

FIVE CENTS

MAY 1944

T H E **BULLETIN**

ITALY: A BETRAYAL IN THE MAKING

**LENIN'S POSITION ON THE
BRITISH LABOR PARTY**

J. C. HUNTER

DEFENDERS OF THE TRADE UNION BUROCRACY

By ARTHUR BURKE

Cannon's "STRUGGLE FOR A PROLETARIAN PARTY"

By GEORGE MARLEN

THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION

THE POT CALLS THE KETTLE BLACK

THE RED STAR PRESS

P. O. BOX 67

STATION D

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
Italy: A Betrayal In the Making by George Marlen	1
Lenin's Position On the British Labor Party by J. C. Hunter	3
Gannon's "Struggle For A Proletarian Party" (Continued from last issue) by George Marlen	15
Shachtmanite Somersaults On The Labor Party by Arthur Burke	19
Defenders Of The Trade Union Burocracy by A. B.	21

THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION

The Pot Calls The Kettle Black	23
"We Never Promised"	24

Address Communications To:

The Red Star Press
P.O. Box 67
Station D
New York City

ITALY: A BETRAYAL IN THE MAKING

THE recent political shift of the governmental scenery in Italy and the entry of the Stalinists, Socialists and Liberals into the capitalist government of the masked Fascist Badoglio denotes the deep ferment in the heart of the Italian masses and the intensification of the crisis of Italian capitalism. There can be no doubt that the betrayal of the masses of Italy is in the stage of hasty preparations.

To an advanced revolutionary worker, who has been guided by the lessons of history, the treacherous role of the Stalinists, Socialists and Liberals is well known. The experience of Spain vouches for the inevitable counter-revolutionary outcome of the crisis should the masses remain in the dark regarding the true nature of their misleaders. However, the danger which threatens the vanguard workers who have already cleared up their own mind regarding the Stalinists and Socialists as counter-revolutionary tendencies comes from the direction of the Trotskyites who to all appearances present an anti-opportunist face. Last year, as the political situation in Italy came to the fore, this publication warned the workers to beware of the Trotskyite line which had acted as a fatal trap during the Spanish Civil War. In Spain, as everybody knows, Stalinism was the decisive force among the masses in preventing the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a Workers Republic. It was because the Spanish masses were not aware of the counter-revolutionary designs of the Stalinist bureaucrats that they fell easy victim to the Stalinist-concocted Peoples Front Government composed of the Stalinists, Socialists and Liberals. There was not the slightest suspicion among the millions of the Spanish masses of the real nature of the Stalinist sell-out in Germany which only a few years before had put Hitler in power. Even the most advanced workers of Spain, the followers of the POUM, and of Trotsky, did not realize that the chief menace to the Spanish Revolution was Stalinism. The Trotskyite leaders at that time saw to it that the most advanced Spanish workers were lulled to sleep with respect to the terrible

danger of Stalinism which paralyzed the masses in the face of the Fascist attack. During the Spanish Civil War we exposed that maneuver of the Trotsky leaders. In this publication last year we called the workers' attention once again to the Trotskyite line of spreading reassuring illusions about Stalinism in Spain. We cited concrete evidence of that line in the Trotskyites' own words:

"Fortunately for the world proletariat, Stalinism in Spain does not command the forces it held in leash in Germany — and precisely because the lessons of Germany have entered the consciousness of the Spanish proletariat." (Socialist Appeal, October 1, 1936. My emphasis - G.M.)

The vast growth of Stalinism in Spain was the factual refutation of the treacherous essence of such a deadly narcotic as is contained in the above-quoted words. Significantly enough, precisely this very line of deadening the consciousness of the workers to the presence of Stalinism as the chief enemy within the working class has been introduced by the Trotskyite leaders into the Italian situation. As we predicted last year, it will be the Stalinists who will take the lead in saving Italian capitalism and in solidifying the Fascist rule throughout the entire country. Our prediction has already been verified. The bourgeois correspondents have reported that in the machinations afoot in Italy to abate the crisis, the political lead to all the parties is given by the Stalinists:

"The danger of such a crisis has been reduced in recent days by King Victor Emmanuel's decision to yield his powers to Crown Prince Humbert in the future, the vote of the six-party junta to enter the government, following the Communists' lead, and the resignation of Premier Badoglio to make way for a new Cabinet." (The New York Times, April 18, 1944. My emphasis - G.M.)

Following the Stalinists' lead — this is history repeating itself. Last year we struck a clear note predicting

this very development. This is what we said:

"Stalinism in Italy has been only dormant, not dead. It lies in wait like a hungry beast, and at the first major leftward swing of the masses which takes an organized form, it will leap up in full strength. From the very day Mussolini was removed, the reports came in of 'Communists' being in the forefront in the strikes and mass demonstrations. This no doubt includes both honest rank-and-file workers who cluster around the Stalinist movement and the treacherous bureaucrats who are coming out into the open to take the lead. If the situation develops to a point of great growth of the leftward sweep, there is not a shadow of a doubt that Stalin will send in some of his more important flunkys now 'in cold storage' in Moscow. A carload or two of Ercolis posing as 'old Bolshevik exiles' will return in triumph to Italy -- with Stalin's treacherous instructions learned by heart to be carried out unswervingly. These swindlers will put themselves at the head of the so-called Italian 'Communist' Party; they will prate about the 'many years underground struggle,' and will claim and win the following of the key sections of the Italian workers. Stalinism has not been exposed to the Italian workers; its counter-revolutionary nature is not known to them; there has never been a Marxist tendency in Italy which could perform the function of combatting Stalinism. If Stalinism is not exposed and destroyed, the Italian masses will be led to another bloody defeat. The path may be that of China or Germany or Spain or France; whatever the specific form, the betrayal and crushing of the Italian masses, however great the leftward sweep may become, is

assured unless the influence of Stalinism is wiped out by the growth of a genuine Marxist current." ("The Italian Crisis and the Trotskyite Line, p. 2. August 8, 1943)

We made this clear and unequivocal statement on August 8, 1943. It will be instructive to show what the Trotskyite leaders said virtually on that very date (Aug. 7, 1943), about the Stalinist menace in Italy. Interestingly enough, it was the same treacherous line that they had introduced several years before in Spain, numbing the consciousness of the workers to the Stalinist menace. Here is what the editor of The Militant peddled to the advanced workers, definitely playing down the Stalinist menace:

"I don't want to underestimate the menace of Stalinism, which is more than ready to repeat the role it played in Spain, but I don't think the Stalinists will get the same chance to repeat it. Stalin has dissolved the Communist International and said there is no longer any need for a revolutionary international. But the masses haven't forgotten either the tune or the words of The Internationale, and we can assume they haven't forgotten the meaning either." (The Militant, August 7, 1943. My emphasis - G.M.)

At the very time that the Trotskyite leaders were spreading the fraud that the Stalinists "will not get the chance" to repeat their betrayals, the Stalinists were busy seizing control of the situation. By now, the Stalinist villainy is assuming a full and mature form precisely along the lines we foreshadowed and the Trotskyites concealed. We repeat the warning we gave the workers last August: Beware of the Trotskyite line!

G.M.

LENIN'S POSITION
ON THE
BRITISH LABOR PARTY

THE foremost exponents of Marxism were great leaders of the working class not because they were infallible, but because in their political understanding they were correct predominantly and wrong only to a minor extent. In some cases they were mistaken on highly important positions, but even the most significant errors were overshadowed by the main bulk of healthy teachings. A striking case in point is Lenin's pre-1917 opposition to the principle of permanent revolution. This principle is without doubt of major weight in the system of proletarian politics, and equally without doubt Lenin was incorrect on this point up to 1917. His pre-1917 concept of a two class, proletarian-peasant, left-bourgeois-democratic dictatorship which would function in the true interests of the toilers was completely disproved by historic events in 1917. When faced by the test of concrete reality, Lenin abandoned his false prognosis and incorporated a correct policy on this question into his generally Marxist politics.

Had it not been for the development of opportunist trends in the workingclass leadership and the definitive triumph of this reaction over the original Marxist current, the errors scattered here and there in the teachings of the great proletarian leaders would in themselves have done little serious harm to the toilers. Even so outstanding a theoretical blunder as Lenin's pre-1917 idea of a proletarian-peasant, bourgeois-democratic dictatorship had no decisively injurious results because Lenin replaced this false notion with a correct position in the nick of time. It was only later, when Stalinism supplanted Marxism that Lenin's pre-1917 mistake on permanent revolution was used to divert the workers from the correct path. This was not due to the error inherent in the old, abandoned position, but was caused by the treacherous, factional use made of it by the band of counter-revolutionaries and renegades who usurped the Soviet power.

The fact that opportunism still

dominates in the proletarian ranks and utilizes the mistakes of the great Marxists for its own ends, makes it imperative to review the old errors from time to time. The opportunists characteristically stand matters on their head, fetishizing the true leaders as "perfect," while concealing and distorting what was correct in their teachings and parading what was wrong as eternal truth. The ancient errors of the historical figures of Marxism, which ordinarily would by now be mere curiosities in the political museum, are living enemies of the toilers through the everyday criminality of the current opportunists. The echoes of the past thus become the menace of the present and the future.

THE TRUE AND THE FALSE IN LENIN'S
VIEWS ON THE BRITISH LABOR PARTY

WE deal here with Lenin's position on the British Labor Party as enunciated early in 1920, chiefly in his book, "Left-wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder." It is our intention to analyze this position in the light of what history has revealed.

During more than two decades of Stalinist deceptions, a certain notorious phrase has been tenaciously attached to Lenin's position: "Lenin supported the British Labor Party in 1920." And usually, this expression is uttered as a defense of supporting some variety of political swindle. Indeed, the situation is such, due to the poisons spread by the opportunists, that one would never guess that Lenin was against the very idea of a Labor Party, fought it bitterly, and within Russia itself, where his influence was direct and paramount amongst the workers, succeeded in conquering and exterminating it. Let us therefore see what Lenin's position actually was and examine whether it has stood the test of history.

His book, "Left-wing Communism," in which his position is enunciated, had important antecedents which it is well worth recalling.

Lenin sharply differentiated between a Marxist party and all other parties. Those non-Marxist parties which paraded under a "labor" banner were held by Lenin to be thoroughly opportunist, serving the interests of the bourgeoisie. To these so-called "labor" parties Lenin applied the term bourgeois, following the practice established by Engels. This characterization of Labor parties as bourgeois showed that the criterion of Engels and Lenin was the political line of these organizations. In 1916, at a time when Lenin's struggle against "labor" opportunism reached a particularly sharp and crucial stage, he issued one of his most clear-cut and finished declarations on the attitude of Marxism toward the bourgeois "labor" parties:

"The fact is that as a political phenomenon 'bourgeois labor parties have already been formed in all the advanced capitalist countries, and unless a determined, ruthless struggle all along the line is conducted against these parties — or, what is the same thing, against these groups, trends, etc. — it is useless talking about the struggle against imperialism, about Marxism, or about the socialist labour movement." (Collected Works, Vol. XIX, pp. 349-350)

The bourgeois "labor" parties played a central role in clearing the path for imperialism to plunge the masses into the World War. They pulled capitalism through the critical years after the end of that gigantic carnage by diverting the toilers from revolutionary struggle and struck revengeful blows against the new-born Russian Soviet Republic. In 1920 Lenin's policy of fighting to destroy the "labor" party bulwarks of imperialist reaction stood solid in the terms defined in his 1916 statement which was fortified by four years of the most unequivocal evidence of the utterly and incurably criminal, anti-workingclass character of the "labor" party tendencies.

The outstanding example of the bourgeois "labor" party was the British Labor Party composed primarily of the reactionary trade unions representing the aristocracy of labor in the British Empire. Headed by such invet-

erate hangers-on of the imperialists as Henderson, MacDonald, Snowden, Clynes, Hodges, J. H. Thomas, Williams and the Webbs, the British Labor Party constituted a straight-jacket which utterly paralyzed the entire mass of workers who in the years after the World War were particularly in ferment and on the whole ripe for decisive action against the bourgeoisie. The ideological work of the British Labor Party consisted of promises of achieving Socialism by reformist methods and its actions were primarily a series of treacherous agreements with the capitalist leaders to hold the workers in leash.

Despite the "left" almost-revolutionary verbiage which in those turbulent years the Labor Party leaders were compelled to adopt from time to time as a sop to the aroused workers, Lenin never altered his evaluation of these people and their organization as unqualifiedly and unalterably corrupt and subservient to the capitalists. In a speech at the Second Congress of the Communist International in August 1920, significantly enough, after he wrote "Left-wing Communism," Lenin attacked the British Labor Party in the following words:

"Of course, for the most part the Labor Party consists of workers, but it does not logically follow from this that every workers' party which consists of workers is at the same time a 'political workers' party'; that depends upon who leads it, upon the content of its activities and of its political tactics. Only the latter determines whether it is really a political proletarian party. From this point of view, which is the only correct point of view, the Labor Party is not a political workers' party but a thoroughly bourgeois party, because, although it consists of workers, it is led by reactionaries, and the worst reactionaries at that, who lead it in the spirit of the bourgeoisie and with the aid of the British Noskes and Schoidemanns, they systematically deceive the workers." (Reprinted in "Lenin On Britain," p. 267)

* * *

Within the context of this under-

standing, matured through many years of evidence of the Labor Party's opportunism, Lenin early in 1920 proposed a tactic which he believed would facilitate the destruction of the British Labor Party and its pernicious influence over the workers. This tactic was intended by Lenin to foster the growth of Communist strength amongst the British toilers. The Communists in England were a very tiny group who found it difficult to get the ear of the workers. On the other hand, the pro-imperialist Labor Party had the big bulk of the proletariat behind it.

Up to the period in which Lenin wrote his "Left-wing Communism," the British bourgeoisie could very well conduct its state affairs through the traditional capitalist parties, but the time was rapidly approaching when the labor agents of imperialism, the Hendersons and MacDonalds would receive from the ruling class enough parliamentary weight to be shunted to the fore as the governing party to run the capitalist state. The country was in a state of severe crisis; the workers were rapidly losing confidence in the old bourgeois parties, the Liberal and Conservative. The bourgeoisie were finding it increasingly difficult to rule by the old conventional methods. The vast strike waves which were rocking the country from end to end were leading to a parliamentary crisis which would force the capitalists to hit out upon a somewhat new path if their rule was to be preserved. The emergence of the Labor Party as a dominant instrument in the bourgeois state was on the horizon.

Lenin formed the definite impression that the Hendersons and Snowdens feared to form a Labor Party Government. The Labor Party has never been the governing party, argued Lenin; it sits comfortably behind a mountain of promises about what it would do if in power, but it has never had to show its hand by actually being in power in the bourgeois "democratic" state. Henderson and Snowden, therefore, are resisting the tide which is sweeping them to the fore as the governing party, continued Lenin's argument, and this places them in a serious dilemma before the masses. The hard-pressed toilers are looking to the Hendersons and MacDonalds to seize the helm, and

these gentlemen are afraid to do so. The Communists, said Lenin, must take advantage of this situation by forcing Henderson and Snowden to win and to form a government, thus supporting them "as a rope supports a hanged man":

"If we are not a revolutionary group but the party of the revolutionary class, if we want the masses to follow us (and unless they do, we stand the risk of remaining mere talkers), we must, first, help Henderson or Snowden to beat Lloyd George and Churchill (or to be more correct: to compel the former to beat the latter, because the former are afraid to win!); secondly, help the majority of the working class to become convinced by their own experience that we are right, i.e., that the Hendersons and Snowdens are utterly worthless, that they are petty bourgeois and treacherous and that their bankruptcy is inevitable; thirdly, bring nearer the moment when, on the basis of the disappointment of the majority of the workers in the Hendersons, it will be possible with serious chances of success to overthrow the government of the Hendersons at once, because if the very clever and weighty, not petty-bourgeois but big-bourgeois Lloyd George betrays utter consternation and weakens himself (and the whole of the bourgeoisie) more and more by his 'friction' with Churchill one day and his 'friction' with Asquith the next day, how much more will this be the case with the Henderson government!" ("Left-wing Communism," in Lenin's Selected Works, Eng. Ed. Vol. X, pp. 127-128. Emphasis in original.)

The Communists should propose, said Lenin, to enter into an "election agreement" with the Hendersons and Snowdens to "march together against the alliance of Lloyd George and the Conservatives." Of course, the Communists must retain complete liberty (Lenin underlined this) to carry on their own agitation and propaganda and to expose the Labor Party. If the Labor Party leaders accepted this proposal, Lenin figured, that would hasten the day of a Labor Party Government and the exposure of the whole rotten structure of Labor Party opportunism;

if the Hendersons and Snowdens refused the proposal, they would expose themselves as preferring unity with the bourgeoisie to a bloc with the workers.

Lenin clearly expected that a refusal was the most likely alternative, for he insisted that the Hendersons and Snowdens feared to have their Party form a government in the parliamentary bourgeois state. Lenin elaborated on the character of this alleged fear and its meaning. If Henderson and Snowden refuse the bloc offered by the Communists —

"We will gain immediately because we will demonstrate to the masses that the Hendersons and Snowdens are afraid to beat Lloyd George, afraid to take power alone and are secretly striving to get the support of Lloyd George, who is openly stretching out his hand to the Conservatives against the Labor Party." (*Ibid.*, p. 129. Emphasis in original.)

Immediately following these words Lenin draws an historical analogy to which must be paid the closest attention, for an analysis of it will reveal much of the reason why things happened contrary to Lenin's expectations. Evidently Lenin believed that the situation in England in 1920 was similar to that in Russia in 1917 and drew an analogy from one to the other. Referring to the above-quoted alleged fear of the Hendersons and Snowdens to form a Labor Party Government in Parliament, Lenin wrote:

"It should be noted that in Russia, after the Revolution of March 12 (February 27) 1917, the propaganda of the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries (i.e., the Russian Hendersons and Snowdens) gained a great deal precisely because of a circumstance like this. We said to the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries: Take complete power without the bourgeoisie, because you have a majority in the Soviets (at the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets in June 1917, the Bolsheviks had only 13 per cent of the votes). But the Russian Hendersons and Snowdens feared to take power without the bourgeoisie, and when the bour-

geoisie delayed the elections to the Constituent Assembly because they knew perfectly well that the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries would have the majority in it (the latter had entered into a close political bloc and both really represented nothing but petty-bourgeois democracy), the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were unable to wage an energetic and consistent struggle against these delays." (*Ibid.*, pp. 129-130. Emphasis in original.)

We see that Lenin was drawing upon the Russian experience for his tactic in England. The Russian opportunists were exposed because they refused to take power in the Soviets in the face of the urgings of the Bolsheviks. The British opportunists, considered Lenin, would suffer the same fate for they too feared to form a government and would refuse to do so despite the Communists' insistence.

This reasoning must be carefully examined. Was the analogy Lenin drew from Russia of 1917 to England of 1920 correct? Let us see what the facts were.

Why did the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries fear to take power and steadfastly refuse to do so? Because it was a question of taking power through the Soviets: a revolution had occurred in Russia in March 1917. There was the so-called "dual power," the provisional bourgeois government and the Soviets, the latter in form representing the dictatorship of the proletariat but in content, while under the control of the Mensheviks and S.R.'s, constituting an appendage of Russian imperialism. If the Mensheviks and S.R.'s were to set up a government through the Soviets, as the Bolsheviks insisted up to July 1917, it would have meant that the bourgeois government would be set aside and the Soviets, the form of the proletarian dictatorship, would become the sole power. Precisely because it was a question of establishing a Soviet form of government which would have unleashed the mass movement against the landlords and capitalists, the Mensheviks and S.R.'s, loyal agents of the Russian bourgeoisie, dreaded to take power in the Soviets — but were perfectly

willing to and actually did occupy ministerial posts in the "democratic" cabinet of the Socialist Revolutionary Kerensky.

In England at the time Lenin wrote his proposals in "Left-wing Communism" there were no Soviets, no "March" revolution had occurred, and there was no question of the Hendersons and Snowdens taking power through Soviets or of giving a forward development to an already-existing revolution. Lenin's proposal was to press upon the British Labor Party leaders to form a government in the bourgeois-democratic, parliamentary state. It is precisely at this point that Lenin's historical analogy missed the mark. Just as the Kerenskys and Chernevs in Russia, so the Hendersons, MacDonalds and Snowdens in England did not fear to form a bourgeois government. In fact what happened was neither of Lenin's alternatives. Contrary to all of Lenin's expectations, the Hendersons, Snowdens and MacDonalds did form a Labor Party Government and were not in the least exposed. History is the best answer to Lenin's mistaken tactic on the British Labor Party and it is well to examine that history.



The British Communists accepted Lenin's position on the Labor Party and offered it an electoral bloc. This offer was turned down by the Laborite leaders without the least injury to their pernicious influence.

When the Labor Party a few years later did form a government, it was under circumstances which were worlds removed from Lenin's calculations in "Left-wing Communism." The British Labor Party finally formed a government because such was the will of the British bourgeois leadership. The situation in England continued to remain turbulent for many years after Lenin wrote his "Left-wing Communism." In the General Election of December 1923, the Conservative Party, then the ruling party, came out relatively the strongest, but as a minority in Parliament against the combined forces of the Liberal and the Labor Parties.

The Labor Party jumped from 142 seats in Parliament to 192. Obviously there was occurring a tremendous swing toward the Labor Party. The bourgeoisie hit upon a scheme to ease the strain of the situation. This scheme consisted of pushing the Labor Party into the governing position, i.e., to maneuver it into forming a Labor Party Government. The bourgeoisie knew that the Labor Party in power would dutifully carry out the imperialist policies and would cause a recession of the rising proletarian tide. The total result would be the strengthening of bourgeois power. The best political brains of British capitalism went to work to boost the Labor Party into office. By itself, the Labor Party did not have enough seats in Parliament to become the governing party. Hence, the capitalists ordered the Liberal Party to throw its support in Parliament behind the Labor Party. The so very clever Lloyd George, to whom Lenin sardonically dedicated his "Left-wing Communism," instead of fighting the Labor Party, as Lenin thought, ordered his Liberal cohorts to vote the Labor Party into power! Surely, this was a turn of events which Lenin, who in 1920 saw Lloyd George making eyes at the Conservatives to keep the Laborites out of office, did not foresee. The prime movers behind the whole conspiracy were the Conservatives grouped around Stanley Baldwin. These shrewd and experienced politicians expressed themselves in public declarations as being quite satisfied with the formation of a Labor Party Government. Lord Grey, one of the big bourgeois leaders, stated: "I regard the advent of a Labour government under these circumstances with no apprehension at all." In January 1924, the first bourgeois Labor Government was duly formed at the bidding of the imperialists.

With Ramsay MacDonald as Prime Minister, the first Labor Government carried out every reactionary policy of British imperialism. If being in office could ever expose the Labor Party before the workers, then the Labor Party should have been exposed a million times over. Its crimes ranged from open strikebreaking in England to brutal repression of the masses of India. But the Labor Party was not ex-

posed! The capitalists kept it in office long enough to tide the situation over, and then later, in 1929, carried out the same maneuver of putting the MacDonalds in governmental power! In 1929, after the example of 1924 and after the epoch-making betrayal of the British General Strike in 1926 by the Laborites (and the Stalinists) the British workers were following the Labor Party in greater numbers than before! As in 1923-1924, so in 1929, the very clever Lloyd George openly supported the Laborites. The bourgeois connivers knew a good trick when they saw one. Putting the Labor Party in governmental power proved itself to be a life-saver for the bourgeoisie. And to this day, the overwhelming bulk of the British workers are still in the clutches of the Labor Party!

These are the teachings of history on Lenin's tactic of 1920. It was a mistaken tactic, based on a false analogy. It was to become the ruling party in the bourgeois state that Lenin was urging on the Labor Party in "Left-wing Communism." And the bourgeois state functions for the bourgeoisie in all its ramifications; every party which takes power in the bourgeois state acts in the interests of capitalism. To urge an opportunist party to take power in the bourgeois state is no exposure at all. History proves that such a tactic, as every other mistake, plays right into the hands of the capitalists. It is a capitalist tactic to place an opportunist party in power in the bourgeois state. The British experience shows this clearly.

* * *

There was one feature in the Russian situation of 1917 from which Lenin unfortunately did not draw the necessary lesson. As a matter of historical record, the Russian workers prior to 1917 had never had the experience of a Menshevik or S. R. Party government, but the Bolsheviks did not use any such tactic as Lenin proposed for the British workers in 1920. The Bolsheviks never called for the Mensheviks and S.R. Parties to take power in the bourgeois state or considered that such a maneuver would serve to ex-

pose these opportunists. History proves conclusively that in order for an opportunist party to be exposed it is not necessary that it be the ruling party in the bourgeois state (or in the Soviets, for that matter); it is only necessary that there exist a genuine Bolshevik Party which faithfully combats the opportunists in its daily work. The British Labor Party has not been destroyed by a Marxist Party because in England there did not exist in Lenin's day and has not existed since then a true Marxist Party. The leaders of the British Communist Party of 1920 were essentially opportunists similar to the American Fosters and Lovestones who soon became incorporated in the Stalinist system. Significantly, while they overthrew every truly Leninist policy, the Stalinist traitors often use Lenin's mistaken tactic on the Labor Party, adding to it many reactionary elements of their own fabrication.

* * *

Lenin's position on the British Labor Party, put forth in all honest intention but objectively erroneous, has been a windfall for the opportunists. Each opportunist tendency always gives support, sometimes directly, sometimes in the most roundabout fashion, to the other opportunist movements. It was enough that the opportunists could find in Lenin's writings a statement calling for electoral support to the British Labor Party in a certain specific situation. Given this finger, they soon seized the whole arm. With their usual perverse genius they have decorated Lenin's honest error with so many trimmings that the great founder of Bolshevism would be stricken speechless could he come to life and see what has become of his innocent attempt at a novel experiment in 1920. Lenin's mistake of 1920 has become the standard apology for every treacherous effort by the sham "Marxist" movements of today to tie the workers to this or that reactionary "Labor" Party. Moreover, what Lenin erroneously proposed was for a local situation under very limited circumstances. The opportunists transformed Lenin's proposal into an all-embracing, permanent historical principle with

regard to the Labor Party in general and to all Labor parties in particular.

Lenin wanted to destroy the British Labor Party, to destroy all Labor parties. The opportunists call for Labor parties where such parties do not exist and seek to strengthen them where they do exist. It is highly revealing to observe the brazen manner in which the opportunists utterly distort Lenin's position of 1920. In his speech on the British Labor Party at the Second Congress of the Comintern in August 1920, after he wrote "Left-wing Communism," Lenin took issue with one of the British representatives, McLaine, on a very basic problem concerning the Labor Party. McLaine termed the British Labor Party the political organization of the trade union movement. Lenin sharply disagreed with him on this point and showed that such a formulation was very harmful. Referring to McLaine, Lenin said:

"He calls the Labour Party the political organisation of the trade union movement. Later on he repeated this when he said: the Labour Party 'is the political expression of the trade union movement,' I have read the same expression of opinion in the organ of the British Socialist Party. It is not true and partly is the cause of the opposition, to a certain degree justified, of the British revolutionary workers. Indeed, the concept: 'the political organisation of the trade union movement,' or the 'political expression' of this movement is mistaken." (Speech printed in Lenin On Britain, p. 267. My emphasis - J.C.H.)

Nothing could be clearer. The opportunist British Labor Party is not the political expression of the organized trade union movement. Thus spoke Lenin.

But in the Shachtmanite press the matter is completely turned on its head. The Shachtmanites, in common with the whole Trotsky movement, call for the creating and building of a Labor Party and fall back for support on what they say was Lenin's position in

1920. Why, according to the Shachtmanite editors, did Lenin call for support of the British Labor Party? Listen to this answer:

"He urged his policy because the British Labour Party was the organized political expression of the organized labor movement, it was the organized working class, the trade unions, acting as a class in the political field, even if with a middle class program." (The New International, February 1944, p. 38. My emphasis - J.C.H.)

The words we have underlined are a cynical, barefaced lie. The Shachtmanite leaders are attributing to Lenin a position he repudiated black on white. This is an excellent specimen of the criminal distortions which the opportunists must employ in order to twist Lenin's position inside out and make it look as if he supported the Labor Party per se, i.e., as if Lenin was for the Labor Party.

* * *

Why was Lenin opposed to calling the Labor Party the political expression of the organized working class? It was undeniable that the British Labor Party encompassed the organized union movement in its vast majority. The trade union workers were certainly supporting the Labor Party, and its leadership consisted primarily of the leaders of the trade union movement. Nevertheless Lenin attacked those who palmed off the Labor Party as the political expression of the organized working class.

The reason for this was that Lenin singled out the class essence of the Labor Party, its political line and used this as his criterion of the class character of the Labor Party. From this standpoint Lenin termed the Labor Party a bourgeois party even though in its membership-composition it consisted virtually entirely of workers from the mills and factories. In the system of Leninism, a proletarian party is one which genuinely fights all opportunism and builds its own organization whose aim is to lead the masses toward the establishment of

a proletarian State. The Labor Party, as Lenin observed, headed by the anti-Marxist union leaders and "democratic" politicians of the "Socialist" variety is one of the most insidious deceivers of the masses because its stock-in-trade is the spreading of bourgeois-democratic poisons amongst the toilers. The Labor Party is a consistent opponent of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and as such ipso facto stands for capitalism regardless of the subtlety of its "labor" and even "socialist" disguises.

* * *

In calling for the formation and festering of a Labor Party based on the existing trade unions which are reactionary and pro-imperialist to the core, the Trotsky leaders face certain "diplomatic" difficulties. Their followers are for the most part radical workers who are aware of the anti-workingclass political nature of every Labor Party that ever existed. How can the Trotsky leaders sell to the workers the deception that the growth of "Labor" parties is progressive? The technique is very simple. The Trotsky leaders hide the fact that the parties for whose growth they are shouting are reactionary.

Sometimes, the Trotsky leaders are relatively crude in their maneuvers, as for example, when they urged the workers to vote for the Stalinist A.L.P. stooge, Eugene Connolly, during the elections of March 1941, deliberately concealing the fact that Connolly was a Stalinist and advertising him as an "independent labor candidate opposed to the war-mongering candidates." (The Militant, March 8, 1941) We see from this what the word "independent" means to the Trotskyite leaders; a Stalinist lickspittle is an independent candidate!

At other times the Trotsky leaders are much more subtle, but no less deceptive. An interesting specimen of Jesuitical program-mongering is the resolution on the Labor Party question adopted at the end of last year by the Shachtmanite Workers Party's National Committee. The resolution is published in The New Internationalist of December 1943 under the grandiose title:

"The Main Political Problem -The Fight for a Labor Party."

In this resolution the Workers Party calls itself "a party of revolutionary socialism and internationalism, and consequently an intransigent opponent of social-reformism in all its varieties." Further, the resolution states that the Workers Party is distinguished from "all other parties and groups in the working class" by what it calls "its fundamental program of revolutionary socialism" and the militant way it says it fights for this program.

A logical question arises: If the Workers Party, as it says, is the only party standing for revolutionary socialism and internationalism, what kind of party is the independent Labor Party, for which the Shachtmanites also call? Is it also to be a party of revolutionary socialism and internationalism? If so, why two such parties, why the Workers Party and an independent Labor Party?

The Shachtmanites will probably reply: of course, we do not mean that the proposed independent Labor Party should have the same program as the Workers Party; to propose such a duplication would be ridiculous.

In reply to the Shachtmanites, however, it is necessary to quote this passage from their resolution:

"To be effective in the highest degree an independent Labor Party must not take capitalism as its basis and seek to hold it together with repairs at this or that point. It must rather put forward such a program as disregards entirely the interests of capitalism and the class which is its beneficiary, disregards entirely the 'sacred right of private property' which is only the right of the monopoly capitalists and imperialists to exploit and oppress the masses, and directs itself exclusively to defending and promoting the class interests of the proletariat and those sections of society who are its allies in the struggle against the monopolists and their reaction."

This is the blueprint for the proposed independent Labor Party put forth by the Shachtmanites! The independent Labor Party is to "disregard entirely" the interests of the capitalist class and the rights of private property and is to "direct itself exclusively" to the interests of the toilers. This is quite a modest proposal for the Workers Party, that self-styled only revolutionary socialist party, to be making to another party. What does it mean to "disregard entirely" the interests of the capitalists and to direct oneself exclusively to the interests of the toilers? This means to be a Marxist-Leninist, a Bolshevik! No other tendency in the world ever had such an orientation. The outstanding quality of every other political tendency was and is precisely its tender regard for the interests of the capitalists, its betrayal of the interests of the toilers.

Lenin fought for the concept that the only force in history which can liberate the toilers from capitalist oppression and which can really trample upon the interests of the capitalists and their private property is the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. Perhaps Shachtman's independent Labor Party is to stand for the proletarian dictatorship? It seems only reasonable that a party which is to disregard entirely the interests of capitalism should "at least" stand for the dictatorship of the proletariat. On this point the Shachtmanite resolution is silent. And for an obvious reason. It is safe enough for the Labor fakers to chatter empty phrases about disregarding capitalist interests; nobody can pin you down. But no Labor Party can come out openly for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat as the only liberating force in history. If Shachtman injected this point into his blueprint for the "independent Labor Party" his game would stand self-exposed.

What kind of game is concealed in the Shachtmanite resolution on the Labor Party? Shachtman is working for the growth of the only kind of Labor Party that can actually exist, a reactionary party standing for capitalism under a sham Labor disguise. It is to

conceal this fact that the Shachtmanite resolution gabbles about its independent Labor Party "disregarding entirely" the interests of capitalism. This is an anti-capitalist sugar-coating to make the bourgeois Labor Party pill palatable for the radical workers who cluster around the Trotsky movement.

* * *

The Cannonites also shout that their Socialist Workers Party is the only revolutionary socialist party. What kind of party is the Cannonite version of the proposed "independent Labor Party" to be? Cannon put it simply and directly:

"There is no need at all for us to speak about a reformistic labor party. What we are advocating is an independent labor party, and we are proposing our own program, which is not reformist." (Fourth International, August 1943, p. 232)

If, as Cannon says, the proposed "independent Labor Party" is to have a program which is not reformist, obviously it is to have a revolutionary program. Between a reformist and a revolutionary program there is no middle ground. The relationship is an "either-or." But Cannon says that the S.W.P. has the only genuinely revolutionary program. What, then, is the Cannonite "independent Labor Party," if we take his talk literally, but a repetition of what the S.W.P. is alleged to be? However, what is the purpose of having two parties with the same program? This is an obvious piece of nonsense, if it is taken literally. The fact is that in practice the Trotskyites' policy is to support any type of Labor Party swindler who can possibly be painted up somewhat so that the mere sight of him won't make the workers sick in the stomach. The Stalinist Eugene Connolly camouflaged by Cannon as "an independent labor candidate," or Labor faker gangs like Olson's in the mid-west can serve such a purpose. In practice, the Trotskyite Labor Party line has always consisted of building up the Stalinist bureaucrats and various Labor agents of Wall Street.

* * *

The attempt of the leaders of both the Cannon and the Shachtman factions to make the workers confuse the pro-bourgeois Labor Party with a revolutionary party is a perfectly conscious piece of treachery. The leaders of both factions are completely aware that the Labor Party and the revolutionary party are diametrical opposites having absolutely nothing in common. In 1935 when the Stalinists at the early stage of the Popular Front zigzag came out for a Labor Party, the New Militant, organ of the Cannon-Shachtman leadership of those days, wrote these clear, unmistakable words of condemnation:

"The slogan of a 'Labor Party' is the negation of the slogan of a 'Revolutionary Party,' and it is no accident, therefore, that the adoption of the 'Labor Party' slogan by the Communist Party coincides with the latter's adoption of a reformist position generally, and correspondingly, a move for organic unity with the Socialist Party." (New Militant, December 28, 1935)

These words which truly stigmatize the slogan of a Labor Party were nothing but a screen put up by Cannon and Shachtman to conceal their own preparations for seconding the Stalinist Popular Front zigzag by the adoption of a whole series of Rightist features.

To the very end Lenin maintained a bitter, unrelenting fight against the reformists of the Labor Party variety. In August 1920, we remember, he characterized the British Labor Party as "a thoroughly bourgeois party." He pointed out that its leaders conduct themselves in the spirit of the Noskes and Scheidemanns, the "reformist" butchers of the German workers. To work for the destruction, not the building, of the Labor Party formed a fundamental task of the British workers, according to Lenin's entire teaching on this question. The Trotskyites, on the other hand, treat the question of the Labor Party reformists in reverse order. Since the Trotskyites are calling for support to the Labor Party, not in Lenin's sense "as a rope supports a hanged man," but in the

sense of building the Labor Party, it is necessary for them to paint this reactionary organization in certain benign colors. A good illustration of this is an article by the Cannonite writer, M. Morrison, entitled, "The Australian Labor Party and the Fight for Socialism" (The Militant, September 11, 1943, p.3). The difference between revolutionary Marxists and the reformists (Labor Party leaders) is distorted by Morrison in this way:

"Revolutionary Marxists believe in taking power for the purpose of establishing socialism when the majority of the people support them, regardless of the opposition of the minority of capitalists; reformists, though believing in socialism as a theory, in practice would postpone the taking of power and the abolition of the capitalist system until the minority of capitalists give their consent. Reformists are so fearful of the violent opposition of the capitalists that in practice they submit to the basic demands of the capitalist class."

This Trotskyite characterization of the reformists is a downright cover-up of the criminal anti-workingclass purpose and intent of the reformist leaders. In Morrison's terms the crux of the matter is the reformists' alleged fear of the violence of the capitalists in the face of a socialist overturn. Is this in fact the crux of the nature of the reformists? The answer is that not only are the reformists not motivated by fear of capitalist violence, but they themselves are notorious perpetrators of violence against the workers on behalf of the capitalists. The reformist Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries organized White Guard armies and governments for the Russian bourgeoisie and took the lead in the slaughter of the Bolshevik workers and Red Army men and women. The reformist German Social Democrats massacred tens of thousands of radical workers in the years after the World War and crowned their "platonian" reformist career by a vote of confidence for the Hitler regime in the last moments of the Reichstag. The reformist British Labor Party Government headed by Ramsay MacDonald did not hesitate to use widespread violence against the

masses of India in the turbulent years of 1929 to 1933. The Stalinist-Socialist-Liberal Negrin Government in Loyalist Spain sent troops in May 1937 to butcher the revolutionary workers in Barcelona. We could multiply these examples to several pages.

Another splash of whitewash which Morrison applies to the reformists is that they "believe in socialism as a theory." The fact is that the reformist leaders do not believe in socialism in any way whatever, that they hate and fear socialism, and that they consciously support and fight violently to save the capitalist system. The reformists' babbling about "socialism as a theory" to be practiced in the remote future is the crassest demagoguery used to conceal the reformists' function as bribed agents of imperialism.

The "difference" between the Marxists and the reformists given by the Trotskyites is the one advanced hypocritically by the reformists themselves; it is the reformists' pretense of how they "differ" from Marxism. That the Trotskyites are spreading reformist deceptions on this question flows organically from their position of support to the reformist Labor Party.

It is an established historical law that when the workers become disillusioned with the openly bourgeois parties, large sections become prey to the new illusions, namely, confidence in the reformists (various concealed bourgeois parties, Social Democracy, the "Labor" Party). This falling from one trap into another is today termed by the Trotskyites an advancement for the masses! On such sophistry the Trotsky leaders predicate their advocacy of Labor Partyism and tell the radical workers to welcome the growth of the Labor Party.

The collapse of the workers into the morass of reformism in every instance in history resulted in disaster for the entire workingclass. The Labor parties have shown themselves to be more dangerous than the openly capitalist parties for the reason that the reformists are able to stave off proletarian revolution when the capitalists alone are helpless. The les-

son drawn by the genuine Marxists is that reformism must be fought in advance to prevent the workers from falling decisively into this deadly trap. The Trotskyites, on the other hand, put the matter differently. Morrison writes:

"The victory of the Labor party in Australia presents social democracy with a wonderful opportunity to prove its fundamental thesis that a socialist order can be established through a parliamentary majority and without any revolutionary violence."

We have already seen in discussing the Trotskyites' statement of the differences between the Marxists and the reformists that the Trotskyites advance a reformist formulation. Here, in the above quotation it is to be observed further that the Trotskyites present the reformists' "fundamental thesis" in a perfectly matter of fact tone as something taken by the reformists sincerely and seriously. But what in reality is this alleged "fundamental thesis" of the reformist leaders? What role does it play in the reformist system?

This "fundamental thesis" is a conscious and deliberate trick of the reformist agents of imperialism to divert the masses from proletarian revolution which alone can bring socialism. The reformist leaders consciously lie about the bourgeois parliamentary system, painting it as real democracy when in fact it is a mask behind which lurks the rule of the finance-imperialist clique. The reformist leaders, of course, know the real character of the parliamentary regime, for they are in close personal touch with the imperialist rulers and execute their orders. The Bevins, the Greens, the Lewises and the Murrays who are constantly scurrying back and forth from private conferences with the imperialist rulers have no illusions about parliamentarism. The reformists themselves are part and parcel of the machinery of parliamentary deception and, at times, the most vital part.

How then can there be any talk — and with a straight face! — of the reformist leaders having a "fundamen-

tal thesis" of the victory of socialism through the bourgeois-parliamentary machinery? On paper they have such a thesis. But Marxism does not guide itself in evaluating a political tendency by paper declarations. Therefore, Marxists do not speak of the Labor Party having "a wonderful opportunity" to prove its "fundamental thesis." Marxism says to the workers: The "fundamental thesis" of a Labor Party is a conscious fraud. Concrete actions have proved that Labor parties are against socialism and for capitalism. Have no illusory hopes that what the Labor Party needs to prove its "fundamental thesis" is a "fair chance." Look at the record piled up through long years of treachery of the reformist leaders. You will get nothing different from the reformist leaders when they have behind them a majority than when they have a minority. What is more, if the reformist leaders get a majority they will be the better able to deceive you. They will give you a thousand plausible-sounding reasons why "it is impossible" right now to effect socialist measures. They will give you rosy promises about the near future. At times they are quite able to assume a very Left coloration to aid them further in deceiving the workers in a very tight situation. And while this is going on, behind the scenes the reformist leaders will be making deals with the imperialists to give the forces of reaction a chance to organize a bloody assault on the workers. This is all there is to expect from a parliamentary majority of the Labor Party and a Labor Party Government. Thus Marxism establishes in advance its warning to the workers.

We are living in very special times, a period when the bourgeoisie is transforming its rule to Fascism on a world scale. This is not just a general program of the capitalists, it is a concrete, day-to-day guiding motive. The classic example of the specific tactic used is the case of France. While the high circles of imperialism are plotting daily the launching of pogroms and devastation against the workers, the Trotskyites are urging the workers to bask in the sunshine of a leisurely period of "fair chance" for the reformist Labor Party to "exhaust its historical role." This is a program of suicide for the proletariat. The Trotsky leaders are working with might and main to lure the toilers into the fatal swamp of Labor Party reformism which leads to Fascist butcheries and hopeless capitalist slavery. The bourgeoisie operate today with unprecedented speed in their political transformations — witness France. The Trotskyites' spreading of reformist illusions helps to halt the proletarian political transformations in the face of the increased Fascist pace of the capitalists.

What is the real gist of the shouting of the Trotsky groups of Cannon and Shachtman for a Labor Party? This noise is another of the perennial "campaigns" which these opportunists launch to keep their deluded rank-and-file "busy" with some sort of "activity" to engender in their honest followers the false feeling that they are fighting capitalism in day-to-day actions. Like all the Trotskyite "activity," the Labor Party rumpus is opportunist to the core, a prep to reaction.

J. C. Hunter

Read

The Bulletin

SEND FOR FREE BACK ISSUES OF THE BULLETIN AND MONOGRAPHS ISSUED

Address: P.O. B67
Sta. D
N.Y.C.

CANNON'S STRUGGLE FOR A PROLETARIAN PARTY

(Continued From Last Issue)

It is a simple matter to establish that the power-seeking careerists of the American Stalinist Party, both the Lovestone crew and its Opposition, the Foster-Cannon gang, were completely misled by the outward results of the Sixth Congress. Neither Lovestone nor his factional opponents by the wildest stretch of the imagination could visualize the complete reversal of factional fortune which was to take place less than a year hence. They imagined that Lovestone's triumph would be long-lasting and his authority and insolence would grow with the years. Cannon, the memory of his own former prestige and position of leader rankling in his bosom, could not reconcile himself to the idea of playing perpetually the role of a subordinate to Jay Lovestone. Concluding that his careerist hopes would never materialize inside the Comintern, Cannon surveyed the field without.

The Second International was totally unsuited for his purpose — the days of the French Turn lay far ahead. His caucus, like Lovestone's and Foster's, was draped in the mantle of Bolshevism. He would have to make the leap all alone, and be prepared to play a very undramatic part among the robust veterans of Social Democracy. But there was another movement, international in scope, professing, like the Stalin Comintern, to be the true Bolshevik current. This movement proclaimed to be ideologically under the leadership of Leon Trotsky, the most glamorous figure of the October Revolution next to Lenin. Trotsky in those years was known to the workers as the leader of the so-called Left Opposition. There was much, however, that the workers did not know about Trotsky to whom Cannon suddenly began to look. Indeed, the workers did not know about the whole development of the leadership of the Bolshevik Revolution. Completely concealed was the fact that the leaders, in the first instance, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin, and others of similar rank, had become degenerated bureaucrats, usurpers of power in the workers state. From being revolutionists, these leaders had become transformed into self-seeking careerists whose interests lay

no longer with the workers but against them, and had entered the path of intrigues and clique machinations to entrench themselves in their positions of autocratic, personal power.

Although an inkling of this was exposed by Max Eastman in 1925 in his book *Since Lenin Died*, the exposure fell to the ground because of Trotsky's vicious attack upon Eastman's disclosures which Trotsky dishonestly branded as lies. In the early days of the Stalinist degeneration, Trotsky, imagining he could maintain his power by playing ball with the Stalin gang, rendered Stalin full protection and support. As far back as the 12th Congress of the Bolshevik Party in April 1923, Trotsky betrayed Lenin's policy which called for smashing Stalin's machine organizationally and politically. He united with Stalin and together they deceived the masses into the tragic belief that the Party was following Lenin's line. Soon, however, peace among these bureaucrats was terminated by Stalin's intrigue to push Trotsky out of power. Thus, Trotsky, at first an ally of the Stalin clique, had become the butt of the Stalin gang in their efforts to oust him from power and centralize the bureaucratic pyramid completely around themselves. Through the double-dealing of the Stalin clique, Trotsky, formerly their colleague, had become perforce their "opponent." His "opposition" had as its aim to retain for himself some remnants of his former position in the bureaucracy. Such "opposition" could be nothing but a sham from the Marxist standpoint. In essence it did not differ in the least from the "opposition" of Foster to Lovestone. Trotsky's loyal "opposition" exhorted the workers to build the "Comintern," the engine of bureaucratic counter-revolution. In those years, the development of events still being relatively young, the entire bureaucratic system was very closely knit. Trotsky proclaimed himself a "faction of the Comintern," called the "Comintern" his only political home, concealing the consciously counter-revolutionary intent and policies of the renegades who deliberately shunted the

workers away from the path of revolution and freedom in order to safeguard the bureaucratic structure which held sway in the workers state. The Trotsky of 1928 to whom Cannon began to cast his careerist eyes was in every respect fit company for the disgruntled partner of Foster.

Both Trotsky and Cannon had in common a career of former eminence in the Stalinist bureaucracy from which they were cast in the course of the movement of bureaucratic fortunes. Though reduced considerably in splendor, Trotsky still had enough to provide a far lesser luminary like Cannon with the prestige of a borrowed big name. Trotsky became the new shingle for Cannon's place of business.

The Trotsky movement was the logical avenue of escape for frustrated Comintern bureaucrats. Their new political front was a pretense of combatting Stalinism. Many anti-Stalin revolutionary workers who wished to combat the bureaucracy and opportunism of the Comintern and yet remain within the framework of what they imagined was Communism were taken in by the ex-henchmen of Stalin.

Cannon was aware of the hazard of expulsion implicit in the support of Trotsky, and he was cognizant of the fact that Comintern workers ordinarily would go far in tolerating bureaucratic abuse. But he also knew that everyone in his caucus was nauseated by the fact that Lovestone was given the leadership. The lesser leaders of his caucus also saw no prospect of relief, not a feeble ray of hope of being saddled in the seat of control of the Party.

There was a certain ideological difficulty, to be sure. All those years, since the clouded issue of "Trotskyism" had been introduced into the Comintern by the plotting Trio of Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, Cannon had invariably sustained the Trio and condemned Trotsky. Even at the Sixth Congress, which marked the turn of his road, Cannon had cast his vote approving the expulsion of Trotsky and the Left Opposition and supported the rejection of Trotsky's appeal for reinstatement. But already at the Sixth Congress, where all the surface signs

spoke of perpetuity, or at least of longevity, of the Lovestone regime, he thought of the way out of both his blind alley and of the ideological difficulty.

At the Stalinist Congress, a select number of delegates, evidently the most trusted supporters of Stalin, were officially permitted to receive numbered copies of Trotsky's Criticism of the Stalin-Bukharin Draft Program of the Comintern. Cannon was among that group. The "Criticism" was poorly translated, forty per cent of it was deleted, its contents revealed nothing about the crucial and fundamental essence of Stalinism, — namely, the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet leadership on the question of power. The usurping Stalin gang was dealt with as if it were an honest but confused group of revolutionists who must be instructed in real Marxism and persuaded to abandon their "errors." For Cannon's careerist purposes the Trotsky document was sufficient and he made his fateful decision. Upon his return to America he took the first step to marshal his caucus for his new line by asking his followers to keep an open mind on Trotsky. Meanwhile he laid his conclusions before his chief lieutenants, Abern and Shachtman, and with amazing ease "converted" them to the Trotsky creed. Conscious that time was of paramount value in mustering their adherents, they delivered impassioned orations before the members of the Cannon caucus. It was at this point that Foster, anxious to save his own skin, repaid his ally, Cannon, for past treachery by denouncing him to Lovestone. Cannon and a number of his followers were promptly expelled.

Many supporters of Cannon's caucus lingered on inside the Party, attempting to figure out what Cannon's step meant. Cannon was receiving letters in which he was asked to explain his sudden conversion. He printed a reply in the Militant stating he had been a victim of lies about Trotsky, and that he had come to know the truth only recently. The meat of the explanation fed by Cannon and Shachtman to the workers was that Cannon got his light from Trotsky's garbled document given him by the Stalin clique at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern.

Apparently Cannon often felt that his conversion to "Trotskyism" bore a startlingly abrupt character. So after a while he changed his original story and came out with an extravagantly boastful fabrication that for years he and his group had been "gestating" along the Trotskyist lines inside the Stalinist Party, that his group had been "prepared by the past" for the transformation. Many of Cannon's initial followers were struck with wonder when they first heard of the "gestation" hokum. Nevertheless Cannon would not abandon it and even made it public. And Shachtman, who was an editor of the original Militant, with cheerful briskness had it printed in the official Trotskyist organ, without a single word of comment. To the uninformed, deceived readers of the Militant the "gestation" fake was presented as a faithful historical record of the development of the Cannon group.

All was well within the new Trotsky group — for a time. Cannon and his colleagues successfully weathered the expulsion crisis and made rapid headway. Full of ardent zeal, they almost immediately launched a newspaper — the Militant — and began to roll up a list of subscribers and readers primarily among the inquisitive Communist workers. The political face of the American Trotsky group was the most unique in the whole Trotsky movement. Officially Cannon, Shachtman and Abern heralded their adherence to Trotsky's ideas as set down in the Draft Program. This seemed to put them on record as having made a sharp break with their Stalinist past. Yet at the same time they announced that they stood on the platform embodied in the document which Foster, Bittelman and Cannon had jointly drawn up and presented to the Stalinist bureaucrats at the Sixth Congress. The document was a factional concoction designed to gain full confidence of the eminent Stalinist bureaucrats in Moscow and thus secure the elimination of Lovestone from power. In this document Foster, Bittelman and Cannon endorsed with both hands Stalin's political line in the Comintern. This factional document in which Foster, Bittelman and Cannon presented themselves as the true champions of the Stalinist line, was actually printed by Cannon and Shachtman in the Militant and offered to the

workers as a Marxist platform. No less!

Weeks passed. The Trotsky group stood on ground which, organizationally appeared to grow firmer every day. Then something amazing occurred.

The leader and inspirer of the group who, only yesterday with high spirit and iron determination set out to build a Trotsky movement in America, suddenly collapsed into a strange apathy. No one, it seemed, could account for the unbelievable change which took place in Cannon. He grew inattentive to the life of the group and began to keep himself aloof to such a marked degree that the rank-and-file noticed his absence. Shachtman and other leaders took care to cover up Cannon, and in answer to anxious inquiries of Cannon's whereabouts, they would lie brazenly, "He was here just before you came in."

There was talk that Cannon contemplated retirement to a farm in the West. These talks were not altogether groundless. Just before the first conference of the American Trotsky group, May 1929, Cannon suggested that the whole project of a conference be cancelled, and expressed his intention to withdraw from the leading center, retire to Missouri and communicate with the group once in a while by a letter of advice. The situation reached such an unexpected pass that proposals were voiced among Cannon's most intimate collaborators to expel him from the Trotsky organization and thus prevent him from sneaking out in a manner that would attract no attention.

How to explain Cannon's strange behavior in those days? Perhaps it is worth making a cursory survey of the factional situation within the Stalinist Party and see if an answer will not suggest itself. After his expulsion Cannon cupped his eager ear to the walls of the Party. The jubilation of Lovestone was over. Instead, there was arising an atmosphere akin to panic as the ruling clique suddenly found itself being pushed to the wall by Stalin. As if sensing the approach of a decisive blast against the Lovestone regime, the Foster bandits grew more arrogant. Rumors went the rounds that Lovestone was on Stalin's removal list.

A grave sign for the ruling crew was the Comintern's instruction to John Pepper, a chief of Lovestone's caucus, to return to Moscow. Thoroughly frightened, Pepper would not carry out the order and for a while disappeared from the scene. Then outside the walls whispers were heard concerning a Stalin cable containing the decision to withdraw Lovestone and Bittelman as incurable factionalists from the American party.

In March 1929 Lovestone and his lieutenants departed for Moscow to plead their case before Stalin. By the middle of May it was known among the Fosterites in America that Lovestone was done for. He and his associates voted against the decision of the American Commission of the Comintern. When Stachel, Bedacht, Minor and other Lovestone bureaucrats knifed their boss and accepted the "Address" of the Comintern everybody understood that Lovestone's expulsion was a foregone conclusion. The American Party was to be handed back to the Foster crew by Stalin. The thunderbolt of expulsion fell upon Lovestone even before he returned to the United States. And while this momentous event took place, Cannon, the man who had been in the forefront of the long and obstinate fight against Lovestone, the "Marxist" who even now steadfastly adhered to the Fosterite platform which he and Foster had jointly submitted to the Stalinist crowd at the Sixth Congress, found himself outside the American Party and unable to cash in on the new prosperity of the Foster caucus! But there was no turning back the clock of history.

The period of these significant changes in the American Stalinist Party coincided with the time when Cannon, apparently consumed by some gnawing grief, manifested a precipitous drop of interest and even planned to retire to the West and abandon his own group, now the American Trotskyist section, to its fate.

However, Cannon's depression was a mood. He shook off the spell and soon came back with a vengeance. Then the Trotsky group entered the phase of a sharp factional struggle between Cannon who on the basis of the "gestation" story wished to be acknowledged as the

leader of the group, and Shachtman, Abern and Glotzer who rejected the story as an out-and-out fraud. The fight was cloaked with appropriate ideological differences. But the essence of unprincipled factionalism could be seen in the accusations and counter-accusations which were flying like feathers and which reminded one of nothing so much as the old Lovestone-Foster-Cannon bureaucratic wrangles for power, which too were concealed by an elaborate smokescreen of pretended differences about American imperialism, trade union work, the Negro question, and what not.

Had the factional warfare been given free development, the group would probably have split in 1933 or even earlier. But Trotsky took a strong hand in the matter. He knew that as yet neither faction had grown a strong pair of legs to stand independent of him, and he threatened both that in the event of a split he would refuse recognition to either Cannon or Shachtman. Meanwhile on the American scene there appeared the Weisbord group also claiming adherence to Trotsky and seeking his official recognition. Under the circumstances the factional contestants, like fighting cocks suddenly doused with water, desisted and made peace

(To Be Continued)

(Editorial Note: This is the second installment of the article dealing with the political history of Cannon, the first having appeared in the December 1943 issue of THE BULLETIN. In that portion was taken up Cannon's factional machinations within the Stalin Party, his alliances with Foster, Lovestone and other bureaucrats who plotted and intrigued for control of the organization. In the present part we have reviewed Cannon's shift to the Trotsky tendency as his only way out of the impasse into which he had been driven by the decisions of the Sixth Congress of Stalin's Comintern in 1928. In the next installment a survey will be made of the recent struggle and split between Cannon and Shachtman.)

SHACHTMANITE SOMERSAULTS
ON THE LABOR PARTY

PEOPLE who are involved in an opportunist political line often find themselves tangled up in the most ludicrous contradictions. A good example is provided by those "revolutionists" who advocate the building of a Labor Party based on the opportunist trade unions. This is a position which is advanced by a variety of "revolutionists" ranging from the Stalinist bureaucrats to the Cannonite and Shachtmanite leaders.

The recent factional rumpus in the American Labor Party provided a striking bit of comic relief from the Shachtmanite Workers Party. The Shachtmanites have been calling for a Labor Party based on the existing trade unions and have been denouncing the Dubinsky-Rose-Counts leadership which steadfastly refused to construct such a basis for the A.L.P. To the consternation of the Shachtmanites, all of a sudden the Stalinists, together with Hillman, started a factional row, with their platform consisting of the old Shachtmanite demand for a trade union basis to the A.L.P. Of course, the Browder gang had in mind the Stalinist-controlled trade unions in New York, whose representation on the high councils of the A.L.P. would give Browder and Co. complete control. In form, nevertheless, the Browder thesis was the same as Shachtman's. The latter was forced into a dilemma. Shachtman was compelled to come out against the Stalinists, who are yelling for trade union control of the A.L.P., and in favor of Rose-Dubinsky-Counts who are opposed to trade union control of the A.L.P.!

The Shachtman paper, Labor Action, had to stoop to a "dialectical" explanation involving one of those abhorred Hegelian "contradictions": to wit, the diabolical Hillman-Stalinist proposal would strengthen and destroy the A.L.P.:

"How is it possible, some may ask, to declare that Hillman would destroy the American Labor Party when he makes a proposal which admitted-ly would strengthen the organization?" (Labor Action, February 14.

1944, p. 4. My emphasis - A.B.)

Shachtman had to raise a scare that the Stalinists intend to liquidate the A.L.P., thus frightening his followers into supporting the Rose-Dubinsky leadership:

"These facts clearly establish that Hillman and the Communist Party are championing the plan for trade union control of the ALP for the sole and foul purpose of liquidating it. This has concrete meaning when it is remembered that in the counties of New York City the CIO unions are dominated mainly by Communist Party leaders or followers." (Ibid.)

Once Shachtman explained away the Stalinist-Hillman purpose for capturing control of the A.L.P. it was easy for him to foist upon his followers the idea of favoring the Dubinsky gang.

"All legitimate means must be used to prevent its capture and use by the Stalinists to serve the Kremlin. This means supporting the Dubinsky group in the primary fight for control of the ALP." (Labor Action, March 27, 1944, p. 4)

In an effort to squirm out of their political difficulties created by the Stalinist fakery about trade union control of the A.L.P., the Shachtmanites introduced a modification to their program. As a pretended safeguard against Stalinist control, the Shachtman leaders propose that only those unions proclaiming independent labor action should be recognized as affiliates to the A.L.P.:

"All unions that stand unequivocally for independent labor political action i.e. for an independent Labor Party, become part of the American Labor Party. Such a measure should close the door to the Stalinist-controlled unions, to Hillman and to the union he controls. It would bar any union which is opposed to independent political action and a Labor Party." (Labor Action, February 14, 1944)

The fraud here is that the unions today are overwhelmingly in the hands of the traditional labor lieutenants of capitalism (Green, Murray, etc.) and the Stalinists. The Shachtmanite program is for a Labor Party today, based on the trade unions today. The people leading the trade unions today are incapable of pursuing genuine independent labor action, that is, a line politically independent of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, regardless of verbal professions, all that can emanate from these people is a bourgeois Labor Party, a party politically tying the workers to the capitalist class. Only the Marxian vanguard is capable of pursuing political activity independent of and opposed to the bourgeoisie. The Marxist vanguard builds not an opportunist "Labor Party" but a revolutionary proletarian party.

The Shachtmanite leaders are fully aware that the whole idea of advocating the building of a Labor Party is a fraud from the bottom up. But, characteristically, they use their knowledge to cover up their opportunism. When the Stalinists in 1935 began to shout in favor of a Labor Party, Shachtman gave the Trotsky movement an "anti-Stalinist" cover by advancing arguments, perfectly correct in themselves, against the very idea of a Labor Party:

"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." (M.S. in The New International, March 1936, p. 36)

The conclusion followed:

"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 to 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.)

In those days Shachtman avoided any claptrap about a Labor Party based on the existing opportunist unions having an independent political character.

These correct arguments, however, were simply used by the whole Trotsky leadership as a kind of shock-absorber to put their followers off guard and to ease the path to a typical Trotskyist zigzag in which white became black and black became white and the Stalinist-initiated pro-Labor Party line became the official dogma of the Trotsky movement.

When Shachtman and Cannon jointly led the American Trotsky group in 1935, they at that time were pushing the thesis against the fraud of building a Labor Party on a trade union basis:

"It is entirely devoid of Marxian content for, as 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." (The New International, August 1935. My emphasis - A.B.)

A Labor Party, based on trade unions, wrote the organ of Cannon-Shachtman, could never be considered separate and apart from the bureaucratic top leaders of the union:

"In the second place, their ardent espousal of the Labor party cause, requiring for its realization the trade union movement, which cannot be considered separate and apart from its bureaucratic top leaders, will in the decisive moment render them politically prostrate, servilely kissing the hem of the class collaboration garment." (Ibid., p. 147. My emphasis - A.B.)

The main function of a Labor Party was likewise clear to the Trotskyite leaders:

"Its main function would be to canalize the discontent of the work-

ing class into more or less futile reformist endeavors and to swerve the movement from the revolutionary path." (Ibid., p. 146-7)

History has provided plenty of experience of Labor parties based on trade unions. Without a single exception, all these parties unswervingly functioned in the interests of im-

perialism. The Shachtman call for a Labor Party based on trade unions is therefore only a trap for revolutionary workers, a stumbling block in the path of building a true proletarian party whose program is a struggle against all "Labor parties" which uphold capitalist slavery.

A. Burke

* * *

DEFENDERS OF THE TRADE UNION BUROCRACY

Among the most advanced workers, the recognition as to the opportunist role of the present trade union bureaucrats is fairly well known. The Shachtmanite leaders are quite clear as to the reactionary political role of these lieutenants of imperialism within the workers camp:

"The big majority of this officialdom — the Greens, Tobins, Bateses, Lewises, Murrays, Careys, Hillmans and the rest — are bourgeois labor politicians." (Editorial, The New International, July 1943, p. 198)

As a matter of record, the Shachtman paper, Labor Action, declares that in the present capitalist drive against the workers, the chief culprit is the bureaucracy of the trade unions headed by Murray, Green and Lewis:

"The trade union leadership, Murray, Green and Lewis, bear the main part of the responsibility for the success of the attack on labor." (March 1, 1943, p. 3)

There is no need of proving further that Shachtman and his colleagues know the true character of the reactionary trade union agents of imperialism. Seemingly, Shachtman carries on a campaign of exposure against them. In reality these phrases, which look like exposure, cover up a very subtle line of giving the trade union betrayers a non-existent function of defending the interests of the workers. Here is one of the numerous examples, appearing in Labor Action August 16, 1943:

"Recently, President Johnston of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, delivered a speech denouncing the workers and the labor movement. This speech was broadcast to soldiers all over the world.

"Would the War Department permit a speech by Murray, Green, Lewis, Thomas, or any other labor leader, in which the struggle of the workers for their economic, political and social rights were defended? To ask the question is to get your answer."

A politically - educated revolutionary worker is familiar with the fact that capitalist politics employed by the bourgeoisie in combatting the workers is highly complex. The labor agents of capitalism do not openly perform their anti-workingclass role, but operate under a pro-labor flag. Other agents of the capitalist class, pretending they take the outward labor colors of the trade union bureaucrats seriously, occasionally lever sham attacks at them. Such was the case during the recent coal mining crisis when the capitalist newspaper editors "raged" against Lewis who treacherously sold out the miners to the exploiters.

The War Department may or may not permit Green or Murray to deliver a demagogic speech ostensibly defending the rights of the workers, but such action will not in any way disprove the contention that Green and Murray are not defenders of these rights but are disguised tools of capitalism. As a matter of record, Philip Murray was allowed in September 1943 to broadcast

from Washington to Italy following the installation of the Badoglio regime. Murray did not call upon the Italian masses to smash the Badoglio capitalist dictatorship and establish a workers republic, but rallied them to the interests of capitalism. The implication in Labor Action's statement that the Greens, Lewises and Murrays can at certain moments defend the interests of the workers is sheer fiction.

In the present phase of the class struggle in the United States, the bourgeoisie use Green-Murray and their ilk predominantly in the trade union field. Should the class struggle develop to a higher stage of intensity, the American bourgeoisie might have to resort to more complex and elaborate devices to keep the workers in hand. The Greens and Murrays might be used in high governmental offices. In England, for example, the imperialists on occasion saw fit to award the highest ministerial offices to the labor fak-ers. Ramsay MacDonald was made Prime

Minister. At present, Bevin, Morrison, Attlee, occupy high government positions, and make plenty of speeches--all for the bourgeoisie. In other countries, in varying periods, the bourgeoisie resorted to the use of Socialist leaders in their government.

The Shachtman leaders take the fact that the United States imperialists have not as yet resorted to the device of placing trade union bureaucrats in high governmental positions, and distort its meaning so as to give the impression that the imperialists have something to fear from the Greens and Murrays. Clearly, people who picture the imperialists as fearing Murray-Green, and conjure up a possibility that these trade union misleaders would defend the struggles of the workers, can function only to prevent a true exposure of the real role of the trade union bureaucrats.

Arthur Burke:

Send for further evidence

ON TROTSKYITE SUPPORT TO REFORMISM,
STALINISM, TRADE UNION SELL-OUTS

The Cannonites and John L. Lewis

The S. W. P. and the Food Workers Union

The A.L.P. and the Trotskyite Line

The Trotskyites Vote "Independent"

The Betrayal of the Miners

What is the Socialist Workers Party

A "United Front" and Its Aftermath

ADDRESS:

P. O. Box 67

Station D

New York City

COPIES ARE FREE

THE POT CALLS THE KETTLE BLACK

WHEN Shachtman, during the latest A.L.P. faction fight, came out in support of the Dubinsky-Rose gang, the editors of The Militant read their ex-colleague a severe lecture on the evils of supporting every swindler who happens to be wrangling with the Stalinists for some reason or other. The Cannonites quite correctly pointed out that a bloc with reactionaries engaged in a clique fight against Stalinists actually strengthens the latter. As an extreme example of such reactionary combinationism, The Militant harked back to 1938 when there broke out a bitter clique squabble in the United Auto Workers Union between the red-baiting Homer Martin and the Stalinists. The Militant pilloried the now-defunct Lovestoneites who in 1938 supported the labor-faker Martin on the pretext of fighting the Stalinists:

"We witnessed this phenomenon in 1938 in the faction fight of the auto union. Homer Martin, then President of the UAW, by his red baiting, his bureaucratic high-handedness only built up Stalinist strength. At that time, a group of petty bourgeois opportunists, the late unlamented Lovestoneites, cliqued up with Homer Martin and excused everything on the grounds of the 'Stalinist menace.' They accomplished little more than to disgrace themselves. We witnessed an equally disgraceful performance today on the part of a group of petty-bourgeois opportunists — ex-Trotskyites, who alibied their support of the Dubinsky-Social Democratic clique on the grounds of the 'lesser evil.'" (The Militant, April 8 1944, p. 6)

On the surface, the Cannon editors seem to be soundly criticizing the Shachtman line, comparing it with the equally disgraceful Lovestone line of 1938. However, there is one all-essential feature in this situation in the

auto union in 1938 which the Cannonites omit in their brief history. This feature is that the line of supporting the reactionary bureaucratic red-baiter Homer Martin was also the line of — J. P. Cannon and Co.! Indubitable proof of this is Cannon's own article curing that situation from which we now quote:

"Support Martin

"The policy here recommended does not imply extensive negotiations over questions of program, etc. It does not necessitate formal agreements of any kind. The most important facts are already known, and the duty of responsible militants is clear. In the crisis provoked by the Stalinite bid for power, the militants have no choice but to support the Martin administration as against the Stalinite-Frankenstein combination. And this support should be given openly, frankly and aggressively." (J. P. Cannon, Socialist Appeal, May 14, 1938, p. 4. Emphasis in original.)

The very example which the Cannonites cite in their supposed criticism of the Shachtmanites constitutes the most damning indictment of the Cannonites themselves. The omission of the key fact that Cannon and his aides used precisely the same deceitful "lesser evil" arguments in supporting a red-baiting, bureaucratic clique, as Shachtman did in the A.L.P. fight, is typical of the Trotskyite dishonest method of writing history.

The Cannonite editors obviously have a low, cynical contempt for their readers who they feel will never bother to investigate the actual facts. The stigma of the counter-revolutionary line of supporting Martin is pinned to the now extinct Lovestone bandits who did actually support Martin in common with Cannon and Co. What better measure of the utter depravity

of the Cannon opportunists than this brazen hushing up of their own line in supporting the trade union crook, Martin, "frankly, openly and aggressively" in the particular situation which they cite.

The records of Cannon and Shachtman in the labor movement reveal a crime common to both, the crime of supporting and spreading reaction in the labor movement. At all times in their political history since the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern, both Cannon and Shachtman have pursued the policy of upholding one or another variety of reaction in opposition to the Marxian policy which is to expose and fight all reactionaries in the labor movement all the time. Both in the Stalinist Party and following the establishment of their self-styled organizational "independence" from the Stalinist Party, Cannon and Shachtman steadfastly adhered to their opportunist policy. In the Stalinist Party they lined up now with Lovestone, now with Foster. From 1928 to 1933 they openly urged support to the criminal Stalinist counter-revolutionary machine which they called the "only revolutionary party." From 1934 to 1937 they gave "critical" support to Social Democracy (French Turn). In 1937, the Trotskyite leaders again nominally resumed organizational independence while pursuing the same line of abetting opportunism in the workers movement by the political line of "material aid" to the Stalinist-concocted sabotaging Peoples Front Government in Spain. In May 1938 there were the above-cited maneuvers in support of Homer Martin in the Auto Union. In October 1939 Cannon and Shachtman supported the reactionary Dubinsky wing

in the A.L.P. under the guise of promoting "independent labor action." (Socialist Appeal, October 31, 1939)

In March 1940 Cannon and Shachtman indulged in a bureaucratic clique fight of their own and separated organizationally. However, both continued the same political activity. In December 1940 the Cannonites openly made a deal with and assisted the discredited Stalinist bureaucrats in the New York Food Workers Union in regaining control of this important organization. Shachtman saw no violation of principle in this unprincipled maneuver. In 1941 the Cannonites, conscious of the treacherous nature of Lewis, urged support to him in the unions in a crooked maneuver to win his aid for their own Teamsters Union which was being thrown out of the A.F. of L. by Tobin. (See, "The Cannonites and John L. Lewis," THE BULLETIN, November 1941) In October-November 1942 the Cannonites supported the rotten bourgeois politician Dean Alfange who ran on the A.L.P. ticket. Shachtman criticized this policy of supporting Alfange but indirectly gave aid to this line when he urged support to the Cannonite candidates wherever they ran "independently." (Labor Action, March 2, 1942) From March to July 1943, both Cannon and Shachtman wholeheartedly supported the labor faker, John L. Lewis, who sold out the miners lock, stock and barrel to the coal operators.

The Trotskyite line is a consistent prop to capitalist reaction, expressing itself now in support of Stalinism, now to some other reactionary labor tendency.

A.B.

"WE NEVER PROMISED"

FOR many years Trotsky's line was "reform" of the Stalinized Comintern. Although the Comintern was daily adding new crimes to the vast volume of its treachery and betrayal, Trotsky was adamant in pursuing the policy of "correcting" that international machine of Stalinist counter-

revolution. From 1929 to 1933 the fate of the toilers of all countries hinged upon the destiny of the German proletariat whose vanguard was paralyzed primarily by Stalinism. During those years Trotsky faced mounting criticism from many of his former supporters who rejected the line of "reforming" the

Comintern. The utopian character of Trotsky's policy had a cumulative aspect. When the Comintern delivered the German workers to Hitler its vicious nature became revealed to the advanced workers more vividly than ever before. Under the impact of the Stalinist betrayal in Germany, Trotsky's line of "reforming" the Comintern collapsed. Trotsky was compelled to abandon it, and in the process felt constrained to lash out against his "left" critics who had for a number of years attempted to convince the workers that the Comintern was incurable. Trotsky declared:

"During the last few years — appropriately enough — our opponents have told us more than once that we 'are losing time in vain' by occupying ourselves with curing the Comintern. We never promised anybody that we would cure the Comintern. We only refused, until the decisive test, to pronounce the sick as dead, or hopelessly ill." (The Soviet Union and the Fourth International, pp. 8-9)

The work containing the statement that the Trotsky leadership never promised to cure the Comintern was widely distributed by the Cannon-Shachtman organization. To the honest Trotskyite followers, who never suspected that virtually every excuse Trotsky offered for his policies never squared with actual facts, Trotsky's statement appeared as truth. Had they gone to the trouble of examining Trotsky's earlier writings, they would have realized the actual worth of his words "We never promised anybody that we would cure the Comintern." For illustration, had they perused the pages of The Militant for October 21, 1933, they would have come upon the following statement:

"The slogan of the 'reform' of the Comintern was, for us, never a hollow phrase. We counted on reform as on a reality."

And if they had continued their investigation they would have found direct promises of a turn of the Stalinist organization in a revolutionary direction. About a year before the Nazis took power, the Cannon-Shachtman leaders wrote reassuringly about the German Stalinist Party:

"The German party is still capable of victory, of uniting the proletariat about it — for the defeat of the class enemy. Victory can come, will come in the way of the Left Opposition and comrade Trotsky, in the way of Lenin." (The Militant, January 23, 1932. My emphasis - G. M.)

In his pamphlet Germany - What Next? Trotsky wrote in a positive vein: "The about-face of the Stalinists is INEVITABLE" (p. 182. My capitals - G.M.). And in his work The Strategy of the World Revolution Trotsky asserted in tones that brooked no contradiction:

"...the Opposition needs no other soil than that of the Communist International. No one will succeed in tearing us away from it. Our ideas will become its ideas and they will find their expression in the program of the Comintern." (p. 86. Emphasis in the original.)

It is not difficult to penetrate Trotsky's lie "We never promised anybody that we would cure the Comintern." In the face of his critics, who may not have known anything about Trotsky's secret alliance with Stalin in the early days of the Stalinist conspiracy but certainly grasped that the Comintern had become corroded with treachery, Trotsky slid out of the old line by resorting to a barefaced lie to save his prestige among the uninformed honest Trotskyite workers.

G.M.

SEND FOR A FREE COPY OF THE COMPILATION OF

THE TROTSKY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION