

# THE TRUTH ABOUT THE MOSCOW FRAME-UP TRIALS

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# The Reason for the Frame-Up\*

Thirteen more members of the ruling Stalinist stratum in the Soviet Union have been shot after sensational frame-up trials in which the only evidence against the accused was their own "confessions." Radek, who admitted he was guilty of all the crimes with which he was charged and "even those I know nothing about" was given ten years, as was Sokolnikov. Both are being held as witnesses for the coming trials of Bukharin, Rykov and others, as were Zinoviev and Kamenev after their first trial three years ago.

## NO EVIDENCE

The accused were charged with conspiring with Trotsky, who is supposed to be their leader, and with German and Japanese imperialism, to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union. Germany was supposed to get the Ukraine; Japan, the northern half of Sakhalin Island and the maritime provinces of Siberia. What the accused and Trotsky were supposed to get was not "confessed."

No one with a shred of political intelligence will believe that these trials proved what the Stalinists claim they did. There was not a single shred of evidence, no witnesses, no documents.

The "conspiracy" is supposed to have covered a number of years, involved thousands of human beings, had ramifications with foreign governments and their secret services, and stretched over thousands of miles of Soviet and foreign territory. How is it possible that no evidence was available? The failure to produce any evidence can be taken as proof of the fact that it doesn't exist.

But the confessions! About this we note first that hundreds have been arrested. Only those who confess come to trial. Radek proved this. For eight months he refused to confess. He was not brought to trial. Then he confessed and was brought to trial. Piatikov was brought to trial only after he confessed. Why? Because there was no other evidence. Because these men had to be forced to furnish "evidence" against themselves.

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Could they not have refused? The strong ones refused and have been shot or exiled or are waiting in jail. The weaker ones confessed. Torture was undoubtedly used.

### ACCUSED WERE STALINISTS

Besides on what POLITICAL basis could they have fought the frame-up? The only basis for fighting the frame-up is a Marxian political struggle against the whole Stalinist regime and its anti-working class policies of which such frame-ups are a necessary part to make scape-goats for the cruel results. But this is exactly what the accused could not do. With the exception of Trotsky, which is different story, they have been Stalinists for years. Together with Stalin and other Stalinists they have collaborated with the French bourgeoisie against the French workers and against the Spanish revolution, with the American bourgeoisie against the extension of the Bolshevik revolution to Cuba. In Russia with Stalin they have carried through policies against the interests of the working class in the interests of the petty bourgeoisie and world imperialism. In short they had no political basis to fight the frame-up.

There is nothing to exclude the idea of conspiracy of these people with the German bourgeoisie. Had the policy of Stalinism de-

manded it they would have done it. But the policy of Stalinism did not demand it. On the contrary at the moment it demands a conspiracy with the French bourgeoisie against the German, and with the American bourgeoisie against the Japanese. That is why we do not believe that these people were guilty of conspiring with the "wrong" bourgeoisie.

### NO POLITICAL LOGIC

There is another reason. The alliance of Stalinism, including the accused, with various sections of world capitalism against the extension of the Russian revolution and against the interests of the Russian workers is one thing. Of this they are all guilty, accusers and accused, alike. A conspiracy to overthrow the property relations established by the October revolution is another. To this charge there is no sense at all. Why should these men who have spent the best part of their lives in the struggle to overthrow capitalist property relations and the capitalist state, conspire to restore them in Russia?

What would they gain from such a conspiracy? The "confessions," threw no light on this question. Yet it is a vital point. Individuals can and have degenerated to such depths. But to have us believe that people who suffered DECADES of exile, persecution, prison;

who went through three revolutions and the Civil War of 1919-21 should ALL sink so low, we need more than these frame-up trials.

Insofar as Stalinism as a system of ideas and policies is concerned the thing stands differently. Capitalism can be restored in the Soviet Union only by the violent overthrow of the existing property relations and the existing state, even in its present Stalinist form. To say that Stalinism is plotting to restore capitalism is to say that it is plotting to overthrow itself, which is nonsense.

### CAPITALIST AGENCY

Stalinism represents the class needs and interests of the petty bourgeoisie in the Soviet Union, which like the petty bourgeoisie in capitalist countries, cannot play an independent role in modern society. It seeks support either from the working class or the capitalist class.

The defeats of the proletariat since 1923 have weakened the world and Russian workers and their hold on the soviet state and strengthened the world capitalists and the petty bourgeoisie inside the Soviet Union and increased their pressure on the Soviet government. Stalinism therefore also reflects the pressure of world imperialism on the proletarian dictatorship.

As a result of this increasingly

strong pressure on one side and increasingly weak pressure on the other the Soviet Union under Stalinism has moved—not forward toward Socialism—but backward toward capitalism. Objectively the role of Stalinism is to prepare the return of capitalism. But it can not plot its own annihilation. Neither can Radek, Piatikov and all the others. In the case of Trotsky who is not a Stalinist the thing is even more absurd.

### WORKERS SUFFER

Under Stalinist rule the workers in the Soviet Union are made to pay the costs of the defense program while the peasants are granted fresh tax exemptions, Stakhanovists goad the workers to frenzied speed-ups to make up for the growing failures to meet the production quotas, as aristocracy of labor is arising while the real income of the great majority of workers is falling; the sabotage of real imperialist agents and their conspiracies grow; the workers show their dissatisfaction by slowing down production; illegal demonstrations and wholesale arrests are reported. The atmosphere is charged with the tension of coming social conflicts.

The German workers have learned through bitter experience what Stalinism means in the struggle against Fascism—capitulation. Today the Spanish work-

ers are learning through an even bitterer experience that Stalinism stands in the camp of the concealed "democratic" counter-revolution with the Anglo-French imperialists and their Spanish capitalist puppets.

To cover its responsibility for the cruel consequences of its course Stalinism attempts to fix the responsibility on scape-goats and terrorize the workers into submission to its policies. That is the purpose of the trials. At the same time it seeks to remove all people who might constitute leaders of an opposition movement to itself. Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, Piatikov, Sokolnikov, Smirnov and many others were once with Trotsky against Stalin. The vacillations and capitulations of these men in the past has enmeshed them in the Stalinist net and made them easy prey.

The trials are a signal to world capitalism that Stalinism is holding the line against the Russian workers, that it will be faithful to its commitments against the Spanish revolution. They are a reminder to French capitalism

that it needs its alliance with Stalinism against Germany.

### NEED REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Stalinism must be destroyed. If capitalism is restored in the Soviet Union it will be destroyed. But in that case the workers will be smashed by Fascism. There is another way. Like any agency of capitalism in the ranks of the working class Stalinism can be destroyed only through the international proletarian revolution. In the capitalist countries this means a social revolution to overthrow capitalist property relations and the capitalist state. In the Soviet Union this means a political revolution to preserve the property relations and the proletarian dictatorship established by the October revolution.

The indispensable instrument for the realization of this program is a revolutionary party, a world party. That party can be only the Communist Fourth International. And that means a new Communist party in the Soviet Union.

# On the Defense of Trotsky

Leon Trotsky, organizer of the insurrection by which the Bolshevik Party seized power in 1917, organizer and leader of the Red Army, is supposed to be the chief of the "conspiracy," uncovered by the recent Moscow trials, to overthrow the proletarian dictatorship and restore capitalism in Russia. Less than any of the others would he have cause or purpose in such a conspiracy. Since he was not there to "confess," and denies the charges, there is no evidence whatsoever against him except the "confessions" of the accused, which were dictated by the prosecution.

But no more than Radek, Zinoviev and the others can he make

Marxist political struggle against the frame-ups. He is not a Stalinist but his line is opportunist. For almost three years now he has been operating on the line of making revolutionary parties out of the traitor parties of the Second International. In effect this is an abandonment of

the struggle for the creation of a Communist Fourth International and for a new Communist party in the Soviet Union.

## "I AM NOT GUILTY"

That is why in all that he has written on the trials there is not one word about the vital question of a new revolutionary party in the Soviet Union which alone can overthrow Stalinism. The failure to utilize this occasion to make propaganda for a new Communist Party in the Soviet Union and the Fourth International is at bottom a capitulation to Stalinism.

Trotsky's defense revolves around the axis: I am not guilty. Personal vindication is his main concern. What a far cry this is from the days of 1917 when Lenin and Trotsky were accused of being in the pay of the Hohenzollerns against the Russian revolution. Then the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party indignantly denied the slanders and

demanding that the slanderers be tried and executed. They rejected the demand that Lenin stand trial. They used the occasion to sharpen the struggle against the Provisional Government.

### PROLETARIAN JUSTICE

Trotsky demands that he be tried. He demands that an "impartial investigation commission" decide whether he is guilty. This is false and dangerous.

The fundamental issue involved is the defense of the proletarian dictatorship. Justice is possible only in a proletarian court whose guiding line is the defense of Marxism.

An "impartial commission" will contain friends and enemies of the proletarian dictatorship. As an auxiliary arm of the struggle to overthrow Stalinism and preserve the proletarian dictatorship it can serve a useful purpose by investigating the legal aspects of the evidence. To make it the axis and pivot of a defense which

seeks personal vindication is, whether one intends it or not, to throw the political issues into its lap, give it a free hand to attack the proletarian dictatorship and the opportunity to frame Trotsky.

The American Defense Committee is cleverly using the false policy of Trotsky and his followers to attack the proletarian dictatorship as the speeches of Norman Thomas so clearly show.

Trotsky is innocent of the charges made against him by the Stalinists. We must defend his right to asylum. If possible we must create a commission to investigate the legal aspects of the evidence. But its basis must be clearly defined so that it does not give support to enemies of the proletarian dictatorship, nor to its opportunist "friends." At the same time we must organize the struggle against the opportunist policies of Trotsky who confuses the workers and gives support to the agents of capitalism.