

# THE BULLETIN

STATEMENT ON THE BANNING OF  
THE MILITANT AND LABOR ACTION

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WHAT IS THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

By GEORGE MARLEN

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A REPLY TO SHACHTMAN

By J. C. HUNTER

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OEHLER : 1939, 1933, 1943

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THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION

A SIGNIFICANT PHRASE FROM TROTSKY'S PEN

THE RED STAR PRESS

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STATEMENT ON THE BANNING OF THE MILITANT  
AND LABOR ACTION

**A**S reported in recent weeks, the Post Office authorities held up a number of issues of The Militant and later also of Labor Action, organs of the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party, respectively. While we are sharply and irreconcilably opposed to both these organizations, no less so than to the Socialist Party and the Stalinist Party, and regard all these parties as incurably opportunist, we are not indifferent, nor can we be indifferent to the attempts of the capitalists to suppress these publications.

We are motivated exclusively by political considerations. Attacks by the capitalist "democratic" authorities upon any political current within the working class at bottom are directed at the working class itself. The capitalist suppression of free speech robs the workers of the possibility of freely studying different ideas and programs and making a free choice of the tendency to follow. On the one hand, if the Marxist tendency is attacked, the harm to the cause of the proletariat is too obvious to require elucidation. On the other hand, the capitalist persecution of opportunist tendencies harms the workers because it reinforces the illusion that these tendencies are truly revolutionary and therefore fall under the persecution of the class enemy. Moreover, these attacks are used by the opportunist leaders to embellish their masquerade as revolutionaries. Such undoubtedly was the case in China in 1927. The ferocious suppression of the Chinese Stalinist Party left the firm conviction in the mind of many workers throughout the world that the Stalinist Party was the authentic revolutionary leader of the toilers. As a matter of fact, it was precisely that Party, as a tool of the counter-revolutionary Soviet bureaucracy, which laid the ground for the destruction of the Chinese revolution and its

own suppression. Not one iota different in a political sense was the case of the suppression of the Stalinist and Socialist parties by Hitler, Mussolini and Franco. Many workers retained the illusion that these parties were real battlers against Fascism, whereas these parties in actuality paved the way for Fascism by their reactionary policies.

Freedom of the press is not an abstract but a concrete and above all a class question. Depending upon the point of view, freedom of the press can be found everywhere today. There is complete "freedom of the press" in Germany today — for Hitler and the Nazis. Under capitalist "democracy" a limited amount of freedom of the press is allotted at times not only to pseudo-revolutionary currents but even to Marxism. But the sham nature of this freedom comes into full view during sharp turns in historical development. Then under the guise of defending freedom of expression even the limited amount of that freedom is taken away. The workers then are regaled with the spectacle of the leaders of capitalist "democracy" standing up in public and boasting of "inviolable freedom" of the press while their bureaucratic functionaries suppress the publications of newspapers criticising the official policy.

Fascism suppresses all the rights of the workers and all the freedom of expression, except its own, by brutal means, through unprecedented bloody tortures and murders. Capitalist "democracy" suppresses liberties at first by underhand, sneaky methods, then by more open and violent means, and gradually prepares the situation for Fascism to take over. History clearly teaches this fact. Such was the case in Germany where the democratic republican government prepared the ground for Hitler. Be it remembered that the President of that republic, elected primarily by the So-

cialist votes, "democratically" opened the door to Fascism by placing the Nazis in power. Such was the case in France in 1939. Freedom of the press was abolished, the Stalinists and other currents and parties were suppressed - all in the name of democracy - and the French imperialists opened the gates to Hitler and the Gestapo to establish fascism in France.

A glaring example of the hypocrisy of capitalist-democratic freedoms, of the fact that capitalist "democracy" in the present epoch paves the road to Fascism, was recorded in Spain. Needless to argue, had the Spanish working class been led to form a Soviet Republic based on real toilers' democracy, Franco might never have come to dominate Spain, and the power of Fascism might have been shaken in Italy and in Germany. Unfortunately the Spanish working class was caught in a Stalinist-Socialist trap. The Spanish toilers were tricked into following the policy of setting up a capitalist "democracy" which took Franco and other Fascists under its wing and even placed them in government posts. This Spanish capitalist "democracy" paralyzed the workers' efforts to crush Fascism. This Stalinist-Socialist-Republic an "democracy" gradually suppressed all freedoms in Loyalist Spain and behind the shield of this suppression and enforced confidence in its policy, sabotaged the fight against Franco. As a result the bloody hands of Hitler and Mussolini as well as the hands of reaction in other countries were strengthened.

Finally, we believe it is our duty to state that Cannon and Shachtman, the respective leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party, bear a share of responsibility for the unprecedented rise of reaction. Within the space of this statement it is impossible to go into detail to show point by point how the policies of these leaders served to prop up reaction. One example will suffice. We have mentioned Spanish "democracy" which proved to be a treacherous, counter-revolutionary force that upheld capitalist slavery and opened the road to Fascism in Spain. On the political

nature of capitalist "democracy" Cannon and Shachtman need not be lectured. These people who show great familiarity with the documents of the Comintern know Lenin's thesis on capitalist "democracy". This thesis was the major line of the founding Congress of the Third International. Lenin never abandoned his line on bourgeois-democracy. On an anniversary of the founding of the Third International he repeated his ideas on the subject: "Bourgeois democracy can be backed only by those who support capitalist slavery." The Trotskyites made the admission that bourgeois-democracy in this period of capitalism paves the way for Fascism: "To admit the truth would be to confess that bourgeois democracy is not the opposite of fascism, but paves the way for fascism in this epoch of capitalist decay." (The Militant, May 24, 1941.)

That is true. It is clear that people who gave support to Spanish bourgeois democracy really helped to pave the way for Fascism in Spain and strengthened the fascistisation of other countries. Such, precisely, was the role of the Trotskyite leaders - by their own inadvertent confession! Referring to the Civil War in Spain and calling themselves "revolutionary Marxists," the Trotskyites stated:

"In that struggle, by the way, the revolutionary Marxists were in favor of giving material support to the Spanish Loyalists because we recognized it to be a struggle between fascism and capitalist democracy and between the two we prefer the latter." (The Militant, May 24, 1941. Our emphasis.)

The thesis that in Spain the struggle was between capitalist democracy and Fascism was a Stalinist fraud. In actuality capitalist democracy in Spain paved the way for Fascism, performing the same function it had performed previously in Germany and still earlier in Italy. The fight in Spain was between the capitalist reaction led by Franco and the toiling masses misled by the "democratic" republicans, Stalinists and Socialist bureaucrats. These treacherous misleaders prevented

the workers from establishing a workers' republic and attached the masses to capitalist democracy. In teaching the workers to prefer capitalist "democracy" Cannon and Shachtman aided the Republican—Stalinist—Socialist betrayers to confine the masses within the framework of capitalist slavery and thus facilitated the victory of Franco.

people who promote it; the tragedy of history is that it hits primarily the workers who are the victims of opportunist traps and betrayals. The sooner the Trotskyite workers arrive at the realization of the reactionary character of Cannon's and Shachtman's policies the sooner will a real struggle commence against "democratic" and Fascist imperialist reaction.

The grim irony of history is that reaction boomerangs against the very

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January 1943

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OUR CHARGES AGAINST  
CANNON AND SHACHTMAN ARE  
PROVED BY DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE IN —

THE BULLETIN

READ —

" SPAIN "

" CANNON'S ' CLEAN ' BANNER "

" THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION "

AND MANY OTHER ARTICLES

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WHAT IS THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

In many major questions the Socialist Workers Party has more than one position. A good example is the question of what Party is to lead the workers in a struggle against the capitalists.

In general the Trotskyite leaders get their followers to believe that the Socialist Workers Party is the Party which conducts a fundamental struggle against the capitalist class. Every advanced worker familiar with the history of class struggle knows that there can be only one Party leading the fight against the capitalists. The Trotskyite leaders, however, transcend this Marxist axiom. Today, they focus the attention of their followers upon the building of a party separate and apart from the Socialist Workers Party to carry on a fight against the capitalist class. This separate party the Trotskyite leaders envisage is a Labor Party. They paint a picture of the development of a Labor Party in America, making it appear it can be different from the pro-capitalist British Labor Party, capable of clashing on fundamentals with the capitalist class:

"A Labor Party which arises in the America of today must tend to come into collision on fundamentals with the capitalist class. This is the epoch of the death agony of capitalism. The war is an expression of this death agony. A Labor Party, like that of England arising during a period when capitalism still seemed endowed with indefinite possibilities of expansion, could comfortably adapt itself to a capitalist outlook. But a Labor Party arising in America during the precipitous decline of world capitalism can have a very different development." (Fourth International, November 1942, p. 326)

It is clear that this pro-Labor Party thesis of the S.W.P. is really

nothing more than a prognosis. No specific, actually existing Labor Party is indicated by the S.W.P. as coming "into collision on fundamentals with the capitalist class." Other statements could be cited to show that a specific Labor Party as the American Labor Party in New York is condemned by the Trotskyites for its programme and policies (though the S.W.P. nevertheless periodically urges the workers to vote for candidates of the A.L.P.). Therefore, the thesis of the S.W.P. leaders on the Labor Party boils down to a prediction as to the possible course of development of what they call a "real independent Labor Party."

This is not the first time that the Trotskyite leaders have dealt with the issue of the Labor Party. About seven years ago they presented an entirely different prognosis from the current one. In the New International for March 1935, the Trotskyites published an article "The Problem of the Labor Party" in which they delivered a powerful blast against the whole concept of a Labor Party.

Discussing the subject in the light of British and American experiences, the 1935 article arrived at the very opposite prognosis from the one the Trotskyites offer today:

"The only genuine labor party is the party of revolutionary Marxism. Past experiences in this country - not to mention the experiences in other lands! -- show that the evolution of the British Labour party, namely, its degeneration from a great progressive force which separated the proletariat politically from the bourgeoisie to a reactionary obstacle to progress which ties the proletariat politically to the bourgeoisie, is accomplished in the United States under conditions of capitalist decline in a far more telescoped period of time."

The 1935 article took cognizance of the tremendous changes which have occurred in the last half century and denounced those who attempted to ignore these changes and foist upon the workers a policy which has become obsolete:

"To attempt to foist upon the American revolutionary movement the obsolete advice given by Engels to the Marxist emigrants in the United States of fifty years ago, and to conclude from it that it is our task to found a Labor Party now, is to do violence to the whole spirit of Marxism, is to ignore the tremendous changes that have taken place throughout the world (the United States not excepted) in capitalism, in the labor movement and in the revolutionary movement." (Ibid.)

The conclusion drawn by the Trotskyite leaders was that Marxists must not initiate or support the building of a Labor Party:

"For, it is not the business of the revolutionary Marxists, above all in the present stage of the relationship between capitalist disintegration and social reformism, to initiate or to help organize and found in addition to their own party another party for the 'second class citizens,' for the 'backward workers,' a 'Labor' Party, i.e., a third capitalist party, even if composed predominantly of workers." (Ibid.)

Another article in 1935 categorically declared the Labor Party would be a reformist obstacle from which nothing could be expected except futile reformist endeavors:

"...as all history proves, a Labor Party even when it has a genuine trade union base, is a reformist party and nothing else can be expected from it..."

"Its main function would be to canalize the discontent of the working class into more or less futile reformist endeavors and to swerve the movement from the revolutionary path." (New International-

al, August 1935, p. 146)

This position, though advanced by the Trotskyite leaders only as a paper proposition to be cast aside at the first convenient moment, is nevertheless correct.

Has anything changed since 1935 which would make the anti-Labor Party prognosis given then by the Trotskyite leaders incorrect or a political anachronism? Have the past seven years presented even the slightest basis for believing that a Labor Party can have what the Trotskyites now call "a very different development" from the reactionary British Labor Party? There is not a single fact in the whole history of the past seven years which justifies the most minute hope that a Labor Party can be anything but a reformist, i.e., pro-capitalist organization. What is the best proof? Concrete objective facts readily available to those who want to see. Look at the A.L.P.! This organization originated in 1936, only a year after the Trotskyites prognosticated that a Labor Party in the United States must repeat the development of the reactionary British Labor Party in telescoped time, that the whole idea of a Labor Party is a violation of Marxism, that Marxists must not initiate or support the building of a Labor Party. Since its foundation in 1936, the A. L. P. has fulfilled the Trotskyist prognosis of the year before in every single detail.

A jingo, class-collaborationist, pro-capitalist, bureaucratic machine divided between the Social Democratic liberal clique and the Stalinist gang such is the American Labor Party, Nevertheless, though its 1935 anti-Labor Party prognosis has been corroborated to the letter by the concrete unfolding of events, the Trotskyite leadership now stand on a pro-Labor Party prognosis. In a word, having known the truth in advance and then seeing it unfold before their very eyes the Trotskyite leaders are deliberately dangling mirages before the workers, entangling them in a chase after false hopes. This is what the line of the S.W.P. adds up to when debested of its "Marxist" verbiage.

\* \* \*

**A** BRIEF review of the history of the American Trotskyist movement will reveal a number of its high-vaulting political feats not only with the Labor Party thesis, but also with the Socialist Party, with the Stalinist Party, and with all sorts of fake progressives. When the Trotsky group was expelled by the Lovestone crew of political charlatans, Cannon, Shachtman and Abern, the leaders of the group, set up a "fraction of the Communist Party" giving support to the Stalinist machine headed by the Lovestone leadership. After Stalin kicked out Lovestone and installed in power the equally putrid but the less autonomy-minded Browder-Foster gang, Cannon, Abern and Shachtman continued their line of supporting the Stalinist trap called the Communist Party:

"In the past, when we were a faction of the Third International endeavoring to reform that body, we generally supported the candidates of Stalinism." (The Militant, October 13, 1934)

Here is a vivid illustration of how they gave support to Stalinism. During the course of the elections in 1931 the Trotskyite newspaper engaged in the following sort of electioneering for the Stalinist party, whose opportunist program, they knew, was centered around the reactionary fake theory of "Socialism in one country":

"The Communist party is the only one in the field that has not waited for the elections to give 'promises' to the workers. Alone it has endeavored to mobilize the hard-pressed labor movement for militant resistance to the capitalist offensive, day in and day out. It alone embodies the link between the daily struggle of the workers and their final struggle for complete emancipation from capitalist oppression. It alone has earned the suffrage of the working class.

"It is for the principles of Communism, for its militant struggle against the capitalist class,

because of the fact that it is our party, the only fighting revolutionary party, the only workers' party, that it behooves every worker to support it in the elections." (The Militant, October 24, 1931)

Only three months before Hitler came to power chiefly through the treachery of Stalinism, the Trotskyite leaders were still electioneering for the Stalinist Party:

"Our differences with the party's policy, which isolates it from the masses and impedes the development of the revolutionary movement in this and other countries, cannot eliminate the fact that the Communist Party is the only working class party which stands for the interests of the working class today and tomorrow.

"The Left Opposition therefore ranges itself alongside its party and calls upon every worker to cast his vote for his party, the Communist party!" (The Militant, Oct. 29, 1932)

The Trotskyite leaders did not even attempt to analyze the details of the Stalinist opportunist platform, and did not expose the deadly truth that every vote for that party politically and historically represented a vote for intensifying the Stalinist plague. Their opportunist, utterly pro-Stalinist work is attested to by their own statement:

"In general the League did not attempt to go into a criticism of the details of the C.P.'s election platform. We were concerned mainly that the workers give the C.P. their support since, primarily, every such vote meant a vote for revolution." (The Militant, October 20, 1934)

It does not require much argument to prove that the very opposite effect was produced by having the workers vote for the Stalinist C.P. Each vote represented a vote not for revolution but for reaction and blackest counter-revolution.



WHEN the Comintern had accomplished one of the blackest betrayals in the history of politics, bringing Fascist rule upon the German proletariat, the line of "Bolshevizing" the Comintern became untenable.

The Stalinist Party was glaringly incurable. A Labor Party, the Trotskyites themselves declared, could be nothing but a brake upon the workers' struggle against capitalism. Was it to be perhaps the Trotskyite party — at that time the Workers Party led by Cannon-Shachtman? No The Trotskyite "Bolsheviks," who professed to shape a revolutionary instrument for the toiling masses along the irreconcilable pattern established by Lenin, suddenly declared they obligated themselves to make a Bolshevik organization out of — the Socialist Party! All along, and even as late as April 1936, the Trotskyite leaders correctly adjudged Social democracy to be bankrupt. They insisted upon a sharp break with that rotten, treacherous movement:

"It is necessary not merely to understand that social-democratic reformism is bankrupt; but, positively, to break sharply from Social-Democracy." (The New Militant, April 18, 1936)

But a few weeks later these self-styled "Bolshevik-Leninists" made a sharp about-face. They crawled into the stinking corpse, calling for its transformation into a party of revolutionary fight for Socialism:

"We obligate ourselves to work loyally and devotedly to build the Socialist Party into a powerful, united organization in the revolutionary struggle for Socialism." (The New Militant, June 6, 1936)

Thus, the Trotskyite Workers Party was buried by Cannon and Shachtman in the Social Democratic Organization.

Not only did the Trotskyite leaders reverse themselves on the question of the Social Democracy, but they cynically discarded the correct thesis on the independence of the party. Not

very long before they joined the Socialist Party, they wrote:

"Complete and unconditional political and organizational independence of a revolutionary party is the first prerequisite for its success." (L. Trotsky, The Militant, January 27, 1934, p. 2)

The unprincipledness of the Trotskyite dive into the Socialist Party is quite evident.

After a period of hibernation in the "stinking corpse," the stench became a bit too strong for the honest and quite discontented Trotskyite workers. When the Socialist Party which the Trotskyites allegedly delegated themselves to transform into "a powerful, united organization in the revolutionary struggle for Socialism," came out in support of the New Dealer, La Guardia, the Trotskyite leaders were compelled to demur. In consequence, the Trotsky group became "independent" by having themselves expelled. Then came the period of support to reformist swindlers <sup>Man and Reg</sup> as the plan in California, support to labor fakers Martin, Lewis and to lesser agents of imperialism, winding up recently with a vote for a Tammany Hall stooge, Alfange.

And while the Trotskyites had been for years putting down in words that Stalinism is a plague, and the chief plague at that — "Stalinism is today the chief plague of the working class movement" (Leon Trotsky, The New International, August 1935) — in deeds the Trotskyite opportunists struck up horse deals with the Stalinist bureaucrats in the trade union field (Local 302 of the Food Workers Union) and sent their followers to the polls to vote for Eugene Connolly, Browder's stooge in the Stalinist-controlled section of the A.L.P. Whenever and wherever possible the Trotskyite leaders behind a smoke-screen of sham criticism propped up Stalinism under the pretext that such support was serving the interest of the workers.

The American Trotskyites recently celebrated the fourteenth anniversary

of their tendency in the United States. Having piloted their honest followers along an amazingly winding path, Cannon, Shachtman and their associates for a period (1928-1929) tied their trusting victims to the counter-revolutionary trap operated by Lovestone. They continued attacking their followers to the same trap when Browder took it over. Following their brief solitude Cannon and his henchmen led their victims into unity with Reverend Muste with whom they formed amidst much fanfare a new "Bolshevik" organization, the Workers Party. Then they guided their followers and what few Musteites remained with them into the camp of Social Democracy. Back to "independence" again the Trotskyite self-styled "Leninists," in the fifteenth year of their "Bolshevism," have found for their victims another mirage to chase: a Labor Party-to-be, which as they had promised in the case of the Stalinist Party, their own Workers Party, and the Socialist Party, they now say will approach the issue of Power! Only yesterday they gave lip service to the correct position that in the epoch of the decline of capitalism a "Labor Party" can be nothing but a tool of reaction. Today the Trotskyite leaders deceive their followers with stories that a "Labor Party" can be an instrument of struggle for the overthrow of capitalism!

For fourteen years American radical workers have been falling into the opportunist trap known as the Trotsky organization. During those years great events have passed over

the scene of history. To date the sum total of these events has spelled disaster for the toilers. Class conscious workers will ask themselves to what extent have they added to the power of the workers to resist their class foes in this period of black world-wide reaction. What can the thinking, honest Trotskyist worker say upon frankly and unflinchingly taking stock of the fourteen years of the existence of the American Trotsky group? The Trotsky leadership during these vital years has led its followers on a ceaseless series of wild goose chases. Posing as an independent revolutionary tendency, the Trotsky group has acted as a medium for attaching the workers to a big variety of forms of reaction ranging from Stalinism through Social Democracy to the jingo American Labor Party. Fourteen years of support to reaction - this is a precise summary of the fourteen years of the existence of the American Trotsky group. To the extent of their influence, the Cannons and Shachtmans have materially added in bringing about the present profound political paralysis of the masses.

What, then, is the "Socialist Workers Party" headed by Cannon? Shorn of all disguise, it is a product of the degeneration of the Comintern, with this Party's political roots buried in Trotsky's role in the Stalinist bureaucratization of the Soviet Union. The patient study of Trotsky's role opens up to view the whole internal political corruption of this branch of pro-Stalinist opportunism. The path toward the elimination of the degenerated Comintern lies through the winning of the advanced workers from the Trotskyist current which for two decades has served as a lightning-rod for the Comintern counter-revolution.

George Marlen

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A REPLY TO SHACHTMAN

In a polemical series called "China In the War," Max Shachtman accuses one of the contributors to THE BULLETIN, G. Marlen, of being "the master of Pseudo-Marxian Thaumaturgy and Obfuscation." One might imagine from this kind of writing that Shachtman is a strict dealer in objective facts. The way Shachtman handled the specific point around which he wrote in the course of making his accusation, however, is a better measure of his political character than are his linguistic acrobatics.

Shachtman chose to quote an article by Marlen called "Labor Action's Own Facts on Malaya and Burma," published in THE BULLETIN of September 1942. As the title of the article indicates, the Shachtmanite paper was accused of spreading fictions about the events in Malaya and Burma. The charges against Labor Action were based on certain statements it made concerning the British imperialists' role in the Japanese occupation of Malaya and Burma. The Shachtmanites have the position that there is a real war in progress amongst the imperialists, like in 1914-1918. The semi-colonial country, China, according to Shachtman's line, is a participant in this "Second Imperialist War" as a tail to the "democratic" kite, a mere pawn in the Anglo-American imperialists' game. As one of the vital "proofs" of the Shachtman line, Labor Action made the claim that the "democratic" imperialists used the Chinese troops against the Japanese in Burma and Malaya. Employing the term "we" to mean the "democratic" imperialists, Labor Action wrote:

"Today, when we seek to use China's masses and China's soldiers in the imperialist war (the use of Chinese troops to retain Burma for the British Empire is an excellent example of what we have in mind)..."  
(Labor Action, July 20, 1942)

". . .we found Chinese troops

were mighty handy for use in Malaya, Burma and a few other points. They could serve well in the imperialist struggle with Japan." (Ibid.)

Marlen, in THE BULLETIN, exposed these Shachtmanite statements as sheer inventions. Marlen presented material in which the bourgeois press itself revealed that the British rulers refused to use the big Chinese force that was available.

Which was the obfuscationist in this matter — THE BULLETIN or the Shachtman paper, Labor Action? Let us see what Shachtman himself had to say subsequently concerning this affair.

In his series, "China In the War," (October 1942) where he charges Marlen with being a perverter of facts, Shachtman deals with this question of the Chinese troops. But we find that Shachtman without any announcement of the fact, has now taken a position which completely reverses that of Labor Action of July 20, 1942, quoted above. Shachtman now suddenly writes of —

". . .the very well known fact that in spite of its desperate plight during the Japanese invasion of Burma, the British military command hesitated up to the last minute to send into battle the Chinese mechanized units made available in Chinese Kunming for use in the Burmese campaign and, at the very end, allowed a small number to enter, with British agents standing at the border counting them as they passed by." (New International, October 1942, p. 275)

Shachtman goes on to speak of —

". . .this business of the English refusing to permit more than a few Chinese into Burma." (Ibid.)

Further on he states that —

". . .the British hesitated as

much to call upon Chinese natives in Singapore as they did Chiang's troops." (Ibid.)

And finally, Shachtman tells of--

". . .the refusal of the British to work militarily with the Chinese in Burma." (Ibid.)

Thus, Shachtman inadvertently vicinates the charges made by Marlen against Labor Action of July 20, 1942.

Had Shachtman changed his position on this point openly and honestly no issue could be made of it in itself. But the maneuver was executed in typical opportunist manner. Shachtman keeps utterly silent about the fictions presented in Labor Action of July 20, 1942 and hopes that the reader either never saw them or has forgotten them. Nowhere does he in any way mention or refer to Labor Action's hokum, refuted by Marlen, about the British use of the Chinese troops in Burma and Malaya. Meanwhile, he accused others of being obfuscationists.

\* \* \*  
T HIS Shachtmanite dishonesty, which is indicative of the political character of the Workers Party leadership, is by no means the whole point involved. How does it happen that it was Labor Action and not THE BULLETIN which cooked up phantasies concerning the Burma-Malaya affair? Was this an accident or did it flow from two opposite political lines, one, Labor Action's, which is based on invented situations, the other, THE BULLETIN'S, based on objective facts? Let us grant, for the sake of the argument, that when Labor Action of July 20, 1942 was written, the facts on Burma-Malaya were not yet known. Nevertheless, there is still the question of why Labor Action invented this particular kind of story, the yarn that the British imperialists used the Chinese troops against the Japanese in Burma and Malaya.

As we have mentioned, the Shachtman group holds that there is a real war in progress amongst the imperialists similar to that of 1914-1918 and

that China is merely a tail to the "democratic" kite. The fable about the British use of Chinese troops against the Japanese obviously flowed organically from the need to make the Shachtmanite line look plausible. It is significant to observe that in 1914-1918 nobody had to fabricate tales about the imperialists' use of colonial troops. In those days of real inter-imperialist war, the colonial troops were used by the hundreds of thousands on wide fronts. It is indicative of the present situation that "Marxists" a la Shachtman have to make up myths to give the appearance of reality to their line of "the-war-like-that-of-1914-1918."

Shachtman had to eat the words of his own Labor Action, characteristically concealing the maneuver behind a smokescreen of self-assured-sounding verbiage. What he lacks in facts he makes up in sarcasm. He presents the position of THE BULLETIN on the present situation as follows:

"According to him [Marlen], there is but one war going on: the war between the allied imperialists (England, Germany, France, Italy, America, Japan) on one side, and Soviet Russia and China on the other side. Literally? Yes, literally! You don't mean that? Yes, we do, or at least Marlen does. You mean that the battles between England and Germany, Germany and Poland, Italy and Greece, Greece and Germany, Germany and France, Belgium, Holland, Scandinavia, the United States and Japan, Japan and England -- that all these battles are a fake? Yes, exactly and literally, at least according to Marlen. But surely you don't mean -- Excuse please, but we do mean it, at least Marlen does. Then the whole thing -- Yes, the whole thing is a fraud, a show, a facade, a trick, a bitter joke. The imperialists are not fighting among themselves at all. The fact is -- Marlen has it on a reliable tip -- that all the imperialists are secretly allied, and they have an agreement to help Germany crush Russia and Japan crush China, and then all will be well with the world. But this is dirty business! Yes,

and to cover it up they are going through an elaborate pretense at fighting each other. But try as they will, they won't fool Marlen. Shachtman? Yes! Marlen? No!" (Max Shachtman, "China In the War," The New International, October, 1942, p. 275)

Clearly, if punctuation marks were facts, Marlen's position would be torn to shreds by this barrage. Let us penetrate this cloud of words and extract what is pertinent and correct, leaving fiction aside. Against Marlen's line that the imperialists are shamming in their "war" amongst themselves, Shachtman marshals the following battles: 1. England and Germany, 2. Germany and Poland, 3. Italy and Greece, 4. Greece and Germany, 5. Germany and France, Belgium, Holland, Scandinavia, 6. The United States and Japan, 7. Japan and England. This is truly an imposing array — if the facts concerned were as Shachtman makes them appear. What are the facts, however?

In previous issues of THE BULLETIN we have dealt at length with these situations; we shall give here only a brief summary of the concrete facts we previously have presented and shall leave the reader to refer to THE BULLETIN for the main bulk of the specific documentary material. We shall consider all the situations listed by Shachtman.

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FIRST, the battle between Germany and Poland. When Shachtman lists this as something THE BULLETIN holds to be a sham, he simply falsifies THE BULLETIN'S position. The consistent position of all the contributors to THE BULLETIN is that the war in Poland was militarily actual, although politically it was reactionary on both sides.

In an article by Marlen dated only eight days after the September 1939 declaration of "war" by Chamberlain-Daladier, the actual war, confined to Poland, is contrasted to the make-believe war between the "democratic" and

Fascist ruling cliques:

"Numerous signs, multiplying, unmistakably attest to the fact that the actual war is confined to Poland, while the 'war' between German and French and British imperialism is a make-believe war." ("Why the Mock War In the West," THE BULLETIN, July-September 1939, pp. 4-5. Article dated September 11, 1939)

To give another example. Early in 1942, an article by Crane and Hunter, described the actual war in Poland:

"The gigantic Anglo-French naval forces, the combined 'Allied' air fleets, the huge French land forces, were held inactive, while real war raged in Poland." (THE BULLETIN, March 1942, p. 9)

On this point, however, Shachtman is guilty of falsifying a subsidiary point in the total position of THE BULLETIN.

Actual war raged in Poland in September 1939. But does this prove that amongst the big imperialist powers there is — or was from September 1939 — a real war? What were the Anglo-French imperialists doing while their "ally" Poland was being ravaged with fire and sword?

While Hitler devastated Poland, the "democratic" powers on the Western "Front" reported attempts to "seek contact" with the Nazi "enemy," they fired some artillery and entered a small wood in Saarbrücken and abandoned it without a fight, they dropped leaflets over Germany, and so on and so forth. And when Poland was crushed, there set in the notorious "Sitzkrieg" days. The huge French army was kept in idleness, playing checkers, reading detective stories, and the like. The British forces played a similar role. Not a finger was lifted by the "democratic" imperialists to relieve their "ally" Poland. Shachtman points to the terrific and very real battle between Germany and Poland. But, like a good diplomat, he carefully keeps #1-

lent about the "Sitzkrieg" that was "fought" between the Anglo-French and the German imperialists. Nevertheless, he uses the battle of Germany and Poland to "prove" that there is and was real war amongst the major imperialist powers! We have no doubt whatever that Shachtman has not forgotten about the "Sitzkrieg" days. His memory is very good, but conveniently manipulated to suit his polemical needs.

THE soldiers on the Western "Front" were idle, but not the imperialists. The eight months of "Sitzkrieg" — for which a mountain of alibis was invented by the imperialists and the opportunists — was a period of preparation for the next major step in the imperialists' machinations. In their plan there was a grand coup which was effected in May 1940 — the Fascization of France.

Two important events preceded the Nazi entrance into France; one, the visit of Sumner Welles to Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain and Daladier, and the other, the Nazi occupation of Norway. Acting as Roosevelt's confidential agent, Welles made a hasty dash to Europe shortly prior to the Nazi entrance into Norway, and held secret conversations with Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain and Daladier. Two rounds of discussions were held by Welles with each of these gentlemen. Then Welles returned to the U.S. and reported his conversations to Roosevelt. To this day, the contents of Welles' discussions have been kept secret from the masses. Here is a remarkable situation. Obviously, Hitler and Mussolini know what they talked about with Welles. The explanation cannot be given of "supplying information to the enemy." Why, therefore, the secrecy? The Welles conversations should not be thrown into an indiscriminate heap together with the usual secret diplomacy. These conversations must be placed against the background of the many years of material and political assistance which the international imperialists gave to Hitler and Mussolini, against the background of the betrayal of Poland by the "democratic" imperial-

ists only a few months before, and above all against the background of what followed Welles' discussions.

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SHORTLY after the Welles conversations there occurred the German occupation of Norway. Does not this prove there was real war amongst the big imperialist powers? How did the Anglo-French rulers behave during the occupation of Norway? Of the French forces virtually nothing whatever was heard. But the headlines blared that a gigantic battle was raging in the waters of the Skagerrak and Kattegat between the British and the German fleets, that the German fleet had been largely destroyed. At this point we discover that it is the imperialists, not Shachtman, who initiated the tactic of concocting yarns about "battles." The reports about the "greatest naval battle since Jutland" were an unmitigated fraud. The Chamberlain Government "sat tight" as long as it was feasible allowing the headline furor to take its effect and only later let it be known that the alleged sea battle around Norway had not taken place. The London Times made the following comment:

"It is evident from Mr. Churchill's statement that there has been no 'battle' in progress at sea in the last few days in the sense which has been conveyed to the public by the somewhat excited reports which have been reaching this country from Sweden, uncorrected until yesterday by any announcement of real events from the British Government." (April 12, 1940)

Churchill subsequently "explained" that for some "reason" the British fleet was "unable" to be present in the waters of the Skagerrak (speech reported in The New York Times, June 19, 1940)

The land "operations" of the British rulers consisted of flinging 1500 relatively raw troops with almost no equipment onto the Norway snows and slush. Leland Stowe's sensational report of this is worth quoting at length even in a brief review:

"Here is the first and only eye-witness report and the opening chapter of the British expeditionary troops' advance in Norway north of Trondheim. It is a bitterly disillusioning and almost unbelievable story. The British force which was supposed to sweep down from Namsos consisted of one battalion of Territorials and one battalion of the King's Own Royal Light Infantry. These totaled fewer than 1,500 men. They were dumped into Norway's deep snows and quagnires of April slush without a single anti-aircraft gun, without one squadron of supporting airplanes, without a single piece of field artillery. Ill-equipped, they were thrown into the snows and mud of 63 degrees north latitude to fight crack German regulars — most of them veterans of the Polish invasion — and to face the most destructive of modern weapons. The great majority of these young Britishers averaged only one year of military service." (New York Post, April 25, 1940)

After some fanfare and more "battles" in the newspaper headlines, the British withdrew even the handful of troops they had sent to Norway. This withdrawal had peculiar features which drew pointed comments in the Swedish press. A Swedish news agency correspondent reported:

"They are leaving in the most peculiar fashion. . . . This is shown by the fact that their motorized anti-aircraft guns were covered with canvas. They were not even standing by for any possible action." (Reported in Daily Mirror, May 4, 1940)

Even more significant was this report:

"The people who knew most about the British withdrawal were the Germans. The Norwegian officers were not told until the last minute." (The New York Times, May 6, 1940)

Such was the conduct of the British rulers, people who possessed enormous material resources, whose huge fleet commanded the waters to Norway,

whose army at that time already numbered nearly two million, equipped with the modern weapons of war built up through two decades since the end of the War of 1914-1918. Again it must be repeated that of the French imperialists nothing was heard, despite their also gigantic fleet, large air force and even vaster land forces. Does Shachtman's "battle of Scandinavia" prove the existence of real war between the Anglo-French and the German imperialists? Quite obviously it proves just the opposite of Shachtman's thesis.

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So far we have been dealing with the period up to May 1940, period referred to as the "phoney war" even in the capitalist press itself. But now we reach that most tremendous of all "battles" in Shachtman's list, Germany against France, Belgium and Holland. Here, indeed, is the test case.

In 1914 there was a real imperialist war. In France it manifested itself in the titanic struggle which carried the Kaiser's armies to within less than 25 miles of Paris, reaching the Marne by the beginning of September 1914. The French imperialists, though at many disadvantages, hurled in every possible man and gun, put up a furious fight and drove back their foes. Search the pages of history from 1914 to the present and you will not find even the vaguest hint that in 1914 there never was a Battle of France. But what is the situation in Shachtman's "Second Imperialist World War," specifically in his "battle of France?" Only a few weeks after this "battle of France" was supposed to have occurred, a prominent imperialist paper reported:

"It now seems quite clear that there never was a Battle of France, a battle for Paris, or whatever it was called in the days before the country's collapse." (New York Herald-Tribune, July 23, 1940. My emphasis - J.C.H.)

Can it be that the Herald-Tribune is spreading "Marlenite fantasmagorias?" What, "there never was a battle of

France" in Shachtman's "imperialist war-like-that --of-1914-1918!" But Shachtman says there was, and moreover adduces this alleged "battle" to prove Marlen the Master of Pseudo-Marxian Thaumaturgy and Obfuscation. What is the real history of Shachtman's 1940 "battle of France?" Whom does it prove a perverter of facts, whom a true painter of reality?

Let us recall that the immediate antecedents of this alleged "battle of France" were the eight months of "Sitzkrieg," the openly phoney war days filled with secret imperialist machinations, the betrayal of Poland by the "democratic" imperialists, and the bringing of the Nazis into Norway under no more than a pretense of opposition from the "democratic" gentlemen. In turn, behind all these connivings lay the long road back to Munich where vital secret conversations also had been held between the "democratic" and Fascist rulers.

On May 10, 1940, Nazi troops began to move to the West. This date, May 10th, was whispered around Paris for at least ten days before, reported Edgar Ansel Mowrer:

". . . .Even the date -- May 10-- had been whispered around Paris for the last 10 days and only the censor prevented your correspondent from mentioning it." (New York Post, May 10, 1940)

The date for the Westward movement of Nazi troops was thus a known fact in Paris. Yet on May 4th the French Ministry of War announced the demobilization of two war classes! (New York World Telegram, June 14, 1940) That is how the French imperialists, who, according to Shachtman, declared a real war in September 1939 to defend their empire, acted in the face of their knowledge of the impending movement of Hitler's forces. Did these "democratic" rulers have the slightest intention of actually resisting the Nazi entrance, or were they preparing to open the gates for the Nazis to help establish Fascism in France? Was the September 1939 declaration of war, with its Munich antecedents and "Sitzkrieg" aftermath, anything more than a

pretense, a cover for collusion with Hitler? Let the facts speak for themselves.

When Hitler's forces moved into Holland, the papers blared that the British who controlled the seas around Holland and had land forces in France, were flinging "enormous armed strength against the Germans in the invaded lowlands of Holland" (U.S. dispatch, Daily News, May 14, 1940). But shortly later, it turned out that the total forces sent by the British into Holland consisted of 700 men and 3 airplanes (New York Post, May 23, 1940 and The New York Times, May 26, 1940). Such was the "aid" given by the British to Holland!

The reports of the Anglo-French "assistance" to Belgium were not so precise as to numbers as were those pertaining to Holland. Apparently, the Anglo-French rulers sent more than 700 men into Belgium, but the reports from Washington spoke of "comparatively small forces" sent into Belgium to "fight delaying actions" (Daily News, May 16, 1940). The Anglo-French rulers laid down the "strategy" of not using the powerful Belgian border fortifications and according to reports, elected the line of the Meuse River which was palmed off as the best defensive position (The New York Times, May 16, 1940). Shortly later, Reynaud publicly stated that the line of the Meuse was but meagerly fortified and manned (The New York Times, May 22, 1940). It was small wonder that the Nazis raced through Belgium at the rate of forty miles a day "as if on parade," as the reports put it (The New York Times, May 22, 1940). The "battle" of Belgium was over before a flabbergasted public could begin to grasp what was going on.

But the "battle" of France was the most awesome spectacle concocted by the imperialist crowd. To begin with, from reading the reports one would get the fantastic idea that there were hardly any guns, tanks and planes in the whole French army. These weapons, of which the French Army had a huge and high-quality supply, were almost entirely absent from the scene. The general cry was: Where are the



French 75s, long famous for quality and quantity? Where are the tanks, of which France was one of the world's leading producers? Where are the French fighting planes? (of which, according to a recent statement by Pierre Cot, who was then Minister of Aviation, there were 5,000 in France in May 1940).

The opening of the French fortresses to the Nazis was another outstanding feature of Shachtman's "Battle of France." The gigantic fortress of Sedan was entered by the Nazis without a battle. A military writer, Major Leonard Mason, described this sometime after the event:

"...the Germans took Sedan after crossing the River Ourthe, northeast boundary of the Ardennes Forest, and advancing 45 miles in a single day -- the longest day's battle advance that history records. This means that there had been no defense, that the Ardennes had not been occupied, that Sedan had not been defended, that the Germans were again in France." (Look Magazine, July 2, 1940, p. 8. My emphasis - J.C.H.)

In the real war of 1914-1918 the fortress of Verdun was reddened with the blood of a million butchered French and German soldiers, yet despite four months of furious assault by the Kaiser's armies it was never occupied by them. In Shachtman's "Second World Imperialist War," the fortress of Verdun, modernized and made formidable since 1918, was entered and passed through by the Nazis in twenty-four hours! (The New York Times, June 18, 1940) Plainly Verdun also was handed over to the Nazis. And so it went with the remaining places of military importance in France.

The highlight of the mythical 1940 "Battle of France" was the way the Nazis were brought into the country. The opening up of Sedan for the free entrance of the Nazis was the keynote, for Sedan stands at the beginning of the path into France. From there on, the tactic of the "democratic" imperialist clique was simply to open the rest of the path. This was done in a very direct manner. The

"Allied" High Command created a gap between Amiens and Abbeville, about 35 miles in width. To the north of this gap was an Anglo-French army of one million men; to the south lay the rest of the military might of France, a completely intact army of about four million soldiers. Between these gigantic Anglo-French forces, as the correspondents indicated, raced a light-armed Nazi force estimated at fifty to sixty thousand men mounted on bicycles and motorcycles and not supported by any heavy armed troops. These light-armed fifty to sixty thousand troops were the "army" that "captured" France! The northern Anglo-French army of a million men "retreated" to the Channel ports. They were "retreating" before the fifty to sixty thousand Nazi bicycle and motorcycle troops. This fantastic "retreat" was described in one of the most authoritative capitalist papers:

"Advices here indicated that only 50,000 to 60,000 Germans were involved in the race against a retreat of nearly 1,000,000 Allied troops." (The New York Times, May 22, 1940)

This "retreat" succeeded in bringing the Nazis into France to help in the establishment of a Fascist regime. There was no "counter-offensive" against the small bodies of Nazi troops in the gap between Amiens and Abbeville, although the bourgeois press profusely promised one. The British troops were whisked off to Dunkerque. Here they were shipped to England. The bourgeois press raved about the "Miracle of Dunkerque," and romanticized this episode. What, in reality, was the result of the so-called "Miracle of Dunkerque"? The Dunkerque episode resulted in Hitler's obtaining a huge mountain of equipment which served him in the assault on the Soviet Union. The British Expeditionary Force had brought with it to France the best equipment of the British Army. This was left at Dunkerque and the Nazis picked it up. The World-Telegram of June 5, 1940 reported that the Nazis at Dunkerque gathered in enough British equipment to supply 40 divisions, a relatively enormous army.

In the House of Commons on June 4, 1940, Churchill declared that the British had left at Dunkerque —

" . . . nearly 1,000 guns — and all our transport, all the armoured vehicles that were with the Army in the North. . . . The best of all we had to give had gone to the British Expeditionary Force. . . they were a very well and finely-equipped Army. They had the first-fruits of all that our industry had to give, and that is gone." (Penguin Hansard, Vol. 3, p. 28)

This "best of all" served Hitler well in taking the Ukraine.

When the Herald-Tribune reporter wrote that "There never was a Battle of France" in 1940 he presented a bit of fact which could not be easily concealed. At times the imperialists and their flunkys are placed in such a predicament where even they, professional liars that they are, are compelled to let slip some truth. Shachtman, however, as regards the fictitious "Battle of France," is not in such an embarrassing position. Cloaked with the authority of an "historian" of many years' standing, he can still rave about the "Battle of France" and can use it to slander his opponent as a pseudo-Marxist.

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**A**S for Shachtman's "Battle between England and Germany," its true pattern was set in France. Let the workers beware lest the imperialist rulers are plotting a "Battle of England" in the manner of the "Battle of France." History has yet to reveal whether the "democratic" imperialist ruling clique plans to bring the Nazis into England to establish a Fascist regime there.

But what about the bombings of British and German cities and the sinking of ships? Does not this prove that the imperialists are really at war? No. Shooting does not prove the existence of real war any more than the "anti-capitalist" ravings, the manufactured strikes and demonstrations of the Stalinist bureaucrats during the

Third Period proved them to be enemies of capitalism. War, as the great Marxist leaders often repeated, is a continuation of politics by other means. When the bourgeoisie of two countries are politically at war with each other the only kind of war that is possible between them is a real war. But when their politics constitute collaboration for a common purpose, the result is no war — or a sham one to cover the collaboration. History contains several examples of sham wars of this latter type. The most outstanding example heretofore is the so-called Crimean War, fortunately analysed by Marx and Engels while it was occurring. In that epoch the Anglo-French imperialists were plotting with the Czar to divide up the Turkish Empire. When a real war broke out between Russia and Turkey, the Anglo-French imperialists, unable to pursue their plot openly and directly, formed an "Alliance" with Turkey and pretended to be at war with the Czar. The "war" between the Anglo-French rulers and Russia was a sham. Scores of thousands of French, British and Russian soldiers perished in the sham Crimean War, and there were staged bloody battles with huge destruction, but Marx and Engels showed that it was a sham war because of the underlying politics of the "opponents." THE BULLETIN of March 1942 contains an article, "Marx On a Sham War," which presents enlightening documentary material on this episode.

The Crimean War was not the only sham war of previous periods of history. During one period of the constitutional monarchy established after the French Revolution of 1789 the French monarchist clique conducted a sham war against the foreign interventionist forces of Austria, Prussia and their allies. The French monarch made flaming speeches about defending France; the rulers of the constitutional monarchy sent troops to the frontiers; there were battles and soldiers were killed. Yet all the while, this same ruling clique had a secret agreement with the foreign "enemy" to open the gates of France for the monarchist forces from Austria and Prussia to enter and crush the revolution.

The "war" began in April 1792, and until the Jacobins seized power in August 1792 the "war" against the foreign monarchist coalition was a sham, covering secret collaboration of the French King with the monarchs of Feudal Europe. Incidentally, its sham character was fairly well known to the leaders of the revolution and to the people and was one of the features which led to the Jacobins' rise to power. Kropotkin in his History of the Great French Revolution writes:

"And, moreover, the people, guided by their unfailing instincts, knew perfectly well that the King was conniving with the Germans, and inviting them to march on Paris." (Vol. 1, p. 270)

The big bourgeoisie of France of those days, fearing the proletarian masses and the poorest peasantry, were generally in accord with the monarchist policy in so far as bringing in outside forces to crush the revolution was concerned. Only the extreme Left, the workers and the more radical petty-bourgeoisie, tried to wage a real war against the monarchist forces within and outside of France.

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 began as a real war but was transformed into a sham one. The rising revolutionary tide, culminating in the Paris Commune, struck terror in the hearts of the French bourgeoisie. During the whole of the siege of Paris, when officially there still was war between the ruling class of France and that of Germany, the French bourgeois leaders were engaged in secret machinations with Bismark's generals for the purpose of bringing in Prussian troops to massacre the workers of Paris. Then, too, the workers sensed the situation and many bitter jests were passed around deriding the "patriotism" of the French rulers and their "defense" of Paris. This sham war, comprising the major portion of what is generally lumped under the name, Franco-Prussian War, also was analyzed by Marx and Engels.

The Reynauds, Daladiers and their "democratic" counterparts in other

countries had a rich mine of experience in French history before they embarked on the "Sitzkrieg" in September 1939. (Not that these gentlemen had to study history to perform their tricks.) Quite obviously, the colossal "war against Hitler" which these people were promising could not remain in the "Sitzkrieg" days indefinitely. Already in 1939 there were popular jokes about "the phoney war." The imperialist leaders had to cook up "action" to maintain the fiction of war with Germany in some sort of real-appearing form. Otherwise, the game would eventually be given away; perhaps another Paris Commune would result. Consequently, there were bombings and sinkings which gave the atmosphere of genuineness to the "war." This sort of thing is still going on. Only the most naive people, political infants, will imagine that the bourgeoisie will shrink from causing destruction and loss of lives to carry out its basic policy. The ruling class has a vast, fundamental purpose in conducting this sham war. It desires to save its social system as a whole from the terrible crisis which has been rocking it without cessation since 1914 and especially since the October Revolution. The method is to spread the Fascist regime throughout the world, and to restore capitalism in the broad territories of the Soviet Union. For such a purpose the capitalist class will destroy not only ships and cities, but whole provinces and populations. It will even sacrifice its own blood, as every ruling class has to do to remain in power. In so far as it is possible, the burden is shifted onto the shoulders of the masses. In any case, class conscious workers realize — they have not forgotten the World War in which thirty million men were butchered and mutilated for imperialist profit — that the bourgeoisie is the bloodiest ruling class in history and will shrink from no crime and no repressive measures to keep itself in power against the toiling masses.

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Let us continue with the rest of the "battles" conjured up by Shachtman.

A drive against the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany as the spearhead required as one of the preliminaries the marshalling of the Balkans under the heel of Nazi economic, political, and, above all, military domination. In studying the events in the Balkans, the clue to the relations among the big imperialist powers is not whether this or that force of Greeks, Bulgarians, Poles or Jugoslavs tried to resist the Nazi forces, but whether the "democratic" imperialists of the big powers who declare they are at war with Germany tried to prevent Hitler's occupation of the Balkans. From this standpoint, which is the only genuine one, let us study the pattern of events in the Balkans and see precisely what is revealed by those Balkan "battles" offered by Shachtman as proof that there is real war today among the major imperialist powers.

Shachtman refers to the "battles between Italy and Greece, Greece and Germany," Generally speaking, the so-called "Second World Imperialist War" has presented features so fantastic that the imperialist spokesmen and the opportunist leaders have been at their wit's end to explain it all away. The papers have been full of "miracles," "puzzles," "mysteries," "riddles" and the like in relating the course of military events since September 1939. The dignified editors of The New York Times were constrained one day to lecture to their readers that "logic is not the guide to this war," thus frankly appealing to the world at large to abandon any effort to think rationally and scientifically. But of all the magic-seeming events of Shachtman's "Second Imperialist World War" there were few more hair-raising than the Italian invasion of Greece.

On the one hand there was Italy, plentifully armed with the weapons of modern warfare on land, in the air and on sea, and with the additional advantage of close proximity to Greece in every medium of transportation. On the other hand there was Greece, a small, weak, backward nation obviously completely at the mercy of its relatively prodigious opponent. What happened in the Italian invasion of Greece? The Italian forces, tanks,

heavy guns, airplanes, warships, were swept aside by the primitively armed, insignificant Greek army and navy. Whenever the so-called Axis armies occupied large territories since September 1939, the bourgeois spokesmen and the opportunists, concealing the political basis of this, "explained" that this was due to the superior mechanization of the Axis armies. But during the Italian invasion of Greece they turned their "analysis" inside out and "explained" the Greek victories as due to the primitiveness of the Greek Army! Perhaps the reader imagines the bourgeois flunkys did not actually have the brazenness to resort to such ludicrous fakery. Then listen to this gentleman writing in no less a respectable organ than The New York Times under the guise of explaining the events in Greece:

"The Greeks have for the most part conducted their amazingly successful exploits on a primitive scouting pattern." (A.C. Sedgwick, November 25, 1940)

As reported by Mr. Sedgwick, one of the tactics used by the Greeks in routing Mussolini's Panzer divisions was the rolling of rocks down on the Italian troops! This stuff was served up by the bourgeois press in all solemnity. Bows and arrows were not mentioned as able to batter armored tanks to pieces, but after all there are limits even for the bourgeois writers.

What was the reason for the patently artificial "retreats" of Mussolini's army before the Greek rock-rollers? It was not simply to make Mussolini look like a fool, but to make Hitler seem an invincible hero. One of the most important tactics of world imperialism as a whole in building up Hitler's drive on the Soviet Union — remember, the Greek events occurred before the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union — was to present the masses with a terrifying picture of the Nazi military machine as absolutely unbeatable. How did the Greek affair serve this purpose? Mussolini's avalanche of steel and fire was swept aside like chaff by the rock-rolling Greeks. Then — and this was one of the chief purposes of the whole matter — in came

Hitler's Nazi forces and in a brief time Greece was crushed. Who could doubt that Hitler was invincible?

What was the role of the "democratic" imperialists in the Greek affair? If the reader does not remember directly, he undoubtedly anticipates the answer from what he has read above. Yes, the pattern of Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France was followed to the letter. The British rulers sent some forces to Greece for show purposes, as they had done in the case of Norway, Holland, Belgium and France. A remarkably frank statement in The New York Times let slip the real reason for the sending of British forces to Greece:

"It should be remembered ~~that~~ the British decision to send troops to Greece was political not military." (April 11, 1941)

This same Times dispatch indicated that the British forces in Greece were comparatively small and it was a mystery what they were doing there anyhow:

"What the comparatively small British forces in Greece are doing is not known."

". . .they i.e., the British troops - J.C.H. were not there to defend Salonika or the Greeks and Yugoslavs who have been cut off by the success of the German drive."

This remark that the British forces in Greece were not to defend Salonika is of especial importance in that Salonika was long known to be of fundamental strategic significance in maintaining the supply route to Yugoslavia. The papers for quite a while were full of analyses of the importance of Salonika and of the ability of the British to defend it. But Salonika was not defended by the British, and the Greeks and Yugoslavs were cut to pieces by the Nazis.

The attitude of the British rulers toward their Greek and Yugoslav "allies" was clearly indicated in a dispatch from Washington on April 5, 1941 by Drew Pearson and Robert S. Al-

len. It seems that when the Yugoslav officials asked the British Government for arms, the reply was an undisguised order to shut up and go to hell. According to this dispatch the Yugoslavs, who asked for British weapons, were told by the Churchill Government that they could go and capture Italian weapons from Mussolini's army after chasing it out of Albania!

"Bluntly, the British replied that the Yugoslavs could capture Italian munitions after driving Mussolini's army out of Albania."

The same dispatch by Pearson and Allen also relates that --

". . .when Greek Minister Diamantopoulos asked the State Department about munitions, the British Embassy called him down."

Such was the British reply when the Yugoslav and Greek forces were being butchered by the Nazis!

Like every other "battle" Shachtman conjured up, the "battle" of the Balkans proves precisely the opposite of his line. It must be emphasized that the pattern of "democratic" imperialist policy in Greece was not something new, which could be considered a peculiar anomaly in a total situation. This pattern goes far back, not merely to September 1939, but to Munich and even before that. The world imperialist policy of using the Nazi hordes as the spearhead in the spread of Fascism and the assault on the Soviet Union did not change in September 1939. Only the tactic changed. What was done before September 1939 more or less openly has been done since September 1939 under the cover of a sham war against Nazi Germany. This policy of world imperialism as a whole, which seemed confined at first to allowing Hitler to occupy Austria and Czechoslovakia, now appears in a fuller light. Its ramifications can be seen on a world wide scale. They include such gigantic events as the deliberate opening of the gates of France by the "democratic" imperialist rulers for the entrance of Hitler's Gestapo to crush the French

workers; they include the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union.

We shall turn now to another aspect of this policy of world imperialism — namely, what Shachtman calls the "battle between England and Japan!"

**W**I began this article with some vital aspects of this "battle" of England and Japan and observed the kind of figure Shachtman cut therein. Shachtman's Labor Action is one of the papers which helped fabricate some appearance of "reality" for this "battle" by the yarn about the British use of Chinese troops against Japan in Malaya and Burma. Shachtman's New Internationalist had to eat the words of Shachtman's Labor Action, genteely, with no rude noises that might call attention to the feast. What are the facts about this "battle" of England and Japan?

When one hears talk about some "battle" between England and Japan, one immediately thinks of Hongkong and Singapore. And if one knows the facts, upon thinking of Hongkong and Singapore, one's mind turns to Sedan and Verdun in May 1940. Never in the history of class society has the world witnessed such a clear picture of prodigiously powerful fortresses being opened for a supposed enemy to enter as was the case with these four fortresses. As usual, the masses had the impression of ferocious battles raging, especially in Malaya. The bourgeois spokesmen and the "Marxists" à la Shachtman saw to that. Underneath the rumpus, however, could be seen what was really happening. The tactic used by the "democratic" rulers was the now well-tried one of the "planned retreat." Such was the so-called "battle" in Malaya:

"The battle in Malaya as reported officially probably gave the world the impression of a bitter, hard-fought defense. Actually it was a retreat planned from day to day. Each day the Imperials fell back 10 miles or so 'on schedule.'" (New York World-Telegram, February

17, 1942)

This World-Telegram correspondent is saying that there was no battle in Malaya. He does not want to make this too clear, so he speaks of "the battle ~~in~~ Malaya." But "actually" — and this word speaks volumes — "it" — the alleged "battle" was a planned, scheduled retreat. How far in advance this retreat was planned is clear from another item in the bourgeois press of those days. A United Press correspondent speaking as an eyewitness related:

"Once, when the campaign (sic!) was not so old, I saw a high staff officer's map dated ahead to January 31 and marked at the Johore causeway, leading from the mainland to Singapore Island." (The New York Times, February 17, 1942. My emphasis - J.C.H.)

Historically speaking, that "retreat" was "dated ahead" as early as Munich, even before.

The remark about the Johore causeway recalls to mind some of the other highlights of Shachtman's "battle" of England and Japan. Possibly, the reader remembers the reports about the mysterious way in which vital bridges were left intact for the Nazis to enter Belgium and France. Something of the sort occurred in the case of the Johore causeway leading to the fortress of Singapore. The reports were very ambiguous. Some said the causeway was destroyed by the British. Some said it was not destroyed. Some said it was damaged only to a limited extent, not enough to prevent its repair by the Japanese. Anyhow, before one could bat an eye, the Japanese Fascist forces were the tenants of Singapore.

Of the "battle" of Burma something should be said even at the cost of wearying the reader with a repetition of the now all-too-familiar story of absence of battle, "planned, scheduled retreats," and "mysteries." The papers were full of stories of how rosy things were for the British in Burma from the start. General Stillwell was said to have declared that the Japanese were using only about forty to fifty thousand combat troops

(New York World-Telegram, May 25, 1942), relatively a very small force. Air Marshal Sir Richard E.C. Peirse was reported saying that "from the start we were able to gain air superiority." (The New York Times, March 16, 1942) But then the old pattern began to put in its appearance. The British soldiers in the front lines of Burma were puzzled by the absence of British airplanes:

"The Allied soldiers in the front lines of Burma for the past two weeks have seen as few of their own planes as the British Expeditionary Force in Crete saw in 1941." (The New York Times, April 10, 1942)

If as Air Marshal Peirse said, the British had air superiority in Burma from the very start, why were the planes withheld? We shall not bother to dig up some "explanation" peddled by the bourgeois press. One is as good as another, good for concealing the truth. Burma went the way of all the other of Shachtman's "battles." The "battle" of England and Japan is in the same category as the "battle" of France.

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LET us now look over the picture involving the United States and Japan. According to Shachtman these two powers are locked in an imperialist battle. We shall continue to examine the record of events presented by the capitalist press itself.

During the months preceding Pearl Harbor all reliable accounts agreed that, compared with the United States, Japan was a second-rate power. Japan's military and naval expansion was hampered by a weak economy, some important branches of which were said to be in a state of virtual prostration on the eve of Pearl Harbor (The New York Times, December 2, 1941). The seven-year-old war in China strained Japan's resources and manpower. A large Japanese army was bogged down in a number of Chinese provinces, Japanese troops were policing Manchukuo and Korea, a considerable Japanese force was stationed on the Siberian border.

The inferiority of the Japanese

navy in relation to United States sea power was fairly well known. Tokio's air force, which proved a deadly weapon against the defenseless Chinese towns and villages, was no match for the American air force. Such was the picture of Japan portrayed by various students of Far Eastern affairs.

Then came Pearl Harbor. On the surface the act seemed like a deed of the Japanese ruling gang suddenly gone mad. This time the Japanese attack was directed not against a feeble country like China, but against the greatest industrial and naval power on earth! More than that. The Japanese rulers seemed to have gone on a rampage in the Pacific in full knowledge that they would take on, ~~in addition~~ to the United States, another tremendous naval power, the British Empire!

If, on the surface, Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor appeared to be a manic performance, on the American side the events of December 7, 1941, contained certain strange features recorded in the capitalist press. A report from Washington printed in the New York World-Telegram of December 24, 1941, conveyed information about high officials of the Navy Department telling some Congressmen that all the naval commanders had been advised of an impending attack. Another report, perhaps the most interesting of all, came from Chungking on December 10, 1941, three days after Pearl Harbor. According to Leland Stowe, United States representatives in Chungking, China, had been told by Washington that relations with Japan might be broken in a few days. Most remarkable and ~~astounding~~ was this correspondent's reference to an American naval officer of the gunboat Tutuila. On Sunday December 7, 1941, "at least an hour before the Japanese blitz in Hawaii" that officer told the correspondent: "It's going to happen tonight." (New York Post, December 10, 1941) The correspondent indicates that there was nothing mysterious about that officer's knowledge as to when "it" was going to happen. The assertions of this officer were obviously based, according to the correspondent, "on advices from Washington received aboard the Tutuila." (Ibid.)

Hardly less significant than Le-

land Stowe's dispatch was the following revelation printed by one of the most outstanding capitalist newspapers on the day after Pearl Harbor:

"It is now possible to reveal that the United States forces here [Honolulu] had known for a week that the attack was coming and they were not caught unprepared." (The New York Times, December 8, 1941)

Of course, one may be prepared but be off his guard because of lack of warning. However, to continue our going over the material officially presented by the capitalist press, a disclosure by Arthur Krock brought to light that "as early as Nov. 27," that is, about ten days before Pearl Harbor, "the Secretary of State issued a warning to all departments concerned to prepare for the worst. Among those concerned were, of course, the Army and the Navy." (The New York Times, December 17, 1941)

From the material we have cited it is clear that the attack was not unexpected. Therefore, as the correspondent, Stowe, remarked —

"How the Japanese were able to bomb the Army's big airfields at Oahu without large numbers of American fighters getting into the air promptly remains incomprehensible." (New York Post, December 10, 1941)

Incomprehensible — so the situation must remain unless one understands the real policy of world imperialism.

The aftermath of Pearl Harbor followed the underlying pattern of present-day events. The U.S. had big forces in the Pacific. After Pearl Harbor Secretary of the Navy, Knox, stated:

"The entire balance of the Pacific Fleet, with its aircraft carriers, its heavy cruisers, its light cruisers, its destroyers and submarines, are uninjured and are all at sea seeking contact with the enemy." (The New York Times, December 16, 1941)

Where was the Japanese fleet? It was plainly visible in everybody's

mind; it was attacking the Philippines and some of the other American Pacific possessions such as Wake Island.

In connection with the capture of Wake Island by the Japanese warships, there were some remarkable points. The garrison on the island seems to have been holding its own and succeeded in repelling the attackers for many days! But while the Japanese brought up enough forces to outweigh the strength of the garrison, the U.S. forces there received no support from the United States navy, as was stated in the capitalist press:

"But even in the middle Pacific the Navy did not relieve or rescue or even prolong the delaying action at Wake Island." (New York Post, December 26, 1941)

Why? What was the reason behind such a queer tactic of the Navy? The bourgeois press presented the whole thing as a "mystery."

"There are two mysteries in connection with Wake Island that may be explained only after the war is over. One is the manner in which this tiny garrison has withstood a dozen bombardments by air, shelling by hostile ships and other attempts at landing. The other is the reason why no American naval units have been reported as going to the assistance of Wake Island." (The New York Times, December 24, 1941, My emphasis — J.C.H.)

Reviewing the tactics pursued by the American forces in the Philippines perhaps will tell us something about the "imperialist war" said by Shachtman to be going on between the United States and Japan. As was stated in the press, Luzon was the best fortified of all the Philippine Islands.. There was a considerable submarine fleet in the Philippine waters "many of them new submarines, with splendid equipment and well-trained crews." (Hanson W. Baldwin, The New York Times, December 31, 1941) There was on Luzon a native Philippine army and also a United States force. With all that, the Japanese transports, having trav-



ersed a long distance, brought troops and landed them on Luzon Island. The most striking point about the landing of the Japanese Fascist troops was that they encountered no opposition from the American forces!

"The enemy effected UNOPPOSED landings in limited numbers at VI-gon, Legaspi and Aparri." (The New York Times, December 14, 1941. My capitals - J.C.H.)

Recall that Knox stated the U.S. Pacific fleet was "at sea seeking contact with the enemy." Though "the enemy" was very easy to find, the bourgeois press was constrained to comment on the lack of naval opposition to the Japanese landings in the Philippines:

"Whether the subject considered is the retarding of Japanese troop landings on the Philippines, infliction of losses on enemy warships or air attacks on Japanese bases, the one question is, WHERE IS THE NAVY?" (New York Post, December 26, 1941. My capitals - J.C.H.)

Over a year has gone by since those events occurred. The Japanese Fascists accomplished "miracles." With much of its army still bogged down in China and pinned on the Siberian border, Japan, while reportedly suffering terrific losses in ships, planes and men, and, according to computations, losing a considerable portion of its navy, occupied the entire Malayan Peninsula, the strongest fortress in the Far East (Singapore), the Dutch Indies, the Philippines, Wake, Guam, and even reached out into American waters in the remote reaches of the North and settled on some of the Aleutian Islands — "apparently even without a fight." (World-Telegram, June 26, 1942)

The Japanese Fascists are still in the Aleutians. They have not been driven out from Wake, the Philippines, the Dutch Indies or any other important islands they now police. Shachtman's "imperialist war" between the United States and Japan has been largely confined to the "typical South Sea islands, the Solomon Islands, a land of coral reefs and jungles populated by 500 whites and 150,000 native blacks" (The New York Times, February

10, 1943). These islands were "wrested" by the Japanese from the British in one day — January 24, 1942. From August 7, 1942 one of these islands constituted a battleground. There the strongest industrial, military and naval power on earth battled the Japanese for six months! Indeed were it not for some "action" in these South Sea Islands, even Shachtman would not be able to shout with a "Marxist" mien about an imperialist war raging between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

S HACHTMAN raises the question of why the plan of imperialism does not provide for the Fascist powers retiring ~~to let~~ the "democratic" powers come in and act as the bourgeois bludgeon. He poses only England and Japan, but for purposes of clarity we shall deal with it in general terms. Here is Shachtman's wording of this question:

"Why the Anglo-Japanese alliance does not provide instead for Japan retiring from Asia and taking up a position on, say, the Sverdrup Islands in the Prince Gustav Adolph Sea, leaving England to crush China, India and Russia, is not always very clear in Marlen's fantasmagorias." (The New International, October 1942, p. 275)

We shall disregard the remark about Japan retiring to the Sverdrup Islands in the Prince Gustav Adolph Sea, for this is merely a sample of the "humor" with which Shachtman loves to adorn his polemics — for the "benefit" of his readers, no doubt. We shall deal only with the gist of this question, not with Shachtman's verbal trumpery.

First, it is necessary to point out a piece of subtle diplomacy employed by Shachtman in asking this question. He asks why does not England crush China, India and Russia — but, he conveniently omits the imperialist task of crushing the toilers of France. Yet the crushing of the masses of France was one of the foremost features of the plan of world imperialism. Let Shachtman raise the question,

Why was not the plan of imperialism to use British forces to crush the French masses, and he would put himself in a ludicrous light. The answer is quite obvious. By concealing the essential element of France, Shachtman tries to place his question on strong polemical grounds. However, we shall not be misled by debater's tricks, but shall deal with the problem in its totality.

Why does the plan of world imperialism call for the use of the Fascist powers to act as a military bludgeon against the masses, and not of the "democratic" powers? The answer to this question involves an understanding of the essential development of capitalist society prior to and since the October Revolution.

In 1914 the imperialists entered into a real war for world markets and colonies, for world domination by one imperialist clique against another. A fundamental feature which gave them the freedom for such a move was the fact that capitalism as a whole was in a state of considerable stability. The Paris Commune was already forty three years behind, and even during its brief life had by no means indicated any basic shakiness in world capitalist rule. The abortive Russian Revolution of 1905 did not imperil the capitalist system, taking the world situation as a whole, and was followed by a period of reaction. The limited bourgeois-national revolutions in the East, if anything, strengthened capitalist rule. The world had yet to see a revolution which could shake capitalism to its foundations. Bourgeois power on the eve of the war of 1914 was ~~solid~~ on a world scale. The ~~idea~~ that the proletariat could actually become the ruling class was generally considered both by the leaders of the imperialists and the "theoreticians" of the ~~Socialist~~ movement as a crazy fantasy indulged in only by "madmen" of the Lenin type. This bourgeois and opportunist complacency reflected the fact that the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat had not reached the point where the issue of which class was to rule was the first point on the historical agenda. The "spectre of Communism" simply did not terrify the world bourgeoisie in

1914; the class struggle, historically speaking, was in a relatively quiescent stage.

What was acute in the 1914 period was the struggle among the various imperialist cliques. This struggle had been mounting for decades, crystallizing into two groups, the Allies and the Central Powers, on the whole fairly equally balanced in strength. With the "home front" well in hand, the imperialists were at liberty to go off to world adventures. In 1914 the accumulation of factors — relative quiescence of class struggle and acuteness of inter-imperialist rivalry — reached the breaking point and the gigantic slaughter was unleashed.

Since the October Revolution, on the other hand, the accumulation of class factors has been of a totally opposite sort. The Bolshevik Revolution was the keynote of the present period. It was the first authentic, direct, immediate symptom of the fundamental instability of capitalist rule in the present historical epoch. One section of capitalism was definitively overthrown by the workers for the first time in history, and in a large important area, at that. Both the bourgeoisie and the workers learned that proletarian revolution is not a fantasy, but a living political line capable of brilliant, epoch-making victories. The bourgeoisie learned this lesson more profoundly than the masses. In 1917 "the spectre of Communism" suddenly acquired flesh — and — blood in a way which only three years before had generally seemed utterly beyond possibility. This transformation left an indelible mark on bourgeois thought and policies.

The October Revolution reflected the instability of bourgeois rule of a world wide, not a local, character. A wave of mass upsurge swept over the globe. Soviets ~~set~~ up in Germany in 1918, Soviet Republics set up in Finland, Bavaria and Hungary, seizure of factories in Italy, rice riots in Japan, civil war hanging over Bulgaria, a revolutionary situation again in Germany in 1923, General Strike in England in 1926, revolution in China in 1925-27 — a truly gigantic upheaval—

revolutionary ferment in India, intense crisis in France in 1936, revolution and civil war in Spain in 1936-1939, whose rumblings still ring in the ears of the threatened imperialists as they went to "war" in September 1939.

Though defeated and crushed again and again, mass upsurge seemed inexhaustible in its vitality. Although reaction set in in Spain for years after the overthrow of the monarchy in 1930-1931, there came a vast mass upheaval in 1936. In 1927 Chiang Kai-Shek drowned the workers in blood — but had to continue civil war right up to the present, devoting huge material forces to combatting the Stalinist-misled peasant armies in China. The toilers of India have been beaten down time and again. With what result? Even the bourgeois spokesmen cannot entirely conceal the mass surgings in India that are rising this very day. It is true that from 1936 to 1939 the upsurge of the masses in France was gradually quelled. But to the bourgeois mind, sharpened by long and bitter experience, the very next year might witness a new upheaval of the French toilers. To forestall this and other possible mass risings became the chief immediate concern of the bourgeois leaders.

The entire accumulation of factors since October 1917 has placed as the first point on the agenda of history the question, Which class is to rule. This question since 1917 has not been a theoretical proposition, but an immediate, direct, compelling threat to capitalism. For the bourgeoisie this question has been a veritable nightmare, haunting them daily for more than two decades.

Despite the serious nature of the revolutionary threat, it took the imperialists a number of years to readjust their mode of thinking and their policies. For some period after the war of 1914-1918, it seemed time and again that a new inter-imperialist war would break out but each time the ruling class, remembering the experience with the world imperialist war and the October Revolution, avoided the folly of disrupting their own system. The world imperialists sought to repair

their decaying system. Realizing that Germany was the weakest link in the capitalist chain, and that unless German capitalism was saved, the entire bourgeois system was in danger of overthrow, they made efforts to revitalize capitalism in Germany. The Allies of 1914 adopted the policy of pumping millions into Germany to bolster the capitalist system. Every politically educated worker knows how the American, French and British financiers propped up Nazi Germany — all the while professing "hatred" of Hitlerism.

Thus the collaboration of imperialist powers, who in times of international capitalist stability would be at war, grew out of the extreme instability of world capitalism as a whole. At first this collaboration was an empirical, day-to-day practice. It gradually took shape, however, as a systematic method.

The methodical features of inter-imperialist collaboration against the masses were elaborated along certain basic lines. It is now an established historical fact that in the present period the definitive bourgeois method of attempting to preserve capitalist rule in the face of a proletarian revolutionary threat is to introduce Fascism. The most fundamental crushing of the masses today takes the form of the establishment of Fascist rule. This method did not come into existence all at once on a world wide scale. At first it was applied locally, in separate countries, as the specific occasion arose. It would have begun in Russia, had the bourgeoisie not been defeated. As it happened, it began — in definitive form — in Italy, and gradually grew to maturity and universality. Today the bourgeoisie on a world scale are planning to introduce Fascism as the answer to the whole mass upsurge which has been shaking capitalist rule since 1917.

In the various situations prior to 1939 Fascism was introduced in different ways. In Italy, by a "march on Rome." In Germany by parliamentary means. In Spain, through a military uprising and a civil war. Spain with its civil war of over two years was the last case of the introduction of

Fascism prior to September 1939. This is a fact which must be kept in mind — certainly the bourgeoisie had it in mind, for they developed a new method of introducing Fascism overnight, as it were, and without a dangerous destructive civil war. What is this new method?

The classic illustration is France. The decisive crushing of the French masses has long been the aim of world capitalism as a whole. How was this to be accomplished? By a putsch on the part of some general? But only yesterday the bourgeoisie had witnessed the example of Franco who precipitated a two-years' civil war. To go through such an experience in France? A civil war in France would have had proportions and repercussions that would have made the one in Spain seem trivial by contrast. The bourgeoisie was bent upon avoiding such a situation. What then? An attempt by some Fascist outfit such as that of De la Rocque or Doriot? Not only were these Fascist forces on the downgrade by 1939 but any attempt on their part to seize power would have unleashed at once a civil war. To try to introduce Fascism in France from within would have created immense dangers to the bourgeoisie.

There was left to imperialism only one choice: to bring in Fascism from the outside — and this is the method evolved by the bourgeoisie for saving their class rule in the present period.

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**T**HERE is yet another basic aspect of the international bourgeois plan for the present period of history.

An unmistakeable feature of the bourgeois plan to stabilize capitalist rule is the effort to wipe out the nationalized form of economy and restore the capitalist system in the broad territories of the Soviet Union. History records attempt after attempt by world capitalism to destroy the basic gains of the October Revolution, the non-capitalist system of nationalized ownership of the means of pro-

duction. History also records the consistent failure of the bourgeoisie; first, failure in the civil war of 1918-1921, and then, up to June 1941, failure even in launching a military attack. We shall not enter into an enumeration of the many unsuccessful anti-Soviet schemes hatched by the leaders of imperialism in the years after the Russian civil war. Suffice it to say that no attack materialized until the bourgeoisie adopted their present tactics.

What is the essence of these present tactics? The forging of a prodigious, powerful Fascist German war machine to serve as the spearhead of an attack on the Soviet Union. No segment of world capitalism other than Germany had the necessary material basis and geographically strategic situation for such a role. With the Nazification of Germany — the essence of which was the crushing of the ~~German~~ working class — the epoch of building the Fascist German war machine began. Assisted by British, American and French imperialism, the German war machine under Nazi rule grew by leaps and bounds. But more, all Europe had to be mobilized under the Nazi club; the German forces had to be brought to the border of the Soviet Union with their European rear subdued and producing for the Hitler hordes. Gradually, Europe was turned over to policing by Hitler's forces. In the notorious Munich days, the path for Hitler to the East was cleared by the "democratic" imperialists virtually openly. Austria, even before Munich, and then Czechoslovakia were brought under Nazi policing with the thinly disguised connivance of the "democratic" imperialists.

Such a policy could not be continued indefinitely without repercussions dangerous for the "democratic" capitalists. Mass sentiment against the Nazis increased daily to huge proportions. The more the "democratic" rulers, under the guise of appeasement, greased the path for Hitler, the more intensely anti-Hitler was the frame of mind of the masses in the bourgeois-democracies. The "democratic" rulers, to disguise their policy, were constrained to talk "anti-Hitler." Al-

ready in the Munich days, the bourgeoisie, particularly in France, engaged in measures that looked very much like an impending war against Hitler. Millions of soldiers were mobilized and were apparently all set to be hurled against Hitler's troops. The Munich days' war threat against Hitler proved to be a sham, for it was immediately followed by the announcement of the Munich Pact under the cover of which the imperialists sanctioned Hitler's drive to the East.

In the Munich period the collusion of the "democratic" rulers with Hitler was only thinly disguised. Many radical workers sensed in part at least that the hoise of "war" against Hitler was a fraud. Though in the 1938 period one part of the Shachtman-Cannon line was that an imperialist war was brewing, the other part, that of an imperialist attack on the Soviet Union, was given the status of an "alternative" by them. Shachtman and Cannon were compelled to indicate, and at times in no uncertain terms, what had actually occurred at Munich. Under the heading "Pact Menaces Russia" they wrote:

"At Munich, Chamberlain, Daladier, Mussolini, and Hitler came together in recognition of the fact that nothing could be more fatal to all of them than the outbreak of an inter-imperialist war which none of their regimes would survive." (Socialist Appeal, October 3, 1938, p. 1)

This statement is sober fact which the Trotskyite leaders quietly buried later at the crucial moment. The above-named four imperialist gentlemen (and the successors of the now-defunct pair or "democrats") elaborated a tactic to solve their problem.

The problem they faces was a three-sided one. They had to paralyze the healthy anti-Fascist sentiment of the masses, particularly in France and England. There was the need of world imperialism to spread the Fascist form of rule universally to safeguard the shaking grip of capitalism. Thirdly there was the necessity of enabling

German imperialism to organize and plunge against the Soviet Union. The increasing anti-Nazi animus of the masses in the "democracies" prevented an open alliance of Britain, France, Germany and Italy. The "democratic" leaders had to adopt a cloak of "opposition" to Hitler. This cloak had to be decorated finally with the pretense of actually making war on Hitler. This pretense was officially launched on September 3, 1939 upon Hitler's invasion of Poland.

We have already outlined how the monstrous Nazis were given a free hand to drive into Poland. The most basic task of imperialism, however, preliminary to the attack on the Soviet Union, was the crushing of the French masses who stood as a deadly threat to the Nazi rear and to imperialism in general. For the imperialists to hurl the Nazi army against the Soviet Union while on the Western "Front" there was a phoney war, a Sitzkrieg, was obviously out of the question. Such a situation would have created a fierce crisis, especially in France, because the French workers, predominantly pro-Soviet and class conscious, would not have stood idly by while Hitler's troops tore toward Leningrad and Moscow. First and foremost, therefore, the imperialists were under compulsion to crush and decimate the French masses in order to eliminate the danger spot in the rear of the Nazi war machine. In May-June 1940 this was accomplished, as we have shown above, by opening the gates for Hitler's forces to enter France and act as a bloody gendarme in the Fascist enslavement of the French proletariat. The connection between the Fascization of France, a process which the whole of world imperialism organized, and the attack on the Soviet Union is a fundamental one which must be understood or the whole policy of imperialism in the present period will remain a mystery.

With the French masses paralyzed by the belief that there was or would be real war against the Nazi army, the task of opening the gates of France for Hitler was an easy one. The notion that there was "war between France and Germany" was crucial in pro-

ducing the calamity which befell the French workers in 1940. This ~~entrap~~ping illusion was spread by the imperialists, by the liberals, and by every opportunist tendency in the working class ranks from the Comintern to the Trotskyites and Social Democracy. The illusion of "war" shielded the imperialists' machinations with Hitler for bringing the Nazis into France. Had the French workers possessed the realization that the noise of "war" was a cover for collusion of their capitalists and the Nazis, they would have cast off their deceivers and would have been able to take steps to defend themselves against all their oppressors. As it was, the French masses, centered in and about the French "democratic" army, and drugged with the belief that a real war was being waged against the Nazi Army, were a helpless body that could be made to fall back without resistance on orders from the treacherous "democratic" rulers, while the Nazis "captured" fortress after fortress in a few hours and finally rushed into Paris, the heart of the proletariat of France. The bourgeoisie, for the time being at least, had succeeded in warding off civil war which would have been inevitable if they had attempted any other method of installing a Fascist regime in France.

At the same time, Hitler's preparations for the assault on the Soviet Union were whipped into shape. With the rapid Fascization of France, all Europe became a source of supplies for the Nazis, a vast factory ranging from Scandinavia to Spain, from Portugal to Poland. Officially or unofficially, openly or covertly, European capitalism was tied to the Nazi war machine. In June 1941, the military attack on the Soviet Union commenced, bringing to life the two-decade ardent dream of world imperialism.

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HERE is a unique feature of present-day bourgeois rule which must never be lost sight of. Today, the very existence of the capitalist system as a whole hinges on the preservation of Fascist rule. Should the

Fascist regime collapse in Germany, the unleashing of a vast, all-European revolutionary upheaval would be the direct consequence. Should Japanese Fascist rule collapse, a revolutionary upheaval would be unleashed in Asia. Today, Fascism is the club which imperialism holds over the masses of the whole world. Let the Fascist regime in Europe fall, and the masses of France, of the entire Balkans, of Norway, of Poland, of the Ukraine, of the Baltic countries would shake themselves loose and embark upon action which would shake the entire system of capitalism to its foundations. The masses of Italy and Spain would not be far behind in this social upheaval. The mounting wave would sweep into England, into Asia, Africa and even into the Western Hemisphere. The Russian masses would be inspired to throw off their opportunists, bureaucratic oppressors and return to the Marxian path of 1917, thus in turn giving added power to the revolutionary sweep in the collapsing capitalist world. Final success for the proletariat would depend, of course, on the development of a true Bolshevik leadership. In any case, the prospect of the collapse of the Nazi regime strikes terror in the heart of the bourgeois rulers throughout the world.

In 1914 the situation was quite different. No one form of bourgeois rule dominated Europe as does the Nazi regime now. The fall of the Czar did not yet mean a proletarian revolution throughout Europe and the rest of the globe. The imperialist war continued for over a year and a half after the Czar had fallen, showing that imperialism still had plenty of power left. The fall of the Kaiser and the establishment of the Weimar Republic yielded the masses little or nothing. World capitalist rule grew unstable in general after the Bolshevik Revolution, but this instability, while a serious threat to capitalism, never reached the prodigious proportions which will inevitably be witnessed if the Nazi dictatorship crumbles. The crucial, central position of the Nazi regime in the system of world capitalism today is a fundamental fact which keeps the imperialists of all

stripes highly anxious to ward off real dangers to the power of the Nazis. It is a tormenting paradox for the capitalists that Nazi Germany which must serve them as their spearhead is at the same time probably the most unstable segment of world capitalism. Without broad, unstinting support from the capitalists on all sides, bourgeois rule in Germany, and in particular the Hitler regime, would have crumbled long ago. German capitalism has been given the greatest reactionary task in its entire history, namely the policing of virtually all Europe and the destruction of the Soviet Union. For such a task the Hitlerites need the support of all the imperialists and to date the Nazis have not failed to find it.

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THE imperialist bourgeoisie have developed a new and most dangerous weapon. In previous articles we have termed this weapon international Kornilovism. By this term of analogy we have indicated a method of spreading Fascism across the international scene by the collusion of the "democratic" and the Fascist capitalists under the guise of a sham war. The historical source of the analogy is the Kornilov situation in Russia in 1917 wherein the "democratic" Provisional Government of Kerensky, while pretending to mobilize the masses against the Czarist general, Kornilov, actually had a secret agreement with Kornilov to open the gates of Petrograd for his troops to enter, massacre the revolutionary workers, and put an end to the crisis threatening bourgeois rule. The attempt of making use of Fascist forces by "democracy" to crush a danger to capitalist dictatorship in that case was limited to a single national scene. Today this method has been developed to the bringing of Fascist hordes across various national boundaries.

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THE interests of the working class demand a genuine war against the Fascist gendarme of capitalism. Both the imperialists and the opportunists within the working class

fear such a war because it will unleash the revolution. The Stalinist Comintern, to safeguard the bureaucratic regime in the Soviet Union, does not dare to reveal to the masses that the Russian toilers alone are carrying on a military resistance to the Fascist invaders.

When Shachtman cooks up a list of "battles" like the one he ~~issued~~ against the position of THE BULLETIN, he acts as a press agent for the imperialists and the Comintern bureaucrats. What do the imperialist mouthpieces do to counter-act possible suspicions on the part of the workers? Precisely what Shachtman does. They point to the "fighting" in the supposed "war" against the Fascist powers. They cry, Why, what about the Battle of Norway, the Battle of France, the Battle of Malaya, the Battle of Burma! The mythical character of these "battles" is concealed by the "Marxist" Shachtman, who thus aids the enemy class to continue with its pretenses.

It is not an accident that Shachtman is compelled to concoct "arguments" against the line of THE BULLETIN. The workers who follow Shachtman are politically advanced and capable of understanding class forces. Such workers are amongst those who may arrive first at a true insight into the real policy of world imperialism today. They cannot help observing the innumerable "queer" events since September 1939. THE BULLETIN offers a wealth of concrete, documentary material exposing the real source of the "queerness" of these events. Invariably, questions about the actual nature of the so-called "Second Imperialist War" will be evoked in the mind of Shachtman's followers. It is to lull asleep the searching and inquiring tendencies of his followers that Shachtman has to engage in verbal antics above all to prevent the analytic thinking of his followers from being turned upon his political career, and upon the opportunist role of the Trotsky tendency as a whole.

It is of prime importance for the proletariat to break out of its drugged condition into which it has been put in these perilous times by its opportunist leaders. The key to success-

ful resistance to the class enemy is to understand his real policy, to see through the pretenses with which he hides his machinations, and to forestall the realization of his schemes. The "Marxists" of the Shachtman variety prevent the workers from acquiring

the necessary political understanding. They stand in the way of opening a genuine war against Fascism, savior of imperialist oppression and slavery.

J. C. ~~Garner~~  
February 15, 1943

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THE POLICIES OF THE OPPORTUNISTS EXPOSED

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OEHLER: 1939, 1933, 1943

In September 1939 Hugo Oehler's paper, the Fighting Worker, asserted with assurance that "The new imperialist war has begun!" Browder's Daily Worker, Cannon's and Shachtman's Socialist Appeal and other publications claiming to be Marxist also declared, positively, that the world was confronted with a new imperialist war similar in political nature to the war of 1914-1918.

Oehler's paper fairly quivered with excitement and scientific-sounding explanations about this "new imperialist war." England and Germany were fighting — so said Oehler — for the domination of Europe. The stakes which brought the British and German imperialists to a "new imperialist war" were rubber, oil, colonies:

"Behind the words 'independence for Poland' is the fight of British imperialism against the German imperialists for the domination of Europe; behind these words lies the struggle over oil and rubber, coal and iron, copper and manganese, colonies and fields of investments." (Fighting Worker, September 15, 1939)

According to Oehler, England was out to protect its wealth in the Far East:

"What England is after is safeguarding the rubber and tin of British Malaya, Borneo, etc." (Ibid., p. 2)

To those advanced workers whose thoughts went back to 1914-1918 this interpretation appeared sound.

We on our part had a different view of the relations between the British and the German imperialists. The experience of previous years had shown that the policy of the British imperialists was not to make war on German imperialism. Chamberlain, representing the policy of British, and in a sense of world imperialism, had pursued an

obvious policy of collaboration with Hitler, indicating that there was a plan to use German imperialism as a spearhead in an attack upon the Soviet Union. So that when Chamberlain declared war on Nazi Germany, we analyzed that paper declaration as a sham, a cloak for continued collaboration between the "democratic" and Fascist imperialists along the lines of the above-indicated plan and policy.

Whose prognosis did the unfolding events vindicate — the Oehlerite prognosis of an imperialist battle for domination of Europe, of the world, as in 1914-18 or ours which spoke of continued collaboration of the imperialists disguised by a sham war?

The ensuing history recorded a Sitzkrieg among the big imperialists who, according to Oehler, had embarked on a ruthless struggle for supremacy. Meanwhile, the Nazis, their hands free, raged through Poland which received no aid from its "allies," except "advice" to abandon its border fortifications (The New York Times, September 10, 1939) and established a common frontier with the Soviet Union.

As the events developed, the Nazis occupied Norway, the Low Countries, France, the Balkans without even a show of real resistance being offered by the "democratic" imperialists. Later on a similar picture was witnessed in the Far East.

This development put a kink into Oehler's thesis of an imperialist struggle for world domination. It is a queer struggle for the mastery of the world when one "camp" turns over to the "rival camp" the most vital stakes. Oehler, as others, was compelled to bridge the gap between his 1939 thesis and the concrete unfolding of events. He did this by means of a clever maneuver. He could not conceal the fact that Europe was turned over by the "democratic" imperialists to their "foes," the Fascist policemen. But he had to

explain this fact, which does not jibe with the thesis of imperialist struggle for mastery of the world. Continuing to hang on to the thesis, he asserted that the "democratic" imperialists did that out of fear of the workers and colonial slaves. Three years after the Chamberlain war declaration, Oehler addressed the workers as follows:

"The 'democratic' capitalists practically handed over Europe to Hitler, and retreated before Japan in the Far East, for fear of the workers and colonial slaves. Their seemingly insane maneuvers in recent years, in time of 'peace' and in time of war, have one main purpose: to stave off as far as possible, at whatever cost your rise to power." (Fighting Worker, Sept. 19, 1942. My emphasis - G.M.)

Let us piece together Oehler's positions. In September 1939 he stated that the "democratic" imperialists had entered into a war for domination of Europe against the so-called Axis. In 1942 he "explained" that fear of the toilers made them turn over Europe to this same Axis. What logical deduction can be drawn from such positions of Oehler? It would seem that in September 1939 the "democratic" imperialists did not fear the toilers and therefore embarked upon a war for the mastery of the world; but then they were caught short by a sudden fear of the workers and proceeded to turn over Europe and then the Far East to the Fascist executioners. This deduction follows quite logically from Oehler's position, but not from actual life! The fact is, the imperialists feared the toilers before September 1939 as well as after. If, as Oehler says, such fear caused them to turn over the Continent of Europe to the Fascist hangmen, how could they, possessed by this fear, have plunged into such serious business as an imperialist war?

Oehler's position, beginning with the alleged outburst of an imperialist struggle "for the domination of Europe" for markets, colonies, etc., and ending with one of the imperialist groups turning over its alleged objectives to the other imperialist group, is self-contradictory. The story of the capi-

talist fear of the toilers as used by Oehler is a verbal trick and explains nothing. As a matter of fact, this fear was a constant factor, particularly since the October Revolution when the capitalists had an objective lesson in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the workers. Oehler himself admits that the "seemingly insane maneuvers" of the imperialists "in recent years" both "in time of 'peace'" — meaning the period before September 1939 — and in time of what Oehler calls war — meaning after September 1939 — were motivated precisely by this fear of the toilers. What did these "seemingly insane maneuvers in recent years," represent both before and after September 1939? They represented a policy pursued by all the imperialist powers of opening the path for the world-wide spread of Fascism and pushing the Fascist spearhead against the Soviet Union and the toiling masses. Interestingly enough, some years ago, specifically in 1933, Oehler was writing precisely along these lines. He was prognosticating explicitly that German Fascism would be used as a spearhead by the imperialist powers for an assault against the working class and the Soviet Union:

"A Fascist victory and the defeat of the German proletariat would lay the basis for the ironing out the most pressing contradictions standing in the way of the imperialist war on the Soviet Union. Fascist Germany and American capital, with the other imperialists, would transform their economic war into a military war against the Soviet Union, using Fascism as the spearhead of attack. In the post-war period, defeated Germany stood in the way of a well organized military operation and direct attack upon the Soviet Union. A Fascist Germany eliminates the sharpest expression of this contradiction." (Hugo Oehler, The Militant, February 23, 1933)

And some days before he had declared that capitalism required an agreement between American imperialism and Fascist Germany for an attack upon the Soviet Union and the toiling masses:

"A working agreement between Ger-

man Fascism and American imperialism is necessary for capitalism to utilize the Fascist hordes against the working class and the Soviet Union." (Hugo Oehler, The Militant, February 17, 1933)

Without a word of repudiation or explanation, Oehler has resolutely turned his back upon the old prognosis and clings to the new one of 1939 and is "teaching" the workers the lessons of the present period in line with this new thesis.

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One of the most vital lessons which workers should learn today is the lesson of France. The fateful course of events in France strikingly refuted Oehler's 1939 thesis of the new imperialist war. The bourgeois correspondents themselves reported that there was really no such event as "The Battle of France." A million French, British, Belgian and Dutch troops were withdrawn by the "Allied" command to the Channel, a corridor was opened up by the Anglo-French command, and a small Nazi army estimated by capitalist reporters as numbering about sixty thousand rolled through to the Channel. Many of these Fascist troops were mounted on motorcycles. In police-like fashion they were reported to have dashed along the roads and across undamaged vital bridges meeting no resistance from the "Allies." Town after town was occupied by the Nazis without anything resembling actual war, such as is raging today in the Soviet Union. Sedan was occupied by the Nazis with no defense by French imperialism. And such a mighty fortress as Verdun was entered and passed by the Nazis in twenty-four hours! But Oehler had his own idea about this. In keeping with his story that the Anglo-French imperialists set out to fight Nazi Germany for domination of Europe, he told the workers that German imperialism fought every inch of its way, implying that the Anglo-French imperialists were resisting every inch of the way:

"The use of men and material has now reached huge proportions and every hour more are being consumed on both sides. The German imperial-

ist victories cannot be belittled, but we must take into consideration the fact that England has not yet fought her own battle. While Britain has fought to the last man of Poland, Norway, Holland and Belgium and now even France is used to help exhaust German imperialism while the latter has fought every inch of the way. . ." (Fighting Worker, June 1, 1940. My emphasis - G.M.)

Today, of course, after virtually every advanced worker clearly grasped that this was not the case, Oehler, without repudiating a single one of his false evaluations, admits, guardedly, that the "democratic" capitalists practically handed over Europe to Hitler. This is a far cry from fighting every inch of the way! Fighting every inch of the way implies terrific resistance. But today Oehler says the French general staff turned over France to the Nazi butchers:

"The general staff, rather face the revolt of the masses at home, turned the nation over to the German invader." (Fighting Worker, December 15, 1942. My emphasis - G.M.)

Such a policy certainly could not and naturally did not put German imperialism into the position of fighting "every inch of the way."

Oehler's contradictions have lately multiplied. At first he averred that England set out to fight for the domination of Europe. Then, in the face of a different development he made a veiled admission that the "democratic" capitalists allowed Hitler to occupy Europe. Now he comes out with a profound-looking "analysis" that the aims of the Allies is to smash into the Nazi-policed Europe:

"The present strategy of the Allies is to complete the three-quarter ring around Hitler's Europe and then start smashing into this enclosure from two or more points by Spring." (Fighting Worker, January 15, 1943)

What! Has the threat of the toiling masses diminished and the capitalist system acquired a measure of sta-

bility to the point where the "democratic" capitalists can venture to open a real fight for the domination of Europe? Not at all. Oehler himself admits that capitalism is weakening and revolution is growing closer:

"The capitalist chain is weakening in a dozen different spots. The spectre of revolution, particularly behind Axis lines, but also behind Allies lines, is becoming ever more insistent. The Social Revolution has already bobbed its head in India, France, Italy and Yugoslavia, in Latvia, Esthonia, Poland, and in a dozen minor revolts and rebellions." (Ibid.)

And in another place Oehler is even more outspoken. He freely predicts that by Spring, at the very time when, according to his other prediction, the "Allies" will start smashing into the Nazi-occupied Europe, there will be uprisings of the workers in several important countries:

"We think this winter will be very important for social unrest and revolutionary development. At the latest, this spring will unleash proletarian and colonial revolts in several important countries." (International News, January 1943, p.9)

Such is Oehler's treacherous network of contradictions and confusion, to entangle the mind of the workers in order to make them believe in the myth that the capitalist states are embroiled in an "imperialist war" among themselves.

In Lenin's day there was a real imperialist war. At that time the most subtle form of opportunist fakery was the pretense that it was a war for democracy, for national independence, for civilization, a war to end all wars, and similar deceptive shibboleths. All that fakery served the imperialists who carried on a real war for the re-division of the globe and really fought every inch of the way. Today, in a totally different set-up of inter-imperialist relations, to say it is an imperialist war may sound terribly Leninist, but it serves imperialism to keep alive the deception that a real strug-

gle is taking place between the "democratic" and the Fascist powers for the mastery of the world.

Today the greatest deception inculcated into the minds of the most advanced workers by the Cannonites, Shachtmanites and Oehlerites is the illusion of the "Second World Imperialist War." The best workers of France paid with their lives because of this deception. They imagined their bourgeoisie fought Nazi Germany, they believed that in the process of that fight, as in Russia in 1917, the French masses would cease supporting the bourgeoisie and establish a workers' republic. They were taken completely off guard. Reality was the very opposite from what the pseudo-Marxists told them. Instead of fighting against the German imperialists, the French bourgeoisie worked with them all along, opened the gates of France, and before the workers realized what was happening they were overwhelmed by the Gestapo which saved the neck of the French bourgeoisie.

Only a real war against the international Fascist gendarme of world capitalism can save the working class from a savage military-industrial slavery of the type set up by Hitler.

It may seem that the Soviet Union is carrying on such a real war today. Although in contrast to the phoney war among the capitalist powers, the military struggle in the Soviet Union is actual war, yet, owing to the fact that Stalin's policy which guides this fight is opportunist, this policy in essence is a safeguard for Fascism. Only based upon a true revolutionary policy can the war against Fascism be real.

An understanding of the basic facts of the present period is essential for the workers if they are to escape the terrible fate of the French and other workers — if they are to rescue all the oppressed from persecution and slavery. A clear-cut break with all opportunist forces which conceal the true nature of the so-called "Second World Imperialist War," ~~will~~ open the Marxist path toward a real war politically and militarily against the fascist policemen of world capitalism.  
G.M.

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 THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION.
 

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 A SIGNIFICANT PHRASE FROM TROTSKY'S PEN
 

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In 1932, against the sombre background of a decade of Stalinist ravages, Trotsky penned a pamphlet "The Suppressed Testament of Lenin." The work contains many pieces of valuable information. In connection with our investigation of Trotsky's role in the Stalinist development we have often quoted passages from the pamphlet. In it there occurs a phrase which never arrested our eye, never held any special meaning to us until after we had read an article by Trotsky published in Liberty in August 1940. Historically this 1940 article represents one of the most startling revelations of the crimes of Stalinism. Coming as it did eight years after Trotsky's pamphlet which dealt with Lenin's Testament, his article in Liberty shed a ghastly light on the phrase under discussion.

The contents of the article "Did Stalin Poison Lenin?" point unmistakably to a positive answer to the question raised in the title. In the text Trotsky quite openly tells the story of how in 1927 Stalin secretly proposed that poison be sent to Lenin alleging that Lenin had asked him for it to end his suffering, Trotsky clearly intimates that Stalin's allegations about Lenin's "request" for poison were fraudulent, and that Lenin's death in 1924 came not as the result of a stroke, as the whole world was led to believe, but as the result of poisoning by the treacherous conspirator, Stalin. According to Trotsky, Stalin himself took charge of the autopsy. Trotsky subtly adds that the physicians did not search for poison - a strange statement to make, especially in view of his remark "They understood that politics stood above medicine." Striking, too, are Trotsky's words about Stalin's flunky Yagoda, a pharmacist by profession who according to Trotsky possessed a cabinet of poisons! The attitude of Zin-

oviev and Kamenev, Stalin's partners in the Triumvirate they established during Lenin's illness, was no less remarkable: "They avoided all discussion of Lenin's death." Bucharin however, according to Trotsky made "strange allusions" as follows: "'Oh, you don't know Koba (Stalin),' he said with his frightened smile. 'Koba is capable of anything.'"

Used by Stalin as a scapegoat for seventeen years, Trotsky published the article "Did Stalin Poison Lenin?" after an attempt on his life by a gang of Stalinists in his Mexican home in 1940. Very likely the cup of his patience with Stalin had overflowed. This article brought to us with redoubled force the understanding of the depth and blackness of the Stalinist degeneration and of Trotsky's part in it. And then, in rereading Trotsky's pamphlet, "The Suppressed Testament of Lenin" written eight years earlier, we were startled by the phrase which prior to the appearance of the article "Did Stalin Poison Lenin?" had only a figurative meaning to us. Contrasting Sverdlov with Stalin as two types of organizers, Trotsky wrote that significant phrase which we are putting in capital letters for emphasis:

"When at the tenth congress, two years after the death of Sverdlov, Zinoviev and others, not without a hidden thought of the struggle against me, supported the candidacy of Stalin for General Secretary - that is, placed him de jure in the position which Sverdlov had occupied de facto - Lenin spoke in a small circle against this plan, expressing his fear that 'this cook will prepare only bitter dishes.' That phrase alone, taken in connection with the character of Sverdlov, shows us the difference between the two types of organizers: the one

tireless in smoothing over conflicts, easing the work of the collegium, and the other a specialist in bitter dishes - NOT EVEN AFRAID TO SPICE THEM WITH ACTUAL POISON." (The Suppressed Testament of Lenin, p. 22)

Thus, in 1932 Trotsky wrote that Stalin was not afraid to put actual poison into bitter dishes! Into whose food Stalin put poison Trotsky did not even distantly indicate them. The connection of this significant phrase with the article "Did Stalin Poison Lenin?" is obvious. The phrase was a clear dig at Stalin and was understood only by him and those who knew the actual details of Lenin's death as later described by Trotsky in his Liberty article. To the workers Trotsky's intent in writing this strange phrase could not possibly be apparent. They could hardly take it literally, least of all in connection with Lenin's death. Nowhere in the entire mass of information of all shades was there ever the remotest hint implicating Stalin or anyone else in Lenin's death. Then, sixteen years after Lenin's death and eight years after the appearance of that queer phrase, came the open hint from Trotsky. The principal witness of the Stalinist degeneration, Trotsky stood in the very thick of the situation surrounding Stalin's rise to power. When Trotsky in 1940 published the shocking article "Did Stalin Poison Lenin?" he was virtually the sole survivor of the limited number of people who were intimate associates of both Lenin and the Trio (Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev). If there was a man in 1940 who knew better than anyone else, outside, of course, of Stalin himself, whether Stalin actually poisoned Lenin, it was Trotsky. When Trotsky asked a question in the title of the article in Liberty he was fully aware that he alone in the entire capitalist world could supply the precise answer. Using cautious words he does supply the answer.

Trotsky was a powerful figure in the Soviet Union. He was extremely popular with the workers at home and abroad even after Lenin's death and for some years during the steady rise

of Stalin to personal domination and tyranny. Had he during his popularity made public the details of the "poison consultation" as well as the mysterious circumstances in which Lenin suddenly died, the whole world would have been ablaze with excitement. The revolutionary proletariat of the Soviet Union would have been aroused. The arrest of Stalin, Yagoda and others and the investigation of the true cause of Lenin's unexpected death would have been the logical result. There can be no doubt Trotsky clearly understood this and for some "mysterious" reason saved Stalin's neck by keeping silent. What caused him to maintain silence for sixteen years and come out with the shocking hints and innuendos only when he had been completely shorn of all power and of his former popularity and therefore could cause no sensation with such revelations has been clear to us through our examination of his role in the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union.

In connection with Trotsky's article "Did Stalin Poison Lenin?" one would think that Cannon and Shachtman, both setting up the claim of being the authentic anti-Stalinists in the workers camp, would have seized upon the statements of their own chief to use them as a weapon against Stalin. The least one could expect from them would be some sort of comment on that article. But, no, the Trotskyite leaders have maintained an unbroken silence throughout the two and a half years since the publication of that article.

In this instance, as in numerous others, the policy of hushing up is the only way out for them. Indeed, without destroying the halo of idealization with which they invested Trotsky's name they cannot very well dispose of the matter by declaring that Trotsky's article is a pack of lies. On the other hand, should they acknowledge Trotsky's open hint of assassination of Lenin by the Usurper, the most embarrassing question arises. They would have to explain why Trotsky kept mum for so many years, why he did not expose Stalin immediately after the plotter broached the proposition of sending poison to Lenin. The true answer

to these questions can never be given by the Trotskyite leaders for to do so would disclose Trotsky's real role in the bureaucratic intrigues for power conducted by the Politburo during the period of Lenin's illness. The sole answer to these questions is, of course, that Trotsky was vitally interested in avoiding a scandal during the formative stage of Stalinization because he himself was very deeply involved in the bureaucratic intrigues for power in the Soviet State. His silence about the "poison consultation," about Lenin's "bomb" which Lenin entrusted to him to explode against Stalin at the Twelfth Congress of the Party (April 1923), Trotsky's suppression of this "bomb" and his siding with Stalin at that Congress, as the proceedings of the Congress clearly show, Trotsky's participation in the suppression of Lenin's anti-Stalin documents, including the famous Testament, Trotsky's political support to Stalin before and even after the Stalinist destruction of the best section of the Russian proletariat which gathered around the "Opposition," his support to Stalin before and even after the "Moscow Trials" all his pro-Stalinist activity of two decades masked with very noisy but quite harmless (to Stalin) "criticism," was due to his collusion with Stalin at the initial stage of the bureaucratic conspiracy for entrench-

37 ment in power.

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**A**FTER all the major features of the bureaucratic degeneration of the October Revolution, with its dark plots and intrigues for personal power, with its assassinations and appalling crimes against the masses are unearthed, the story will read like a frightful nightmare. Among the names of the protagonists of this awful drama, next to the names of Stalin, Yagoda, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bucharin, Rykov and all the other renegades and criminals, will stand the name of Trotsky. The Cannons and Shachtmans will continue, of course, their policy of hushing up the damning facts about Trotsky and bamboozling their honest followers with Trotsky's and their own fabrications. But the work of digging up the true facts of the gory history of the debasement of the October Revolution will go on. Simultaneously will go on the unmasking of the Cannons and Shachtmans who are just an opportunist by-product of that debasement.

G.M.

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