

THE RED FLAG

ORGAN OF THE MARXIST LEAGUE

No. 8 (New Series)

MAY—JUNE 1937

PRICE ONE PENNY

Bloodshed in Barcelona!

Government move to Right impels attack on workers:
Communist Party supports crushing of masses

AT the end of the first week of May certain significant events took place in the industrial centres of Catalonia, reaching their climax in Barcelona. The Government Shock Police, a body with considerable experience in repressing the workers, attempted to execute the recent "Public Order" decrees which have as their aim the disarming of the workers who so speedily defeated Fascism in Catalonia on July 19th of last year. The armed workers resisted this provocation, and severe fighting took place, resulting in hundreds of dead and thousands of wounded in Barcelona itself, and in other important Catalan centres such as Lerida, Tarragona and Gerona. There can be little doubt that the workers' resistance to the police provocation was spontaneous and widespread, and that many militants of the C.N.T., the F.A.I., and the P.O.U.M. participated in the movement.

That time-honoured device of bureaucratic governments, the censorship, was immediately imposed, and it was not for some time that the magnitude of the events was known. Meanwhile the official "news" agencies, ably backed by Frank Pithers of *The Daily Worker*, began to churn out the misrepresentations usual to these occasions. A few isolated extremists had engineered a putsch. They had no support among the masses. They were rascals, hooligans, cut-purses, and Trotskyists, accomplices Franco's Fifth Column. A little later the same sources confess to the gravity and widespread character of the movement, and report that 7,000 police had been sent by the Valencia Government to assist in suppressing the rising.

The Workers Fight Back

The newspapers of the United Socialist Party (3rd International) of Catalonia are good disciples of their masters. According to them the "putsch" was planned in the best Radek-Himmler fashion at a recent meeting in Freiburg of the Spanish Trotskyists, the Gestapo, and the O.V.R.A. (Italian secret police). This story has been the European round and reappears in *The Daily Worker* of May 18th, via the official organ of that benign democratic President Benesh of Czecho-Slovakia. The truth is that there was no plot, unless in another quarter. It is indeed strange that the Barcelona events should follow so close on the meeting of Communist Parties in Paris, and the sending of a delegation of the Communist International to Valencia, and that within a few days the Communist Party of Spain should engineer a governmental crisis, drive out Caballero from office, and renew its vicious offensive against the C.N.T. and the P.O.U.M. Responsibility for the Barcelona event lies at the door of the Communist Party of Spain which has progressively assisted in the destruction of the workers' soviets in favour of a "strong" central government of the bourgeoisie, and crippled the workers' militia, the potential Red Army of Spain, to replace it by a "People's" Army controlled by the officer caste. Barcelona's May days mark the growing resistance of the masses to the policy of capitulation. The workers are beginning to fight back, realising that only the advance of the Revolution in the rearguard will administer the decisive blow to Fascism at the front.

The P.O.U.M. and the Barcelona Rising

On May 13th *La Batalla*, the official organ of the P.O.U.M., published the following

resolution of the enlarged Central Committee of the P.O.U.M.:

1. *The continued provocations of the counter-revolution, centred in the reformist parties of the United Socialist Party and the petty-bourgeoisie, tending in the sphere of economy, war, and public order to wipe out the revolutionary conquests of the workers won on July 19th with arms in their hands, and culminating on the 3rd May with the attempt to storm the Telephone Exchange, determined the armed protest of the workers.*

2. *The political position of the P.O.U.M. could not be other than one of active solidarity with the workers who spontaneously declared the General Strike, raised barricades in the streets of Barcelona, and undertook to defend with exemplary heroism the threatened conquests of the revolution.*

3. *Seeing that the workers who fought in the street lacked concrete objectives and a responsible leadership, the P.O.U.M. could not do otherwise than arrange and organise a strategic retreat, advocating this to the revolutionary workers and avoiding desperate action, which might have degenerated into a "putsch" and resulted in the complete annihilation of the most advanced party of the workers.*

4. *The experience of the "May Days" shows in a clear manner that the only progressive way out of the present situation is the seizure of power by the working class, and for this it is indispensable to co-ordinate the revolutionary action of the working masses by setting up a Revolutionary Workers' Front, grouping all the organisations which are ready to fight for the complete destruction of Fascism, which can only take place by means of a military victory at the front and with the triumph of the revolution at the rear.*

Revolutionary workers can have nothing but praise for the conduct of the P.O.U.M. in the events themselves, and their subsequent evaluation of those events. Under exceptional difficulties, attacked unscrupulously by the reformists and subjected to all the rigours of the police censorship, with scores of their militants killed, wounded or imprisoned, the P.O.U.M. yet continues to function, drawing strength from the bitterness of revolutionary experience.

Caballero Makes Way For Negrin

We have referred above to the curious consequences of the plenum of Communist Parties recently held in Paris. Perhaps at this point it would be well to refer to another interesting happening which has not had the publicity it deserves. Last February the Valencia Government addressed a note to the British and French Governments offering to solidarize itself with the foreign policy of the two powers in return for military and moral support. This note followed on the rumoured offer of Spanish Morocco to Britain in exchange for assistance against Franco. It is worthy of note too that Senor Besteiro of the Spanish Socialist Party has recently visited London for the Coronation festivities, where he enjoyed some conversations with Mr. Eden. These pourparlers resulted recently in the overthrow of Largo Caballero's government and a shift to the right. The U.G.T. and C.N.T., the two great trade unions are no longer represented. The Socialists have only three as against six portfolios. The Communists retain their two cabinet seats, and the remaining four are distributed among the "left" bourgeois parties.

It cannot be denied that the Communists played an important part in the move to the right. Last week José Diaz, the secretary of the party, started the ball rolling with a speech in which he said that Caballero's government was not the government of victory. Whether Prieto, the new Messiah, will prove himself a greater success remains to be seen. The C.N.T. is opposed to the new Government, and it seems clear that the new government is chiefly directed against that organisation and the P.O.U.M. Indeed one of the "eight points" of the government is: "Order in the rear will be maintained 'inflexibly' without regard to the claim of any organisation to justify disorder by reason of its ideology to protect the perpetrators of the same." (*The Times*, May 19th).

Another Kind of Franco-Soviet Pact

All this has but one meaning. A desperate effort is being made to destroy the Spanish Revolution. No one could accuse the Caballero Government, which on its death-bed disbanded the Soviets in the Fleet, of having revolutionary aims. But the Caballero Government rested on the revolutionary masses of the C.N.T. and the U.G.T., and the former organisation in spite of the waverings of the leadership, remains committed to support an extension of the revolution. The Barcelona events came inconveniently to show that the rank and file of the C.N.T. is getting restive. In order to make itself even more respectable the Communist Party has contrived to get rid of the C.N.T., hoping thereby to convince the British and French Governments that the Revolution in Spain is over and done with, and that they may now advantageously give support to the new government against Franco. But we know that the long avowed object of the British Government has been to mediate in the Spanish struggle between the contending parties. It is significant too that while the re-shuffle to the Right has been going on at Valencia, at Burgos Franco has got rid of the Hedilla, the pro-Italian Fascist. At some point of their evolution an attempt will be made to compose remaining differences, and there can be little doubt that the Soviet Union, which has comported itself so "reasonably" on the Non-Intervention Committee, would not be averse to a solution which might remove the danger to the French frontier, strengthen the Franco-Soviet Pact, and possibly draw Great Britain into it.

More than ever before Defend the Spanish Revolution!

In the face of these dangers we must sound a warning to the workers of this country. A solution to the conflict reached in diplomatic hotel corridors can only have one result, the crushing of the Spanish working class and its revolutionary vanguard. In the place of manoeuvres from above, secret diplomacy, cabinet intrigue we insist that the only lasting solution to the Spanish struggle lies in the victory of the Spanish working class. It is the bounden duty to-day of every revolutionary to defend by every means in his power those parties and organisations of the Spanish working class which stand for the overthrow of the decaying Republic of 1931 and its replacement by a Workers' Republic. They may have reason to need our support in the weeks which lie ahead.

IVOR MONTAGU

Distortion and misquotation are the last resort of those venal persons who, having long since lost or sold all personal dignity, are reduced to substitute for political argument, lies and slander. Ivor Montagu in the April number of the *Left News* deals with "Trotskyism" and the Moscow trials. It is distasteful to be forced to discuss so filthy a compilation, but it would be impossible to let go unchallenged an article which has the authority of so respectable a journal as the *Left News*, which claims to represent all shades of left opinion.

I. TROTSKY AND WAR

Montagu tries to show that the accusations brought against Trotsky in the Moscow Trials, that he was actively fomenting a war between Germany and the Soviet Union, are in accord with the "publicly stated political background of Trotsky." Montagu declares: "Later, the conspirators decided, the country was so weak and Fascism so developing in strength, that in the certain future war Fascism must triumph... In *La Revolution Trahie*, Trotsky puts the question respecting the war he declares inevitable between Germany and the U.S.S.R. 'Let us reply clearly to a question clearly posed—as far as concerns technique, economy and military science, Imperialism is infinitely stronger than the U.S.S.R. Defeat will be fatal to the leading circles of the U.S.S.R. and to the social bases of the country.'"

When we turn up the passage in *La Revolution Trahie*, we find: "Let us reply clearly to a question clearly posed: If the war were only a war, the defeat of the U.S.S.R. would be inevitable. As far as concerns technique, economy and military science, Imperialism is infinitely stronger than the U.S.S.R. If it is not paralysed by a revolution in the west, it will carry off the regime born from the October Revolution." (Page 258).

Montagu has omitted without indication the emphasised passages. And where is the sentence about the leading circles? On the page before, in a completely different context!

What is the general argument of the passage from which this quotation is taken? Trotsky is discussing the danger of war from the point of view of the Soviet Union. He sums up the advantages and disadvantages of the Russian position. As advantages he notes especially the vast extent of the country which saved the revolution during the Civil War; the enormous human reserves (he estimates the effective military reserves as from 18 to 20 million men); in the economic sphere he says: "The advantages of the U.S.S.R. are immense as compared with those of the old Russia." The chief disadvantage of the Soviet Union as compared to the Imperialist countries is the fact that, in spite of immense progress, it is still far behind the great western powers in economic strength and organisation: "The low productivity of labour, the poor quality of production, the weakness of the transport system are only partially compensated by the extent of the country, its natural resources and its population."

But, Trotsky continues, defeat, though it may bring political changes, does not necessarily alter the economic system. "The forms of property can be modified by war only if they are in grave contradiction with the economic forces of the country. The defeat of Germany in a war with the U.S.S.R. would inevitably involve the fall of Hitler and also of the capitalist system. One can hardly doubt, on the other hand, that defeat would be fatal to the leading circles of the U.S.S.R. and to the social bases of the country." (Here in its proper context is the sentence quoted by Montagu.) "The instability of the present regime in Germany arises from the fact that its productive forces have long ago surpassed the forms of capitalist property. The instability of the Soviet regime, on the contrary, is due to the fact that the productive forces are still far from being at the high level of Socialist property."

Trotsky then goes on to say that, if the war were only a war, the U.S.S.R. could not avoid defeat. The qualification, however, completely omitted by Montagu, is the burden of Trotsky's argument: it is inconceivable that the next war will be "only a war"—it will be complicated by revolutions in the west. On these revolutions and on these alone depends the safety of the Soviet Union.

As for "Fascism so developing in strength that, in the certain future war, Fascism must triumph," here is what Trotsky says on that subject a few pages further on (page 261): "In spite of its contradictions, the Soviet regime has, as regards stability immense advantages over the regimes of its probable adversaries. The very possibility of the domination of the Nazis over the German people is due to the prodigious tension of the social antagonisms in Germany. These antagonisms are neither destroyed nor attenuated: the grave-stone of Fascism merely suppresses them. War would bring them to the surface. Hitler has far less chance than William II to carry the war to a successful end. A revolution made in time can alone, by sparing Germany a war, avoid a fresh defeat."

The unprincipled baseness of Montagu's quotation and the argument he draws from it is almost unbelievable.

2. TROTSKY AS ASSASSIN

Montagu goes on to discuss Trotsky as assassin: On the question of assassination it would be difficult for Trotsky to be more public. First his open letter of 1932: 'Remove Stalin.' In the *Bulletin of the Opposition*, October, 1933: 'It would be childish to think that the Soviet bureaucracy can be removed by means of a party or soviet congress. Normal, constitutional means are no longer available. They can be compelled to hand over power only by force.' (Emphasis in original.) And, Montagu continues: "Note, not the Marxist conception, if normal, constitutional means are not available, to link the demands for such means to the unfulfilled needs of the workers and peasants."

(a) The "open letter" referred

to has a curious history in connection with the trials. In the Zinoviev trial this letter was alleged to have been smuggled into Russia in the "secret bottom of Holzman's suitcase." It was represented as a conspirative letter urging the assassination of Stalin, and it figured as one of the exhibits in the case. It later turned out, however, that this "secret document" was an "Open Letter to the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R." which had been published in the *Bulletin of the Opposition* in 1932 and has appeared in the German, French, Belgian, Spanish, Greek, American and Jewish Trotskyist papers! The words "remove Stalin," moreover, which are alleged to express murderous intent, are found to be a literal quotation from Lenin's Testament! The relevant passage of this letter runs in full: "Stalin has brought you to an impasse. You cannot come out in the road without liquidating Stalinism. You must trust to the working class, give the proletarian vanguard the possibility, through free criticism from top to bottom, to review the whole Soviet system and pitilessly cleanse it of the accumulated rubbish. It is time, finally, to fulfil the last urgent advice of Lenin: to remove Stalin."

(b) The next passage quoted is from the *Bulletin of the Opposition* displays, in its dishonesty, a mind lost to all decency. The unabridged passage runs as follows: "After the experience of the last few years it would be childish to suppose that the Stalin bureaucracy could be removed by means of a party or soviet congress. In reality the last congress of the Bolshevik Party took place at the beginning of 1923, the 12th Party Congress. All subsequent congresses were bureaucratic parades. No normal, "constitutional" ways remain open to remove the ruling clique. The bureaucracy can be compelled to yield power into the hands of the proletarian vanguard only by force." (Emphasised passages omitted by Montagu).

And Montague has the temerity to remark, "not the Marxist conception!" In the very next paragraph of Trotsky's article we read: "The question of seizing power will arise as a practical question for the new party only when it has consolidated around itself the majority of the working class. In the course of such a radical change in the relation of forces, the bureaucracy will become more and more isolated, more and more split." (My emphasis).

(c) As a further indication of Trotsky's murderous intentions, Montagu remarks that in *La Revolution Trahie* Trotsky greets "the murder of Kirov by declaring it of great 'symptomatic importance'; 'such acts indicate the coming crisis.'" It is worth while to quote the passage from Trotsky in full: "Attacks against the State power have often a great symbolic importance which permits one to judge the condition of a country. The most resounding of these was the assassination of Kirov, the cunning and unscrupulous dictator of Leningrad, a personality typical of his clique. Terrorist acts are by themselves utterly incapable of overthrowing the bureaucratic oligarchy. The individual bureaucrat may fear the revolver, the bureaucracy as a whole successfully exploits terrorism in order to justify its own violence, and

not without accusing its political adversaries... Individual terrorism is the weapon of isolated persons, impatient or desperate, who themselves most often belong to the younger section of the bureaucracy. But, as under the autocracy, political crimes indicate that the air is charged with electricity and are an omen of crisis." (Page 322. My emphasis).

3. TROTSKY'S REFUTATION

Montagu summarises (what a summary) Trotsky's explanations of how the confessions were obtained. He carefully selects isolated words and phrases from no less than six sources and jumbles them together in such a way that Trotsky's explanation seems fragmentary and confused; yet, as Montagu knows well, a perfectly convincing and consistent explanation is to be found either in Trotsky's Hippodrome speech, *I Stake my Life*, or in an article published in *The Red Flag* for March, 1937.

Montagu continues: "In spite of the fact that seven months have elapsed since the first trial, of the fictional character of which Trotsky declared he had 'documentary proof,' and in spite of having been in communication with the world for two months, it is the only one which Trotsky has offered. His statement that he had 'irrefutable proofs' which he would publish in due course in a book, made at a time when irrefutable proofs of innocence would obviously have saved the lives of the defendants at the second trial (not likely with the Right Menshevik, Vishinsky, as prosecutor, and the 'rude and disloyal' Stalin as architect!) led to numerous indignant resignations from the New York Trotsky Defence Committee."

This is perhaps the foulest morsel in Montagu's unsavoury mess. The impression Montagu tries to create that the psychological explanation of the confessions is offered as "documentary proof" of anything at all is, of course, utterly disingenuous. This is obviously not the place to go into details of the multitudinous documentary proofs which Trotsky has, in fact, brought forward and published to prove his own innocence and that of many of the accused—this would require a book, not an article. It must suffice to mention one or two examples. Thus Trotsky has shown conclusively, with the help of documents from the archives of the French Foreign Office, that Sedov was not in Copenhagen in 1932. He has shown that Piatakov did not visit him in Oslo in 1935. With the help of officials of the Norwegian Government he demonstrated this while the trial was in progress, and the Norwegian authorities telegraphed this information to Vishinsky 24 hours before Piatakov was shot. He has shown with the help of the sworn testimony of such men as James Maxton and John Paton, that he was 300 miles from Paris at the time when he was alleged to have given Romm terrorist directives in that city. While, he was still, thanks to the Soviet Government's terror of his evidence, a prisoner in Norway, his son Sedov published a book, *Le Livre Rouge sur le Procès de Moscou*, in which, taking the evidence point by point, he gives detailed refutations. It took the Commission of Enquiry in Mexico City seven days

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MAXIM GORKY, LENIN AND TROTSKY

by HENRY SARA

Martin Lawrence recently dumped upon the bookstalls, to be sold off at a penny, a pamphlet by Maxim Gorky entitled *Days with Lenin*. In this pamphlet there are some passages which claim to give first hand impressions of Lenin's opinion about Leon Trotsky. It is necessary to warn the unsuspecting reader that this material is totally unreliable. Fortunately it is possible to check these alleged statements by Gorky by Gorky himself.

First of all perhaps it would be as well if a few facts were recalled. For many years Gorky was in correspondence with Lenin, but when the Russian October came Gorky completely failed to appreciate the event. Instead he became a bitter opponent of Lenin, and in his paper *Novaja Zhizn* assailed the Soviet Government and the Bolsheviks. Owing to the fame of Gorky before the war his onslaughts upon the revolution and its leaders were used by the capitalist press the world over in their campaign of vilification of the Bolsheviks, with telling effect. Later on in 1918 Gorky ceased his attacks and was given a small post in the Soviet Government to assist in literary and educational work.

When Lenin died in 1924 Gorky wrote an article on Lenin which had wide circulation, but it was far from being a worthy contribution to the memory of Lenin. Trotsky submitted Gorky's effort to a severe criticism, a criticism however which had considerable merit. It was translated from the *Pravda* for the English *Communist Review* (December, 1924) with a foreword to Trotsky's article which said "that it reveals some additional traits in Lenin's character hitherto unfamiliar to English readers." Gorky's article written earlier in the year had appeared in the pages of the *Daily Herald* and was later published in pamphlet form under the title *Nicolai Lenin—The Man*.

After Trotsky's expulsion from the Soviet Union, Gorky apparently enlarged the article and in so doing put fresh matter in and left old matter out with what result the reader can now judge for himself. By taking these two pamphlets *Nicolai Lenin The Man*, by Maxim Gorky, published by the *Daily Herald* in 1924, and *Days with Lenin*, by Maxim Gorky, published by Martin Lawrence (about 1932?) a glaring fraud is at once apparent.

"Daily Herald" edition: "Yes, I often heard him praise his comrades. Even those for whom, according to rumour, he had no sympathy, Lenin spoke with a true estimation of their energy."

Martin Lawrence edition: "Yes, he (Lenin) often praised the comrades in my hearing, even those with whom he was not personally in sympathy. Lenin knew how to appreciate their energy."

In the first it is a rumour. In the second it is a fact.

"D. H." edition: "I told him that many would be astonished at his praise of one comrade."

M. L. edition: "I was very surprised at his high appreciation of L. D. Trotsky's organising abilities. V. Ilyitch noticed my surprise."

In the first account others would be surprised. In the second it was Gorky himself. But that surprised Lenin too.

"D. H." edition: "Yes, yes! I know! People spread lies about my relations with him. How they all lie, especially about me and Trotsky..."

M. L. edition: "Yes, I know there are lying rumours about my attitude to him. But what is, is, and what isn't, isn't—that I know also."

In the first they lied not only about Trotsky but about Lenin too. The second just isn't.

"D. H." edition: "Striking his fist on the table he said: 'But let them show me another man capable of organising an almost perfect army in one year, and conquering the sympathies of military specialists. And we have a man like that. We have all we want. And we shall have miracles, too, yes!'"

A striking passage! Lenin himself admits Trotsky's influence in organising the Red Army. But when we turn to the Martin Lawrence edition we find it has been cut out! Instead all we find is:

M. L. edition: "He was able at any rate to organise the military experts."

But if the Martin Lawrence edition lacks Lenin's praise of Trotsky it manages to bring to light something not heard of before: "After a pause he added in a lower tone, and rather sadly: 'And yet he isn't one of us. With us but not of us. He is ambitious. There is something of Lassalle in him, something which isn't good.'" How remarkable that that should have been overlooked in the original article! But how more remarkable for Lenin to give two such entirely different versions of one man in the same interview, and to Gorky of all people.

But perhaps it is unfair to put the burden of this contradictory stuff upon the shoulders of Maxim Gorky. Perhaps he never wrote it at all. Perhaps it is just another instance of falsification by the hacks who do this sort of thing daily. Anyway, whether Gorky wrote it or not it is attributed to him and, as we have tried to make clear, those readers who have recently been caught for a penny can see for themselves, Gorky's own statements refute the slurs and innuendoes. If they have learnt that much, not to rely on these latter day versions of Soviet history, maybe their penny was well spent.

• stop press •

THE REVOLUTION BETRAYED

What is the Soviet Union
and where is it going?

by LEON TROTSKY

Translated from the Russian by Max Eastman

This is one of the most important books that has yet appeared on the subject of Communism in U.S.S.R., and is one which no student of the subject, whether sympathetic or hostile, can afford to neglect. It is both a defence of the policy which Trotsky has pursued ever since the death of Lenin, and a vigorous and thorough criticism of the regime of Stalin. Even people who make no attempt to keep up with the immense volume of literature about Russia today, will find this book most exciting reading. It explains, as no one but Trotsky could do, the radical difference expressed by the current terms 'Stalinist' and 'Trotskyist': the difference between two antithetical conceptions of Communist action and Communist ideals.

Trotsky's 'jammed' speech

Some 6,600 men and women gathered in the New York Hippodrome on 9th February, 1937, at a mass meeting called by the American Committee for the Defence of Leon Trotsky, in order to hear the great revolutionist speak in his own cause. Arrangements had been made for the speech to be transmitted from Trotsky's place of asylum in Mexico direct to the hall. It was to have been Trotsky's first opportunity of speaking directly to a large audience in the defence of the accused in the series of trials that began after the assassination of S. M. Kirov in December, 1934. For reasons which are still unknown the speech could not be heard.

The translation of the exact speech which Trotsky intended to deliver is given in Appendix II of "The Revolution Betrayed."

We may add that while the book is carefully documented, M. Trotsky is the master of a clear and lively style. The reader is nowhere burdened by superfluous statistics or unimportant details. Incidentally, M. Trotsky's comments on some English students of Soviet affairs make amusing reading. This is not only one of the most important, but one of the most readable books that has been written about contemporary Russia, and will become an historical classic.

Just published at 12/6

FABER & FABER

The End of Yagoda

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the G.P.U. which he himself had built, reading again the regulation which he signed, awaiting an examination, a judgment, an execution the rites of which he knows by heart—understanding at last what he has done, what he has become, what those like him have made of the Revolution!

And I think also of Romain Roland who met him at Moscow and devoted to him such a handsome article. The great chief of the concentration camps and of those silent executioners in all the dungeons of the U.S.S.R. conquered at a stroke the heart of the author of Jean Christophe.

Is this not the occasion for Rolland to write a new article on Yagoda to try to save even this life—for is it not enough blood and too much cynicism on the part of the Master to attempt thus in broad daylight to suppress his servitors?

Already last September I wrote: the whole generation of October is condemned. Finished. Lost. Every one strangled in a trap. The few last survivors of the old Bolshevik cadres—the Litvinovs, Krestinskys, Bubnovs, Antonov-Ovseenkos—are also condemned, in the same way or by other means. Their existence has become incompatible with that of the regime.

IVOR MONTAGU

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to hear Trotsky's detailed evidence and to examine his documentary proofs.

A lie too is the statement that the "fact" that Trotsky did not publish his evidence "led to numerous indignant resignations" from the American Committee for the Defence of Leon Trotsky. The Committee includes more than a hundred members; nine have resigned (not very numerous). Not a single one of those gave the reason which Montagu alleges. (See the *News Bulletin* of the American Committee).

Dealing with one of the irrefutable proofs which he has just declared do not exist, Montagu writes: "It is not insignificant that the item in Holzman's evidence (the existence of a "Bristol" in Copenhagen) particularly assailed by Adler since been irrefutably confirmed, and with it the deliberate trickery of the Trotskyists who denied it in the first place."

The "deliberate trickery" is here once more on the part of Montagu; the "item" in Holzman's evidence was not the existence of a "Bristol," but that of a "Hotel Bristol." It has been shown conclusively, and indeed is nowhere denied, that in 1932 no Hotel Bristol existed in Copenhagen. The Stalinists, however, discovered there was a "Café Bristol" not too far off. They claim that Holzman refers to this café. Yet Holzman distinctly says that "he arranged to put up at the Hotel Bristol," and that he met Sedov in the "lounge." The café has neither bedrooms nor lounge.

"But it is obvious" declares Montagu "that an error of detail is neither a proof of fictional character of the whole, nor an explanation." This would be well said if its intention was not dishonest. The fact of the non existence of the Hotel Bristol was pointed out by Sedov, Adler and Trotsky merely as an incidental illustration of the slipshod methods of the trial, and Vishinsky's complete disregard for the facts. The Stalinists have seized upon it for two reasons: partly because they hoped to cast doubt upon Trotsky's refutation by indulging in a little higher criticism of Holzman's evidence; and partly, what is more important, because they wanted to distract attention from the really vital point of the Copenhagen episode, namely, that Sedov has never been in Copenhagen in his life, and in particular was not there in November, 1932. Of this he has, and has published, irrefutable documentary proof. Montagu does not mention this fact.

4. TROTSKY AND HEARST

In spite of the fact that similar accusations have in the past been conclusively refuted, with great discomfort to the Stalinists, Montagu has the audacity to write: "Trotsky is, perhaps, the star contributor to Hearst on Soviet affairs." In the *News Bulletin* of the American Committee for 19th February, Trotsky writes: "I refused to receive the Hearst representative or to give statements to the Universal Service (Hearst). The latter has been the only agency refused admittance. Possibly Hearst got the statements

through other agencies or from the Mexican papers which have published them textually without cutting. When he prints them as being by Leon Trotsky he is not formally a liar, because (except for Hearst's distortion and deletions) I am actually the author. But I am not responsible for the channels through which he obtains these statements."

This declaration has never been challenged by Hearst. Trotsky has since brought an action for libel against the Hearst Press.

In this connection it is interesting to recall Lenin's retort to the slanderers of the Montagu type in July, 1917: "They have stooped to such a ridiculous thing as blaming the *Pravda* for the fact that its dispatches to the Socialist papers of Sweden and other countries . . . were reprinted by the German papers, often garbled! As if the reprinting or the vicious distortions can be blamed on the authors!" (*Works*, 21/1/27).

5. TROTSKY AND THE "TROTSKYISTS"

Copying the almost inimitable style of his master, Stalin, Montagu ends his article with a barrage of questions which are intended to indicate the identity of Trotsky's policies with those of the Fascists. It is worth while briefly to refute some of these implied accusations which can be dealt with in a few words.

(a) "In what detail does the picture of the U.S.S.R. painted in *La Revolution Trahie* differ from the picture of the Soviet Union painted by Goebbels at the Nuremberg congress within a fortnight of its publication?" This question can be answered by whoever has read carefully even the few quotations from Trotsky's book given above. We may reply categorically; in every detail.

(b) "Do la Roque and Hitler want or not want the end of the Popular Front, advocated by the French Trotskyists? Would disorders at the time of the occupation of the factories, demanded by the Trotskyists, have served to strengthen or weaken the Popular Front?" The French Trotskyists did not advocate "disorders" (!) at the time of the sit-down strikes; they advocated a proletarian revolution, the seizure of power by the working class, the creation of soviets (the C.P.F. forgot at this moment of crisis its slogan of *Les Soviets Partout*, which it had so ludicrously advanced during the notorious "third period"). Would a successful revolution in June, 1936, have strengthened or weakened Hitler, Mussolini and Franco?

(c) "When Trotsky declares, as he did last month in a French newspaper of the right, that "Franco's victory is certain," is he helping or hindering Fascism to win in Spain?" Typically, Montagu does not give his reference, so this lie cannot be verified. However, I challenge him to produce a single genuine statement of Trotsky's (not a garbled distortion by the piratical French press, whose methods closely resemble Montagu's own) which ex-

presses the thought that Franco's victory is inevitable. Until he can produce such a statement, we must be content with Trotsky's declaration to the *News Chronicle* of August 27th: "In spite of the treason of the French and Soviet Governments, I still count on the victory of the Spanish people. From that victory, I believe, a Socialist Spain will emerge."

I think we have disposed pretty completely of Ivor Montagu. His article in itself is not, of course, worth even the briefest refutation. But by examining point by point the lies and slanders that Montagu brings against Trotsky, and comparing them in detail with the actual facts and the *ipsisima verba* of Trotsky, I think we have gone far to show that the whole case against him as presented during the Moscow trials is in the sharpest contradiction to his openly declared and often repeated policy.

In particular, we have demonstrated that Trotsky's analysis of the situation with regard to war, and his perspectives for the Soviet Union, are the direct opposite of those alleged by Montagu and Vishinsky-Stalin.

We have shown that Trotsky's attitude toward individual terrorism is that of all real Marxists: ineluctable opposition.

We have briefly indicated the crushing and irrefutable documentary evidence which Trotsky can bring, and has brought, forward to demonstrate his complete innocence.

We have shown, finally, that the policy of Trotsky and his followers in the working class movement of the world, far from being the fantastic medley of Fascist and counter-revolutionary phrases which Stalin and his hirelings declare, is the uncompromising continuation of the revolutionary policy of Marx and Lenin.

In the long and dishonourable history of political slander and falsification it would be difficult to find a baser or more vicious specimen of this poisonous art than Ivor Montagu's article. "How foul," exclaims Lenin, "must be the source which spreads slander as a substitute for the clash of ideas!" Montagu, indeed, presents a curious, if revolting, psychological problem. That the vast majority of the leaders and theoreticians of the working class movement throughout the world are bitterly opposed to the political ideas of Trotsky, as they were, and are, to those of Marx and Lenin, is a well-known and easily explicable fact. But whoever has a sincere principled objection to a political theory will attack that theory on the basis of facts and the reasoned arguments founded upon them. Montagu, however, bases his arguments on the most transparent falsifications, on the most easily refutable lies. What motive can there be for such a procedure? Is there any conceivable motive which is compatible with personal honour and integrity? Perhaps it would be more charitable towards Montagu to conclude that, like the wretch whom Engels attacked, "he is one of those low creatures who do the basest actions from an innate inclination to infamy."

CHARLES SUMNER.

The END of YAGODA

by Victor Serge

The vast police *coup d'état* begun by Stalin last July in order to liquidate Bolshevism and to stabilise his personal regime continues, and each day brings its new surprise. It will soon be clear that the importance of this period of eighteen months is not inferior to that of a Thermidor combined with an Eighteenth Brumaire. The arrest of Yagoda is the sensation of the last few days. It even casts into the shade the arrest, which has finally been confirmed, of Christian Rakovsky, and the rumours that Leon Sosnovsky, like General Putna, has been shot in prison without trial. (Sosnovsky, the brilliant Bolshevik journalist, was so greatly appreciated by Lenin that he made him his mouthpiece at the first pan-Russian Executive of the Soviets). But nothing definite is known about this, and perhaps nothing ever will be known.

A Government communique, signed by Kalinin, announced the accusation of Henry Grigorievitch Yagoda: malfeasance in office, crimes committed in the course of the fulfilment of his functions . . . What functions? Yagoda is an old Bolshevik from before October, member of the Cheka from the time of the red terror; in 1928 he sympathised with the Right Opposition (Bukharin, Rykov), but not for long . . . As head of the G.P.U. for many years, he organised the repression against the technicians, against every opposition, in every sphere. Thousands of death warrants received his signature. He ruled the vastest concentration camps in the world—a position which gained him a decoration for the construction of the White Sea Baltic Canal, by convict labour.

He watched over Stalin whom he was seen to follow step by step on ceremonial occasions. Chief Commissar of the Criminal Police, People's Commissar for the Interior, member of the Central Committee of the Party, commander of the special troops of the G.P.U., he was in truth the most dreaded man in the U.S.S.R., the one whose conscience carried—by order—the heaviest burdens: Chief of Police to the "genial Leader." In this capacity he presided over the secret examinations (what horrible concoctions!) for the Zinoviev trial and over the execution of the sentences against the Sixteen. Immediately after the Zinoviev-Kamenev-Smirnov trial his disgrace became known.

A scape-goat was required to shoulder the responsibility of this badly managed judicial comedy. Above all was it necessary to suppress Yagoda because he had become, in his turn, an intolerably disturbing witness. He is accused. Everything can be blamed on him: he committed—by order—all the crimes that are required, and he could commit no worse or more unpardonable crime than to defend himself—for this could only be done by accusing others. He is irretrievably lost.

I picture him to myself in one of those cells in the Moscow prison of

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Printed by V. M. Beach (T.U.) Tonbridge, Surrey, and Published for the Marxist League by A. Boyd, 238 Edgeware Road, W.2.