocation and vilification is being conducted in China against the Chinese revolutionists, who are charged by the Stalinist allies of Chiang Kai-shek with being paid agents of Japan. In China, too, a favorable atmosphere is needed for the coming trial.

Everything of importance in this new amalgam is already sufficiently clear. Trotsky and his followers, in China and the U. S. A., are responsible for the Japanese invasion of China. At the same time, they plotted with the Japanese imperialists against the Soviet Union and the United States. Rakovsky, Yurenev and Bogomolov will be Stalin's witnesses in Moscow. Persons arrested recently in China and dubbed "Trotskyists" by the Stalinist press (although they are not and never have been members of the Communist League—see Socialist Appeal, March 5) will by their confessions, posthumous or otherwise, furnish the China angle of the frame-up.

The links between Moscow, the U. S. A., Mexico (Trotsky) and the Far East will be furnished, in part at least, by the Robinson-Rubens couple now being "interviewed" by the G. P. U. in a Moscow jail.

But a frame-up is a frame-up, and Stalin's new effort will be no more convincing than its predecessors.

He "Helped Britain"
Continuing his testimony, Rakovsky said that "Piatkov wrote Yurenev regarding Bogomolov, the Ambassador to China, pointing out that a certain government was dissatisfied with his political line, that he was giving more help to Britain than to the government in question."

Piatkov is dead, but presumably Yurenev and Bogomolov are still sufficiently alive to be brought into a new treason

STALIN EXECUTES ANOTHER EIGHTEEN

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other three, as in previous trials, and had proclaimed them in his totalitarian press: "No mercy for the mad dogs!"

White Guard Prosecutor
Prosecutor Vyshinsky, who earned the privilege of framing-up and befouling the records of revolutionary fighters by his own record of fighting in the White Guard armies during the Civil War which followed the Bolshevik revolution, endeavored in his summation to distract attention from the cracks and fissures in the fraudulent trial structure by a stream of invective surpassing in vulgarity and malice anything previously heard in Stalin's totalitarian court-room.

He described all the defendants as "a stinking heap of human scum." Bukharin, who alone of all the defendants bore himself with some human dignity and firmness, he described as "a cross between a fox and a pig." To no avail! The hysterical declamations of this venal tool of Stalin, directed against Lenin's colleagues, architects of the first workers' state, did not and could not convince the world, especially the world of labor.

Bukharin, maintaining an unexpected nobility of bearing, some last shreds of independence (much to the irritation and discomfort of Stalin's prosecutor, who had reason to fear that a monkey-wrench might be thrown into the machinery of the frame-up), blasted holes in the flimsy fabric of the trial both in his "testimony" and in his last speech to the court. Reading between the lines of his speech, one could discern a bitter hatred of the criminal Stalin regime.

Exposes Falsehoods
The former chairman of the Communist International vigorously denied that he was a murderer and stoutly repudiated the testimony of Sharangovich that he had given the latter instructions for spying in the interests of Poland. Going still further, he denied even knowing Sharangovich or the members of the "bloc" whom Sharangovich allegedly represented. Sharangovich, playing out to the end the role assigned to him, promptly called Bukharin a liar. Bukharin treated the interruption with merited contempt — by ignoring it.

Even more revealing was Bukharin's declaration that he had "confessed" to the crimes charged against him from despair in prison. "It was not the evidence that broke me down," he said. "It was the solitude in prison." (New York Times, Mar. 13.)
These precious words, spoken by a once eminent revolutionist on the edge of the grave dug for him by the counter-revolutionary Stalin regime, tear to shreds the last doubt any honest, intelligent person may have harbored concerning the character of the trial. They rip open the frame-up at the seams. Not all of Bukharin's equivocal and hazy admissions of guilt in general, interspersed as they are throughout the trial proceedings and Bukharin's final address to the court, can destroy this damning indictment of Stalinism.

Daily Covers Up
That delectable organ of "democracy" in this country, the Stalinist Daily Worker, which is merely an extension abroad of Stalin's prostitute press, printed on March 14 the "last statements" of Stalin's latest victims, and managed to do so without giving a single word of Bukharin's accusatory assertions! Honest members and followers of the Communist Party must ask themselves why, for other papers carried them in full.

Bukharin's damning indictment of Stalinism must be taken in conjunction with Krestinsky's accusatory statement to the court on March 2 at the commencement of the trial proceedings.

Conclusion: This trial, like its predecessors, was false and fraudulent. Eighteen of the twenty-one are dead. The other three have gone to a living death. But history has already nailed the executioners and their masters to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of the Stalinist high priests will not avail to redeem them.

Trotsky On Hearst

The APPEAL has received the following communication from Leon Trotsky:

"During the Moscow trial the London Daily Express asked me to give them an exclusive article upon the trial. Cabling the article, I did not have the faintest idea that it would return from London and appear in the Hearst papers.

"Let the various bigots who support Stalin-Vyshinsky make what they can of this occurrence. I am not greatly moved. It is by no means a question of literary 'collaboration' with Hearst. My task and that of my collaborators during these days was to launch into world circulation through all accessible channels the greatest possible number of facts and arguments against the executioners and thus attempt to stay their hand. If I should have to post placards, warning the people of a cholera epidemic, I should equally utilize the walls of schools, churches, saloons, gambling houses, and even worse establishments.

"LEON TROTSKY."
"Mar. 3, 1938.

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