WRITINGS OF
LEON TROTSKY
[1935-36]
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Writings of Leon Trotsky is a collection, in twelve volumes, of pamphlets, articles, letters, and interviews written during Trotsky’s third and final exile (1929-40). They include many articles translated into English for the first time. They do not include the books and pamphlets from this period that are permanently in print, nor most of the unpublished material in the Trotsky Archives at Harvard University Library. Five of the volumes cover Trotsky’s residence in Turkey (1929, 1930, 1930-31, 1932, 1932-33); two in France (1933-34, 1934-35); one in Norway (1935-36); and four in Mexico (1936-37, 1937-38, 1938-39, 1939-40).
WRITINGS OF LEON TROTSKY
[1935-36]

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the memory of ELOISE BOOTH (1912-1952)

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Leon Trotsky in Norway.
The third country in which Leon Trotsky lived during his last exile (1929-40) was Norway. Deported from the Soviet Union in 1929, he lived in Turkey until 1933, when the French government granted him asylum. Less than a year later, it ordered him to leave, but because no country would accept him, this order could not be enforced until June 1935, when the newly installed Norwegian labor government consented to admit him. He remained in Norway until December 1936, when the same government had him put on a tanker bound for Mexico. This collection of pamphlets, articles, letters, and discussions, which are not otherwise available in books or pamphlets permanently in print, covers Trotsky's eighteen-month stay in Norway; this second edition, with approximately twice as many articles as the first, contains a great deal of material here published in English for the first time, and much that has never before been published in any language.

Trotsky's main concern while he was in Norway was the struggle to form the Fourth International, which he and his comrades had undertaken in 1933, after the criminal failure of the Communist International to block the Nazi assumption of power in Germany had convinced them to abandon their effort to reform the Comintern. During these months in Norway Trotsky wrote The Revolution Betrayed (Pathfinder Press, 1972)—a profound analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet Union under Stalinism, which he also viewed as a contribution to the building of the Fourth International. The contents of the present volume indicate how much of his attention and thought was focused on the problems of the projected new International and its national sections at that time, when the major powers were beginning to reorganize themselves for World War II. Fascist Italy was preparing to invade Ethiopia when Trotsky arrived in Norway, and did so a few months later. In July 1936 the Spanish fascists under Franco launched a civil war that Hitler and Mussolini would utilize as a testing ground for new weapons and tactics.

In its own way, the Soviet bureaucracy also began to prepare for the coming war. One form this took was the abandonment of
the ultraleft policies proclaimed and practiced by the Stalinized Communist International from 1928 to 1934, policies that had facilitated Hitler's victory. In those years, called the "third period," the parties of the Comintern had declared that revolution was imminent everywhere, and had forbidden collaboration or united front activity with other working class parties or tendencies, which were dubbed "social fascists."

The new Stalinist policy began to take public shape in the spring of 1935, while Trotsky was still in France, when Stalin signed a pact with imperialist France and announced that he "understands and fully approves" French rearmament. The new policy was declared universally applicable at the seventh and final world congress of the Comintern, held in Moscow in August 1935, and had two major themes: the "People's Front" and "collective security." Now Stalinists everywhere were ordered to collaborate not only with the working class forces previously called social fascists (except the "Trotskyists"), but also with "progressive" and "democratic" capitalists and their parties, and, on the international scene, to support the democratic imperialist governments in their military and diplomatic preparations for war against the fascist governments. As a result of this policy—which was pursued until 1939, when Hitler signed a pact with Stalin—the opportunities for social revolution that arose in France and Spain in 1936 were lost or deliberately stifled, and the working class was politically disarmed at the outbreak of the war.

Trotsky met this sharp rightward move of the Stalinists by redoubling his efforts to build a new worldwide Leninist organization. The first draft of his *Open Letter for the Fourth International*, which begins this volume, was written shortly before he left France. It was designed to speed up and if possible complete the international regroupment of genuinely revolutionary forces that had begun in 1933, when the International Left Opposition became the International Communist League. In 1933-35 the ICL sought to link itself with leftward-moving forces in various centrist organizations. Fusions of ICL sections with such elements in the United States and Holland led to the formation of the Workers Party of the United States (1934) and the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party of Holland (1935), both of which signed the *Open Letter*. In 1934 the ICL's French section entered the Socialist Party and its youth movement in order to win over their revolutionary members. The French SP leaders were preparing to expel the partisans of the Fourth International when Trotsky reached Norway. The members of the Workers
Party of the U.S. would enter the American Socialist Party in 1936.

The tactics used to remove organizational obstacles in the path of centrist forces moving to the left provoked serious resistance, factional strife, and in some cases splits on the part of sectarians in the ICL who found it difficult to distinguish between principles and tactics or who had become comfortable in their isolation. A large part of this volume is devoted to these and other problems of party-building, and to centrism, factionalism, sectarianism, and opportunism in Belgium, Britain, Holland, and the United States.

In addition, the experience inside the Socialist parties, while considerably enlarging the cadres for the Fourth International, coincided with and in some cases encouraged the development of opportunistic tendencies ready to sacrifice principles for the sake of tactical maneuvers. This dangerous development led to a split in the French section after its members had been expelled from the Socialist Party toward the end of 1935. The editors had hoped to include this important episode in this volume, but were prevented from doing so by the large amount of material that has come to light, on the one hand, and the already excessive size of this volume, on the other. Trotsky's writings on the split and its consequences in France will be found in a separate volume, *The Crisis in the French Section (1935-36)*. Several articles on this subject that were in the first edition of *Writings 35-36* have been omitted from the second edition and will be included in that volume.

Although the response to the *Open Letter for the Fourth International* was limited, Trotsky believed that those who agreed with its line should move promptly to create a new International, and that was what he proposed to the First International Conference for the Fourth International, sponsored by the ICL and held in July 1936. But the delegates to that conference thought such a move premature, and voted instead to form the Movement for the Fourth International; the founding conference of the new organization would not be held for two more years. The present volume contains three documents written by Trotsky and adopted by the 1936 conference.

While the Soviet bureaucracy was conciliating democratic imperialists abroad and adopting a new constitution at home, it stepped up its persecution, imprisonment, and murder of revolutionaries and oppositionists inside the Soviet Union. The actual dimensions of this repression began to emerge more clearly when two revolutionaries escaped in 1935 to describe the
conditions that prevailed in the prisons, camps, and places of exile that were home to tens of thousands of Soviet oppositionists. Trotsky was untiring in his work of publicizing the repression and appealing for international support and aid for the victims of Stalin’s prisons and concentration camps.

The repression reached a new level in August 1936, when the Moscow “confession” trial of sixteen defendants, headed by the Old Bolsheviks Zinoviev and Kamenev, startled the world. Trotsky, the chief target of the trial, began at once to expose it as the worst frame-up in history, but he was quickly silenced and interned by the Norwegian government, acting under pressure from Moscow. The last part of this volume includes Trotsky’s statements on the trial, including his summary of the dramatic testimony he gave in a closed Norwegian courtroom before he and his companion, Natalia Sedova, were shipped off to Mexico.

Until the Moscow trial claimed exclusive use of his time, Trotsky wrote on a great diversity of subjects, included in this volume: the relation of factions to a political party; terrorism; the uses of the general strike; the role of the capitalist state in the fight against fascism; the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern; whether Marxists should defend religious freedom in Nazi Germany; the new Soviet constitution; Rosa Luxemburg; People’s Frontism; and more.

The second edition of this volume differs from the first in the following ways:

1. It is much larger. Of the 132 selections in this edition, 70 are published here in English for the first time; they are indicated by an asterisk in the table of contents. This edition does not include the long essay “Edouard Herriot, Politician of the Golden Mean,” which has been transferred to Trotsky’s Portraits, Political and Personal (Pathfinder Press, 1977). “Before the Second Stage” has been transferred to Leon Trotsky on France. “The Expulsion of the French Youth,” “Labels’ and ‘Numbers,’” “After the Toulon Events,” “Introduction to Fred Zeller’s Pamphlet,” “For Committees of Action, Not the People’s Front,” “What Is a ‘Mass Paper’?” and “Lessons of the SFIO Entry” have been transferred to The Crisis of the French Section (1935-36). “Ready to Face Norwegian Court,” which contained nothing by Trotsky, has been dropped. “In ‘Socialist’ Norway,” which Trotsky wrote as a retrospective summary of his sojourn in Norway, has been moved to Writings 36-37.

2. The first edition was divided into nine sections by theme. All the articles in the second edition are arranged in chronological order, except for certain letters about the Moscow trial sent to
Preface

Trotsky's French lawyer, which are grouped together for the convenience of readers and editors.

3. Some dates mistakenly given articles in the first edition have been corrected here, and articles that were incomplete because the full text was not available are here presented in their entirety.

All of the articles in this volume were written at Honefoss, a town about thirty miles north of Oslo, where Trotsky lived in the home of a Labor Party member of the Norwegian parliament; in a hospital in Oslo, where he stayed for six weeks toward the end of 1935; at Opdagelseschef, a small island where he was vacationing when news of the Moscow trial reached him; and at Sundby, where he was interned for three and a half months before being deported to Mexico. Many of these articles were signed by pen names or were unsigned when first published, usually for security reasons; this explains why in certain places Trotsky refers to himself in the third person. The date preceding each selection indicates when it was completed; if that is not known, the date when it was first published is given. Translations originally made in the 1930s and 1940s have been revised to correct obvious errors and to achieve uniformity in spelling of names, punctuation, style, etc. Acknowledgments about the articles and translations, and explanatory material about the persons and events mentioned in them, will be found in the section entitled “Notes and Acknowledgments.” A list of Trotsky's 1935-36 writings not included in this volume because they are in print and available elsewhere will be found in the section entitled “Other Writings of 1935-36.”

For expansion of this edition and improvements in its contents, special thanks are due the Harvard College Library, for its permission to examine and use material in the “open” section of the Trotsky Archives at Harvard; the Library of Social History in New York, for its permission to examine and use material in the archives of the late James P. Cannon; the late Kenth-Ake Andersson, for locating and making available copies of articles published in the Scandinavian press; Albert Glotzer, for providing copies of letters by Trotsky from his personal archives; John Archer, for his elucidation of some features in the history of British Trotskyism; Jean van Heijenoort, Herman Pietsner, and Dick Fidler, for assistance with various points requiring annotation; and Louis Sinclair, for the help afforded by his Leon Trotsky: A Bibliography (Hoover Institution Press, 1972).

The Editors
September 1976
CHRONOLOGY

—1935—

Spring—Trotsky writes *Open Letter for the Fourth International*. 
June 18—Trotsky arrives in Norway.
July 14—People’s Front holds enormous demonstration in Paris.
July 30—Expulsion of French Trotskyists from leadership of Socialist Youth begins at Lille congress.
July 25—August 20—Comintern holds its seventh and final world congress, adopting People’s Front line. Three days later, Trotsky begins analysis (“The Comintern’s Liquidation Congress”).
August-September—French SP leadership excommunicates Trotskyists’ paper, *La Verite*, and begins expulsions of adult Trotskyists.
September—*Biulleten Oppozitsii* publishes letter by Soviet emigre Tarov shedding new light on conditions among Soviet political prisoners.
September 19—Trotsky enters hospital in Oslo for six weeks.
October 3—Italian army invades Ethiopia.
Autumn—Tories win British general elections.
November—Trotsky is interviewed on British political problems.
December 6—French Trotskyists expel faction led by R. Molinier for violation of discipline.

—1936—

January 24—Trotsky approves proposal for U.S. Trotskyists to enter SP.
February 16—Electoral victory of Spanish People’s Front.
March 1—Convention of Workers Party of U.S. authorizes entry into SP.
March 7—Nazi remilitarization of Rhineland becomes official.
April—*Biulleten Oppozitsii* publishes Ciliga’s articles on Soviet political prisoners.
April 26—May 3—Electoral victory of French People’s Front.
May 26—Massive strike wave begins in France.
June 4—French People's Front government is formed with Blum as premier.
June 5—Pravda announces Central Committee has adopted new, “democratic” Soviet constitution.
June 12—French police seize first number of Lutte ouvriere, paper of the POI, new Trotskyist party.
July 17—Franco's fascist uprising opens Spanish Civil War.
July 29-31—First International Conference for the Fourth International held in “Geneva” (actually, Paris).
August—Blum government adopts policy of “nonintervention” in Spain.
August 4—Trotsky finishes manuscript of Revolution Betrayed. Norwegian Nazis burglarize his home.
August 19-24—First big Moscow show trial ends with death sentences for sixteen defendants.
August 26—Trotsky refuses to sign statement demanded by Norwegian government.
August 28—Trotsky is placed under house arrest.
September 2—Trotsky is transferred to Sundby, where he is held virtually incommunicado.
October—Trotsky's Norwegian lawyer initiates suit for slander against Stalinist and fascist papers but Norwegian government passes special decrees to prevent any court action by Trotsky.
October—Trotskyists expelled from Belgian Labor Party establish PSR.
November 7—GPU steals Trotsky's archives from Paris institute.
November 11—Another special edict passed by Norwegian government prevents Trotsky from using any foreign tribunal to seek a hearing.
December 11—Trotsky testifies for four hours at trial of his Norwegian fascist attackers.
December 19—Trotsky is forcibly put aboard a tanker bound for Mexico.
Natalia Sedova (left) and Leon Trotsky (second from right) leave the ship that brought them to Norway, June 18, 1935.
OPEN LETTER
FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL¹

To All Revolutionary Working Class Organizations and Groups

Spring 1935

Hitler's assumption of power, which did not meet with the slightest resistance on the part of the two “mighty” working class parties—one of them, moreover, basing itself upon the USSR—has decisively exposed the internal putrefaction of the Second and Third Internationals.² In August 1933, four organizations formulated for the first time in a programmatic document the new historic task: the creation of the Fourth International.³ The events that have transpired since that time have been irrefutable confirmation that there is no other road.

The annihilation of the Austrian proletariat⁴ has demonstrated that victory cannot be gained by issuing a last-minute call for insurrection to the masses, disoriented and drained by opportunism—after the party had been driven into a blind alley. It is necessary to prepare systematically for victory by means of revolutionary policies in every sphere of the working class movement.

The very same lesson immutably flows from the annihilation of the Spanish proletariat.⁵ Under all conditions, especially during a revolution, it is impermissible to turn one’s back upon the toilers for the sake of a bloc with the bourgeoisie. It is impossible to expect and demand that the duped and disillusioned masses will fly to take up arms upon the belated call of a party in which they have lost confidence. The proletarian revolution is not improvised by the orders of a bankrupt leadership. The revolution must be prepared through incessant and irreconcilable class struggle, which gains for the leadership the unshakable confidence of the party, fuses the vanguard with the entire class, and transforms
the proletariat into the leader of all the exploited in the city and countryside.

Following the ignominious downfall of the principal section of reformism—the completely corroded German Social Democracy—the "left wing" of the Second International went down in ruins in Austria and Spain. But these fearful lessons passed by without leaving a trace: the leading cadres of reformism within the party and in the trade unions have degenerated to the marrow of their bones. Their personal interests and their patriotic views bind them to the bourgeoisie and they are utterly incapable of taking the road of the class struggle.

The parties of the Second International calmly reconcile themselves to the fact that their Belgian president, at the very first beck and call of finance capital, joined hands with the Catholic and liberal middlemen to salvage the banks at the expense of the toiling masses. In the wake of Vandervelde there followed de Man, the vainglorious critic of Karl Marx, the originator of a "Plan," nor did the "left" centrist Spaak fail to betray the socialist opposition in return for the livery of a minister.

Mindful neither of lessons nor warnings, the French Socialist Party continues vainly to clutch at the tailcoats of the "Republican" bourgeoisie, and it pins greater hopes upon the friendship of the Radicals than upon the revolutionary might of the proletariat. In all other countries in every part of the world, in Holland, Scandinavia, Switzerland, the Social Democracy, despite the decay of capitalism, remains the agency of the bourgeoisie within the working class and reveals its utter inability to mobilize the masses in its own defense against fascism.

Should the electoral successes of the Labour Party raise it once again to power, the consequence would be not a peaceful socialist transformation of Great Britain, but the consolidation of imperialist reaction, that is to say, an epoch of civil war, in the face of which the leadership of the Labour Party will inevitably reveal its complete bankruptcy. The parliamentary and trade union cretins have yet to be convinced that the threat of fascism in England is no less real than on the continent.

The turbulent development of the crisis in the United States, the unending chain of strike struggles, and the growth of working class organizations, against the background of the possibilities provided by the demagogy of the Roosevelt "plan," run up against profoundly conservative and bourgeois forces within the working class movement. As for the Stalinist party, it is hogtied
by the solemn declarations of Litvinov, who in return for the recognition of the USSR by Yankee imperialism publicly renounced the American Communists. This party, corrupted by a decade of unprincipled maneuvers and liquidationist experiments with parties (Farmer-Labor Party) that have nothing in common with proletarian parties either in their composition or program—this Stalinist party, upon orders from Moscow, confines itself to the role of a movement of radical intellectuals, functioning in the United States as the servant of Stalinist diplomacy. But the deep-going crisis of American capitalism is awakening wide layers of workers from their semiprovincial slumbers, gradually dispelling bourgeois and petty-bourgeois illusions, impelling the proletariat toward large-scale class actions (Toledo, Minneapolis, San Francisco), and creating for the revolutionary Marxist party an opportunity to gain a widespread and profound influence upon the development and organization of the American working class. The historic role that accrues to the Fourth International and its American section—not only within the confines of the Western hemisphere but on the world arena as well—is of exceptional importance, since the smashing of American imperialism is of exceptional importance for the world proletariat.

In the meantime the Third International does nothing except squander the remaining shreds of influence and authority acquired during the first five years of its existence. In Austria and Spain, the Communist International, despite extremely favorable circumstances, not only failed to create an organization that was in the least bit influential, but systematically compromised in the eyes of the workers the very idea of a revolutionary party. The Saar plebiscite is evidence that the German proletariat lost every vestige of confidence not only in the Social Democracy but in the Communist Party as well—the party that so ingloriously capitulated to Hitler. In Great Britain, Belgium, Holland, Scandinavia, on both American continents, and in the Orient, the sections of the Communist International, burdened by twelve years of fatal policies, are unable to emerge from their obscurity.

True, after the German debacle, the Communist International substituted the capitulatory policy of the united front at any price for the adventurist policy of the "third period." However, the experience in France, where this latest turn has attained its greatest development, demonstrates that the Communist International, with all its contradictions and zigzags, manages to retain
its function as a brake upon the proletarian revolution. Rejecting the creation of a workers' militia in face of the immediate fascist danger, substituting its program of immediate demands and a policy of parliamentarism for the struggle for power, the Communist International is the sower of the worst illusions of reformism and pacifism, gives actual support to the right wing in the Socialist Party against the left, demoralizes the proletarian vanguard, and clears the road for a fascist overturn.

Finally, the founder of the Communist International, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, has been completely crushed during the last few years by the uncontrolled bureaucracy, which has turned the dictatorship of the proletariat into the conservative absolutism of Stalin. By means of persecutions, frame-ups, amalgams, and bloody repressions, the ruling clique strives to nip in the bud every manifestation of Marxist thought. Nowhere in the world is genuine Leninism hounded so rabidly as in the USSR.

The most recent opportunistic somersault of the Communist International is intimately linked with the Soviet turn in foreign policy toward the League of Nations and the military alliance with French imperialism. The ruling bureaucracy of the USSR has definitely arrived at the conclusion that the Communist International is incapable of affording it any assistance whatsoever against the war danger and that at the same time, it hinders the work of Soviet diplomacy. The humiliating and truly servile dependency of the Communist International upon the Soviet upper crust is expressed in a particularly glaring light in connection with the recent declaration of Stalin, approving the national defense of French imperialism.

Through the medium of an imperialist minister the leader of the Communist International passed the order to the French Communist Party to conclude a patriotic truce today with the French bourgeoisie. Thus the Third International, whose congresses have not been convoked for almost seven years, has now officially gone over from the internationalist position to that of the most outright and servile social patriotism. Whether or not the Seventh Congress, so continually postponed, convenes—the Third International will not be resuscitated. The Stalin-Laval communique is its death warrant.

Meanwhile, the destructive forces of capitalism continue their hellish work. The disintegration of the world economy, the unemployed in the tens of millions, the ruin of the peasantry, put
the task of the socialist revolution imperiously on the agenda. The toilers, embittered and aroused, are seeking a way out. The prostration, collapse, and putrefaction of the Second and Third Internationals leave the proletariat without revolutionary leadership and impel the petty-bourgeois masses onto the road of despair. The bankrupt leaders seek to shift the responsibility for the triumph of fascism onto the “passivity” of the proletariat; thus political betrayal is supplemented with slander.

Thrashing in the grip of insolvable contradictions, capitalism is preparing to plunge into a new slaughter of the peoples. Ministers and diplomats openly speculate whether the outbreak of the war will come in one or in three years from now. All the governments, vying with one another, are preparing the most destructive instruments, and thereby from every side they are hastening the explosion, which may be immeasurably more frightful than the war of 1914-18.

The leaders of the so-called working class parties and the trade unions sing loud the praises of the beauties of peace, babble about “disarmament,” exhort their governments to make peace among themselves, arouse the hopes of the working masses in the League of Nations, and at the same time swear fealty to the cause of “national defense,” i.e., the defense of bourgeois rule with its inevitable wars.

Under cover of the “united front,” and even of “organic unity,” Soviet diplomacy is preparing, behind the backs of the class-conscious workers, class peace between the sections of the two Internationals and the bourgeoisie of those countries which are in military alliance with the Soviet state. Thus, the outbreak of a new war must lead to a new betrayal, which will eclipse that of August 4, 1914.21

The betrayal of the cause of the international revolution by the Soviet bureaucracy has thrust the world proletariat far back. The difficulties that face the revolutionary vanguard are incredible. Nevertheless, its position at the present time is incomparably more favorable than on the eve of the last war. At that time, capitalism appeared to be all-powerful, almost invincible. The patriotic capitulation of the International came utterly as a surprise, even to Lenin.22 Everywhere the revolutionary elements were caught unprepared. The first international conference—very small numerically and its majority indecisive—took place more than a year after the outbreak of the war.23 The formation of revolutionary cadres proceeded slowly. The possibility of proletar-
ian revolution was rejected even by the majority of the "Zimmerwaldists." Only the October victory in Russia in the fortieth month of the war produced a change in the situation, providing a mighty impulse for the formation of the Third International.24

Today the internal weakness and corrosion of capitalism are so evident that they serve as the main theme for fascist demagogy. In the colossal crisis in the United States, in the no less colossal unemployment, in the economic adventurism of Roosevelt, in the sweep of the strike struggles, in the ferment within all working class organizations, are being lodged for the first time the conditions for a mighty development of the revolutionary movement in North America. The example of the first victorious proletarian revolution lives in the memory of the masses. The experience of the great events of the last twenty years has been burned into the consciousness of the best militants. Genuinely revolutionary organizations, or at least groups, exist in all countries. They are closely bound together ideologically, and in part also organizationally. Even at present they represent a force incomparably more influential, homogeneous, and steeled than the "Zimmerwald left" which in the fall of 1915 took the initiative in preparing for the Third International.

Within the reformist parties and trade unions, opposition groupings are emerging and growing stronger. Some of these assume the form of independent organizations. Within the sections of the Communist International, as a consequence of the prison regime, the opposition assumes a more mute and masked character, but it is developing there as well. Even in the USSR the need for ever new purges and repressions is proof of the fact that the bureaucracy is unable to root out the spirit of Marxist criticism which is so hateful to it.

The oppositionist moods and tendencies bear today a predominantly centrist character, that is, intermediate between social patriotism and revolution. Under conditions when the traditional mass organizations are in the process of collapse and decomposition, centrism represents in many cases an inevitable transitional stage even for progressive working class groupings. Marxists must be able to find access to all such tendencies, in order by example and propaganda to speed their passage to the revolutionary road. In this, the condition for success is irreconcilable criticism of the centrist leadership, exposure of the attempts to create a Two-and-a-Half International,25 and a ceaseless explanation of the fact that the revolutionary tasks of our epoch doom
beforehand to ignominious bankruptcy those unifications which are hybrid and amorphous.

The slogan of "unity" of all working class organizations regardless of their program and tactics is being zealously propagated at present by the centrists, and is being ably exploited by the reformists, who are more farsighted, and who fear, with good cause, being thrown overboard. The centrists often substitute the idea of merging the two old Internationals for the idea of a new International. In reality, unity with reformists and social patriots of the Social Democratic or Stalinist variety signifies in the last analysis unity with the national bourgeoisie, and consequently the inevitable split of the proletariat, internationally as well as nationally, especially in the event of war. Genuine unity of the International and of its national sections can be assured only upon the revolutionary Marxist foundation, which in its turn can be created only by a break with the social patriots. To remain silent about the principled conditions and guarantees for proletarian unity is to join in the chorus for broadcasting illusions, duping the workers, and preparing new catastrophes.

The humiliating and hopeless position of the old Internationals is adequately characterized by the fact that the president of one became the humble minister of his king, while the real master of the other uses the world proletarian organization as so much small change for diplomatic deals. Regardless of what unification maneuvers the two equally corrupted bureaucracies may undertake, it is not they who will create the unity of the proletariat, and it is not for them to point the way out. The efforts of the centrists to reconcile the irreconcilable and to save by means of patching together the pieces what is fated to be destroyed, are foredoomed. The new epoch requires a new International. The primary condition for success on this road is the close consolidation nationally and internationally of the genuine proletarian revolutionists, the disciples of Marx and Lenin, on a common program and under a common banner.

Any attempt to prescribe an identical course for all countries would be fatal. Depending upon national conditions, upon the degree of the decomposition of the old working class organizations, and finally upon the state of their own forces at a given moment, the Marxists (the revolutionary socialists, the internationalists, the Bolshevik-Leninists) can come forward, now as an independent organization, now as a faction in one of the old parties or trade unions. Surely, no matter what the time or the
arena may be, this factional work serves only as a stage on the road of creating the new parties of the Fourth International—parties which may be created either through the regroupment of the revolutionary elements of the old organizations, or through the agency of independent organizations. But on whatever arena, and whatever the methods of functioning, they are bound to speak in the name of unqualified principles and clear revolutionary slogans. They do not play hide-and-seek with the working class; they do not conceal their aims; they do not substitute diplomacy and combinations for a principled struggle. **Marxists at all times and under all conditions openly say what is.**

The war danger, which is a life and death question for the people, is the supreme test for all the groupings and tendencies within the working class. "The struggle for peace," "the struggle against war," "war on war," and similar slogans are hollow and fraudulent phrases if unaccompanied by the propaganda and the application of revolutionary methods of struggle. The only way to put an end to war is to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The only way to overthrow the bourgeoisie is by a revolutionary assault.

As against the reactionary lie of "national defense" it is necessary to advance the slogan of the revolutionary destruction of the national state. To the madhouse of capitalist Europe it is necessary to counterpose the program of the Socialist United States of Europe, as a step toward the United States of the World.

Marxists irreconcilably reject the pacifist slogans of "disarmament," "arbitration," and "amity between peoples" (i.e., between capitalist governments), etc., as opium for the popular masses. The combinations between working class organizations and petty-bourgeois pacifists (the Amsterdam-Pleyel Committee and similar undertakings) render the best service to imperialism by distracting the attention of the working class from reality with its grave struggles and beguiling them instead with impotent parades.

The struggle against war and imperialism cannot be the task of any sort of special "committees." The struggle against war is the preparation for revolution, that is to say, the task of working class parties and of the International. Marxists pose this great task before the proletarian vanguard, without any frills. To the enervating slogan of "disarmament" they counterpose the slogan of **winning the army and arming the workers.** Precisely in this is one of the most important dividing lines between Marxism and
centrism drawn. Whoever dares not utter aloud the revolutionary
tasks will never find the courage to solve them.

During the year and a half that has elapsed since the
publication of the first program of the Fourth International, the
struggle for its principles and ideas has not abated for a single
day. The revolutionary national sections and groups have grown
in number: some of them extended their ranks and influence,
others attained a greater homogeneity and cohesion. Organiza­
tions within the same country have united (Holland, USA); a
number of programmatic and tactical documents have been
elaborated. All this labor will indubitably proceed much better if
correlated and unified on a world scale under the banner of the
Fourth International. The impending war danger does not brook
a delay in this task for even a single day.

The new parties and the new International must be built upon
a new foundation: that is the key with which to solve all other
tasks. The tempo and the time of the new revolutionary
construction and its consummation depend, obviously, upon the
general course of the class struggle, the future victories and
defeats of the proletariat. Marxists, however, are not fatalists.
They do not unload upon the "historical process" those very tasks
which the historical process has posed before them. The initiative
of a conscious minority, a scientific program, bold and ceaseless
agitation in the name of clearly formulated aims, merciless
criticism of all ambiguity—those are some of the most important
factors for the victory of the proletariat. Without a fused and
steeled revolutionary party a socialist revolution is inconceivable.

The conditions are difficult; the obstacles are great; the tasks
are colossal; but there is no reason whatever to become
pessimistic or to lose courage. Despite all the defeats of the
proletariat, the position of the class enemy remains a hopeless
one. Capitalism is doomed. Only in the socialist revolution is
there salvation for mankind.

The very sequence of the Internationals has its own internal
logic, which coincides with the historic rise of the proletariat. The
First International advanced the scientific program of the
proletarian revolution, but it fell because it lacked a mass base.
The Second International dragged from the darkness, educated,
and mobilized millions of workers, but in the decisive hour it
found itself betrayed by the parliamentary and the trade union
bureaucracy corrupted by rising capitalism. The Third Interna-
tional set for the first time the example of the victorious
proletarian revolution, but it found itself ground between the millstones of the bureaucracy in the isolated Soviet state and the reformist bureaucracy of the West. Today, under the conditions of decisive capitalist collapse, the Fourth International, standing upon the shoulders of its predecessors, enriched by the experience of their victories and defeats, will mobilize the toilers of the Occident and the Orient for the victorious assault upon the strongholds of world capital.

Workers of the World, Unite!

We herewith append the “Declaration of Four” on the Fourth International [see Writings 33-34]. Not a single line of this manifesto has become antiquated. The present letter is only a restatement of the “Declaration of Four” in the light of the experience of the last year and a half.

We call upon all parties, organizations, factions, both within the old parties and within the trade unions, all revolutionary working class associations and groupings who are in agreement with us upon the fundamental principles and upon the great task we have posed—the preparation for and building of the Fourth International—to send us their signatures to the present Open Letter, together with any proposal or criticisms they may have.27 Individual comrades who have not been connected with our work up to now, if they seriously intend to henceforth join the common ranks, should get in touch with us.

The initiating organizations who are signatories to the Open Letter have resolved to create a Provisional Contact Committee between those parties and groups which stand upon the position of the Fourth International. The Provisional Committee is to be entrusted with the issuance of an information bulletin.

In the immediate future the committee is to assure the regular and collective working out of the fundamental programmatic and tactical documents of the Fourth International.

The question of preparing an international conference will be decided on the basis of replies received and the general course of the preparatory work.28
Efforts are now being made in France and elsewhere to construct a so-called Luxemburgism as an entrenchment for the left centrists against the Bolshevik-Leninists. This question may acquire considerable significance. It may perhaps be necessary to devote a more extensive article in the near future to real and alleged Luxemburgism. I wish to touch here only upon the essential features of the question.

We have more than once taken up the cudgels for Rosa Luxemburg against the impudent and stupid misrepresentations of Stalin and his bureaucracy. And we shall continue to do so. In doing so we are prompted not by any sentimental considerations, but by the demands of historical-materialist criticism. Our defense of Rosa Luxemburg is not, however, unconditional. The weak sides of Rosa Luxemburg’s teachings have been laid bare both theoretically and practically. The SAP people and kindred elements (see, for example, the dilettante intellectual “proletarian cultural” French Spartacus, the periodical of the Socialist students appearing in Belgium, and often also the Belgian Action socialiste, etc.) make use only of the weak sides and the inadequacies which were by no means decisive in Rosa; they generalize and exaggerate these weaknesses to the utmost and build up a thoroughly absurd system on that basis. The paradox consists in this, that in their latest turn the Stalinists, too—without acknowledging or even understanding it—come close in theory to the caricatured negative sides of Luxemburgism, to say nothing of the traditional centrists and left centrists in the Social Democratic camp.
There is no gainsaying that Rosa Luxemburg passionately counterposed the spontaneity of mass actions to the "victory-crowned" conservative policy of the German Social Democracy, especially after the revolution of 1905. This counterposition had a thoroughly revolutionary and progressive character. At a much earlier date than Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg grasped the retarding character of the ossified party and trade union apparatus and began a struggle against it. Inasmuch as she counted upon the inevitable sharpening of class conflicts, she always predicted the certainty of the independent elemental appearance of the masses against the will and against the line of march of the officialdom. In these broad historical outlines, Rosa was proven right. For the revolution of 1918 was "spontaneous," that is, it was accomplished by the masses against all the provisions and all the precautions of the party officialdom. On the other hand, the whole of Germany's subsequent history amply showed that spontaneity alone is far from enough for success; Hitler's regime is a weighty argument against the panacea of spontaneity.

Rosa herself never confined herself to the mere theory of spontaneity, like Parvus, for example, who later bartered his fatalism about the social revolution for the most revolting opportunism. In contrast to Parvus, Rosa Luxemburg exerted herself to educate the revolutionary wing of the proletariat in advance and to bring it together organizationally as far as possible. In Poland, she built up a very rigid independent organization. The most that can be said is that in her historical-philosophical evaluation of the labor movement, the preparatory selection of the vanguard, in comparison with the mass actions that were to be expected, fell too short with Rosa; whereas Lenin—without consoling himself with the miracles of future actions—took the advanced workers and constantly and tirelessly welded them together into firm nuclei, illegally or legally, in the mass organizations or underground, by means of a sharply defined program.

Rosa's theory of spontaneity was a wholesome weapon against the ossified apparatus of reformism. By the fact that it was often directed against Lenin's work of building up a revolutionary apparatus, it revealed—to be sure, only in embryo—its reactionary features. With Rosa herself this occurred only episodically. She was much too realistic in the revolutionary sense to develop the elements of the theory of spontaneity into a consummate metaphysics. In practice, she herself, as has already been said, undermined this theory at every step. After the revolution of
November 1918, she began the arduous labor of assembling the proletarian vanguard. Despite her theoretically very weak manuscript on the Soviet revolution, written in prison but never published by her, Rosa’s subsequent work allows the sure conclusion that, day by day, she was moving closer to Lenin’s theoretically clearly delineated conception concerning conscious leadership and spontaneity. (It must surely have been this circumstance that prevented her from making public her manuscript against Bolshevik policy, which was later so shamefully abused.)

Let us again attempt to apply the conflict between spontaneous mass actions and purposeful organizational work to the present epoch. What a mighty expenditure of strength and selflessness the toiling masses of all the civilized and half-civilized countries have exerted since the World War! Nothing in the previous history of mankind could compare with it. To this extent Rosa Luxemburg was entirely right as against the philistines, the corporals, and the blockheads of straight-marching “victory-crowned” bureaucratic conservatism. But it is just the squandering of these immeasurable energies that forms the basis of the great setback of the proletariat and the successful fascist advance. Without the slightest exaggeration it may be said: the whole world situation is determined by the crisis of proletarian leadership. The labor movement is today still encumbered with huge remnants of the old bankrupt organizations. After the countless sacrifices and disappointments, the bulk of the European proletariat, at least, has withdrawn into its shell. The decisive lesson which it has drawn, consciously or half-consciously, from bitter experiences, reads: great actions require a great leadership. For current affairs, the workers still give their votes to the old organizations. Their votes—but by no means their boundless confidence. On the other hand, after the miserable collapse of the Third International, it is much harder to move them to bestow their confidence upon a new revolutionary organization. That’s just where the crisis of the proletarian leadership lies. To sing a monotonous song about indefinite future mass actions in this situation, in contrast to the purposeful selection of the cadres of a new International, means to carry on a thoroughly reactionary work. That’s just where the role of the SAP lies in the “historical process.”

This fine fellow Paul Froelich can, of course, summon up his Marxian recollections in order to stem the tide of theoretical spontaneity-barbarism. These purely literary protective measures
hardly prevent the pupils of a Miles (the precious author of the peace resolution and the no less precious author of the article in the French edition of the *Youth Bulletin*), the Oscar Wasser­manns and the Boris Goldenbergs, from carrying on the most disgraceful spontaneity nonsense in the ranks of the SAP itself.35 The practical politics of Schwab36 (the artful “not saying what is” and the eternal consolation of future mass actions and the spontaneous “historical process”) also signifies nothing but a tactical exploitation of a thoroughly distorted and bowdlerized Luxemburgism. And to the extent that the Paul Froelichs fail to make an open attack upon this theory and practice in their own party, their anti-Miles articles acquire the character of a search for a theoretical alibi. Such an alibi really becomes necessary only when one takes part in a deliberate crime.

The crisis of proletarian leadership cannot, of course, be overcome by means of an abstract formula. It is a question of an extremely prolonged process. Not of a purely “historical” process, that is, of the objective premises of conscious activity, but of an uninterrupted chain of ideological, political, and organizational measures for the purpose of fusing together the best, most conscious elements of the world proletariat beneath a spotless banner, elements whose number and self-confidence must be constantly strengthened, whose connections with wider sections of the proletariat must be developed and deepened—in a word, of restoring to the proletariat, under new and highly difficult and onerous conditions, its historical leadership. The latest spontaneity confusionists have just as little right to refer to Rosa as the miserable Comintern bureaucrats have to refer to Lenin. Put aside the incidentals which developments have overcome, and we can, with full justification, place our work for the Fourth International under the sign of the “three” L’s,” that is, under the sign not only of Lenin, but also of Luxemburg and Liebknecht.37
THE SAP AND THE OPEN LETTER

July 2, 1935

To the International Secretariat

Dear Friends:

I must admit that the business concerning the manifesto for the Fourth International is beginning to worry me very much. At first I quietly accepted approaching the SAP as part of the venture. Now I realize that this was a mistake.

The manifesto is issued by organizations that really, i.e., actively, endorse the Fourth International. The SAP does not belong in this category. Like every other organization it will have the opportunity to express its opinion after the publication of our appeal. But we had absolutely no reason or inducement to show special consideration to this group in particular. It would be a crime to forget that after the publication of the August 1933 Declaration of Four, the SAP sabotaged the fight for the Fourth International in every way possible. The fact that the agreement of the four went to pieces right after it was formed naturally caused great damage to the struggle for the Fourth International. The only reason for this long interruption in the organizational struggle lies in the opportunistic ill-will of the SAP leadership together with the criminal de Kadt clique.

Two irretrievable years have elapsed. The war is knocking at the door. The Third International is forming an alliance with the Second International in an act of vile political treachery. Now we wish to unfurl the banner of the Fourth International again, and at this very moment we politely turn to that group that betrayed us once and is now carrying out an unprincipled and (in the last analysis) treacherous political course in France, the political focus of Europe today.

Of course, if one looks at approaching the SAP under the above characterized circumstances from a purely organizational point of view—as I tried to do some weeks ago—it can be regarded as a
totally harmless organizational step. Fundamentally this is not so. The very need to bow once more before our treacherous former ally signifies—if one thinks it through—a lack of inner confidence and revolutionary self-assurance in our own ranks or in those of our closest allies.

If one has carefully thought through the historical situation, including the chicanery of the Comintern, if one is clear about the magnitude of our revolutionary mission, then there should not be a single day’s further hesitation in carrying out the most fundamental and imperative task: to speak out before the world proletariat, to say what is, and to call upon the best elements to build a new International! Making the fulfillment of this task dependent upon the already proven opportunistic ill-will of the SAP is a sad state of affairs that will cause some more unpleasant surprises.

Only helpless opportunists can say: the question is not so vital; the “masses” are not interested enough in the Fourth International as yet; we still have enough time for small-scale diplomatic maneuvers, etc. It is true that the masses know far too little (partly because of our own negligence) about the banner of the Fourth International; but what the masses need and what more and more elements understand—or at least feel—the need for is a correctly oriented, determined, courageous revolutionary leadership. And those who waver and hesitate on the question of the Fourth International are inevitably not up to the historical task on all other questions. When they write, their pens fumble; when they speak, their voices fumble; they have not cut their ties to the past. And the masses have an unmistakable instinct for the inner confidence of the spoken and written word. Various parts of the class can follow the wrong slogans, but they will never have confidence in uncertain, wavering leaders, who are constantly shifting their weight from one foot to the other. Of course, self-assurance alone is not enough: the political course must be correct. But politics in this new period of storm and stress must be guided by great political and social factors, and not by unimportant, petty considerations. In any case, in this period every vacillation, every instance of indecision, is a guarantee of certain ruin.

What has been said does not in any way exclude adaptation to existing reality. Quite the contrary: our most recent experiences in France prove that we should not shrink from the boldest measures in order to find our road to the masses.

It is one thing to keep in mind the real masses and their turns
when considering a turn of our own, and something quite the contrary to court the gracious approval of experienced opportunists and professional dissemblers when taking an important step forward. Carrying out cautious work inside a mass organization, hiding, if necessary, disguising oneself from the parliamentary and trade union police of capitalism—all this not only is allowed, but is our duty. But only under one condition: that it is a real fight for the real revolutionary banner which is involved. And this banner must now be hoisted before the international proletariat by the most advanced elements, i.e., the vanguard of the vanguard. This banner is that of the Fourth International. Not the number alone, of course, but a program, a strategy, and a center for planning and leadership.

It seems that the proposal is to wait for the answer of the SAP until July 10. And then? The centrist fakers, who are only concerned now about delaying final bankruptcy as long as possible, will propose a different text or a whole number of amendments to us. What then? Should we have a new international discussion then about things that are clear to all of us—or at least should be clear? The SAP leaders, having sabotaged our fight for the Fourth International for two years, and with undeniable success, are now being given a chance to continue exercising their political function in a new form as best they can.

We have all (and I do not by any means exclude myself) made a serious mistake, which we will regret. In order not to allow the disastrous consequences of this mistake to be compounded, we have to put a stop to it at once. I make the following proposal:

a. If the SAP sends its signature by July 10, without any reservations (which is as good as excluded), we will publish the manifesto with the SAP's signature at once.

b. If the SAP counterposes a different text to ours, we will publish our text at once without engaging in any further negotiations about the SAP text.

c. If the SAP proposes amendments to our text, we will give them the right to publish their reservations under their own name, but we will publish our text with our signatures without delay.

In other words: we will not allow any more delays, even for twenty-four hours.

If we had already published our document some weeks ago, it would have made a strong impression on the ranks of the SAP, would have accelerated the internal struggle, and would perhaps have attracted revolutionary elements of the SAP—if there are
any—to us. Through waiting and endless negotiations we only cover the wavering of the SAP, assist the right wing against the left, and worst of all, we ourselves begin to waver. And any group, I repeat, which wavers or even seems to waver in this period is bound for destruction.

L. Trotsky

P.S.—The latest slogan of the SAP “for a new Zimmerwald” only shows the desire of these gentlemen to extricate themselves unnoticed from the bankruptcy of the IAG. We have not the slightest interest in supporting the new confusion directly or indirectly. That does not mean, of course, that we reject in advance taking part in possible meetings of different internationalist, left centrist, etc., groups, on an individual basis. Everything depends on the concrete circumstances. Thus, for example, our French section was quite right in taking part in the attempt of different groupings to offer resistance to the new chauvinistic wave. But we can only participate in such ventures in closed ranks and as pioneers of the Fourth International, with strong internal homogeneity. Otherwise we ourselves will fall victim to the confusion of the SAP and go from disaster to disaster.

L.T.
FOR A SPECIAL INFORMATION SERVICE

July 2, 1935

To the International Secretariat

Dear Comrades:

I am sending you a letter dealing with the publication of the manifesto of the Fourth International. I implore you not to wait on this question any longer. If you have the Americans' signature, this will be sufficient to exert the appropriate pressure on the Dutch organization, if necessary. I hope that the Dutch will not withhold their signature . . . even without organizational pressure. No matter what, the manifesto has to be published by the eleventh.

Some remarks about other questions:

1. The internal life of the Second and especially the Third International remains a book sealed with seven seals. Here too, saying what is, is an important political task. In order to fulfill this task, we have to know what is, i.e., what is going on in the parties. A special information service should be organized to carefully collect and classify all the news, even the small and personal items, in somewhat the way military staffs do with news from the country of the presumed enemy. Everything of importance or organizational value should be published in our press immediately.

In fact, nothing like this happens. Rather, one gets the impression that our editors are embarrassed to deal with the internal and especially the personal matters of the parties in their papers and also that they consider these matters "gossip." This is completely wrong. Sometimes the best way to make general ideas clear to the reader is to use concrete, vivid examples, even if they are of the second order.

A short time ago, for example, I received a copy of a letter from Wo. to Comrade Erde, containing highly interesting and
informative descriptions of the internal processes in the Comintern and its German section. All this should be known by the broad public. The comrades mentioned above and many more could certainly give our press regular articles and notes of this kind.

There is, for example, a great deal of talk about the conflict between Wels and Aufhaeuser and about the events in the Austrian Social Democratic Party, etc. Our press does not cover this. This abstention is characteristic of a spirit of isolation and a lack of interest in the internal processes of other organizations, i.e., also a lack of will to intervene into these processes.

The International Secretariat could perhaps give advice and set an example in this area.

2. It seems that the Stalinists in France for the time being have abandoned Stalin’s position in favor of the position of the SFIO. Blum probably argued successfully as follows: If we come out openly for militarism now, we will be liquidated even before the outbreak of the war. We have to maintain an ambiguous policy now, so that we can complete the turn at the moment the war starts and carry the workers with us on a wave of patriotism.
To the International Secretariat

Dear Comrades:

1. Our International must have a name. The “Fourth” is only a number, not a name. We can call it neither Socialist nor Communist, because these two names are already taken, and in a very compromising way. In the future we will certainly make the word “communism,” i.e., the banner of Marx and Lenin, an honorable one once again. For the moment, we cannot use it. “Revolutionary socialist” does not mean very much either, because the centrists tend to hide behind this name. It seems to me that the only appropriate name for our International is: World Party of Social Revolution. This name has the great advantage of clearly and unambiguously characterizing the historical task of our epoch, thereby justifying the existence of the new International. The Second International laments over the ruins of capitalism. The Third is a tool for maintaining the rule of the Soviet bureaucracy. The Fourth is the World Party of Socialist Revolution.

In the course of time, our sections will be able to adopt this name—at least as a byname. For example: “Workers Party of the USA (American section of the World Party of Social Revolution).”

It would be completely wrong to object that the social revolution is not the only and exclusive task of the workers’ movement, since all struggles in this period must be adapted to the needs of the social revolution and the name of the party has to indicate its principal task. It would be even more false to say that the name could frighten away the “masses.” That would be a classical centrist argument. The revolution is not a historical perspective but the task of the day. Our approach is precisely to
call this historical task by its name. The name has to correspond to the thinking and the imagination of the masses and at the same time clearly distinguish us from the other organizations.

The question of the name is highly important. Therefore it has to be selected carefully and with the greatest possible unanimity. It is absolutely necessary for all sections to place this question on the agenda and have a discussion about it. At the same time, the sections should be informed about all other proposals, so that we can set the name of the new International by a referendum—let us say by mid-September. I believe that public meetings could successfully be devoted to this theme. Our propagandists could seriously motivate the name and then have the meeting itself take a vote on it. That way, broader layers will consider themselves to be cofounders of the new International.

2. It can be presumed that a new amalgam is being prepared in Moscow to strengthen the last one and claim new victims. It is absolutely necessary for our press to deal with this. It would also be good to write an explanatory memorandum for the entire workers' press all over the world. The new *Rundschau* gives enough information about it. Comrade Parabellum could also use the Russian press for such a memorandum, which could then be published in the name of the IS.\(^{45}\)

3. On the question of the General Council: The members of the council in every city form an action committee, which naturally has no right to make decisions, but could be of great service in this matter. The central focus would be the Paris membership of the council, which could play an important role through regular collaboration with the Amsterdam secretariat.\(^{46}\)
THE ITALO-ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT

Published July 17, 1935

To the International Secretariat

Far too little attention is paid to the Italo-Ethiopian conflict by our sections, especially by the French section. This question is highly important, first for its own sake, and second from the standpoint of the turn by the Comintern. Of course, we are for the defeat of Italy and the victory of Ethiopia, and therefore we must do everything possible to hinder by all available means support to Italian imperialism by the other imperialist powers, and at the same time facilitate the delivery of armaments, etc., to Ethiopia as best we can.

However, we want to stress the point that this fight is directed not against fascism, but against imperialism. When war is involved, for us it is not a question of who is “better,” the Negus or Mussolini; rather, it is a question of the relationship of classes and the fight of an underdeveloped nation for independence against imperialism. The Italian comrades might give us a short historical summary indicating how Crispi’s defeat had a positive effect on the further development of Italy.
FOR DEFENSE OF SOVIET REVOLUTIONARIES

July 17, 1935

To the International Secretariat

Dear Comrades:

1. It is very important that Action socialiste has adopted the proposal for an international commission on acts of terror against revolutionary elements in the Soviet Union. I think we have to build a big international action around it. The IS could publish an appeal on this question. Perhaps the secretariat could do so for the Fourth International. In any case the matter should not be dragged out. In my opinion the appeal should be short and it should have an unemotional, totally "objective" character.

   The terrorist measures against Communist elements and against Lenin's old co-workers are increasing (the Zinoviev affair, the Yenukidze case). The charges against old and young revolutionaries in the official and officious Comintern press (Deutsche Rundschau) are becoming increasingly monstrous and difficult to believe. (Perhaps some quotations from the Rundschau.) Even the big Comintern newspapers do not dare to reprint these charges from the Rundschau. Nevertheless, individuals are being sentenced and executed on the basis of these charges. The disquiet and concern, and often the indignation, within the ranks of the entire world proletariat are very great. In order to dispel the growing mistrust, the Soviet government has to prove with facts and documents that it is really a question of combating the enemies of the workers' state and not one of a war of extermination by a bureaucratic grouping carried out against its opponents and critics. This it can only achieve through an international commission whose composition could guarantee complete objectivity as well as loyalty to the workers' state and the world proletariat.
This is only an approximate indication of the contents. The task would be to win the support of different groups, organizations, and individuals. In this matter collaboration with respectable centrist organizations is completely in order. If the project is undertaken energetically, perhaps the creation of an international relief organization could be achieved.

2. We have not received the manifesto yet. The supplement on America could create the suspicion that the intention was to commit oneself and others through general phrases to a position on the struggle of the different tendencies in the WPUS. If that was not the objective of the authors of the supplement, so much the better.

3. On the composition of the General Council: of course every section must be represented in it, even those that are not represented in the International Secretariat. In my last letter I did not mention some sections only because the question of personnel did not seem clear to me.

   In the German section, for example, Bur, Johre, Fischer, or Nicolle as members of the IS? It should be decided in consultation with the section itself which two comrades should be incorporated. I am not clear on how matters stand in Spain, Greece, and Latin America. In any case, all important groups, or those that have qualified comrades (our Polish friends, too), must be in the General Council. During the period of illegality, when thoroughly organized congresses will be impossible, the General Council would remain the decision-making body.

4. We must now give the Belgian experience the closest attention. It is already clear: essentially our Belgian friends are right. Sharp conflict with Marteau is the best protection against a Stalinist degeneration of the left wing of the SP. In the course of time the SP wing will acquire a totally different significance in Belgium than in France. By the way, the Belgian example proves that in entering into reformist or centrist parties it is not so much a question of legal rights, but rather one of the political situation inside and outside the party. Details in the letter to the Polish comrades.
PERSPECTIVES IN POLAND

July 18, 1935

To the Polish Bolshevik-Leninists

Dear Comrades:

I have received from the IS the material dealing with Poland and also a letter addressed to me, containing a list of precisely formulated questions. The discussions among the Polish comrades are going on in two areas, connected but distinct: on the one hand, the general principles and criteria of the workers’ movement and its tendencies; and on the other, an assessment of the opportunities for work for our Polish comrades.

As to the general question, I think the answer has been given to a very large extent by the events of the recent period. Have we abandoned the Leninist assessment of reformism and centrism? Or should we revise it? Should we abandon the idea of the Fourth International?

Whoever holds this opinion is absolutely not one of us. Our policy is sufficiently characterized by the following facts: (a) the fusions in America and Holland; (b) the entry of our section into the French and Belgian Social Democratic parties; (c) a hard campaign against the SAP and its like; (d) the publication of the manifesto on the Fourth International. It is only when one has all these facts before one’s eyes that one can understand their mutual interdependence and have an exact picture of the strategic line of the Bolshevik-Leninists. We can permit ourselves to enter the opportunist parties because we have educated cadres; because we are implacable toward professional confusionists of the SAP kind; because we are doing all our work either as an independent organization or, temporarily, as a faction inside the opportunist parties, under the banner of the Fourth International, that is to say, without any conciliation with the ideas and methods of the Second and Third Internationals. Whoever destroys this form of organization, which we did not invent but
which was imposed on us by the total situation; whoever isolates tactics from strategy and makes a universal formula out of an episodic rule—that person courts the danger of perishing in the swamp of opportunism or in the desert of sectarianism.

It is wrong to claim that we should not enter a Social Democratic party unless we are accepted as a statutory faction and allowed our own press, etc. No doubt it would be excellent if we had all that. But outside of France, where the SP has a quite particular structure and tradition, we never find such conditions. Nor are they decisive. As the Belgian example shows, entry is conditioned by political, not constitutional motives. It is not a matter of entering a given party with fanfare, but of having real opportunities to develop revolutionary work inside the party. Inside the Stalinist parties our friends must work in a completely illegal way. The same is admissible equally for reformist parties. For us it is a question not of decorous politics but of revolutionary politics.

In Belgium we all had some fears in view of the fact that our section was obliged to give up its press and, without rights “guaranteed” in the slightest, enter the SP, a party, moreover, which was sharing governmental power. But facts proved our Belgian comrades right. They now play a very important role in the left wing of the party, which is sharply expressed by the fact that they have ousted Dr. Marteau, a Stalinist agent, from the leadership of the oppositionist newspaper, L’Action socialiste. This fact cannot be overestimated. A revolutionary leadership, therefore, can develop only inside this party and the unions connected with it. The question was whether this would take place in a Stalinist or in a Leninist direction. We can now say with complete certainty that the Stalinist perspectives have diminished considerably while ours have increased by as much. It is very important to notice that the Stalinist Marteau has support only in Brussels, where he is faced by Vereecken and his group. By that it is incontestably proved that the Vereecken group has not the slightest influence on the left wing of the POB.57

Many counterblows may yet be produced, in France as in Belgium. But an important step forward has been made. Discussion on the correctness of the organizational turn, in the last instance, has been cut short by the verdict of practice.

Some comrades appear dismayed, even discouraged, by the fact that the recently fused parties in America and Holland have not
achieved greater success, the Dutch party even having suffered losses in the last elections. Marxist analysis in this case too is the only guarantee against exaggerated hopes and against unjustifiable disappointments. The two parties are not new formations but have their origin in old organizations. They are barely known to the working class as autonomous parties. After great historic disillusionments, the proletarian vanguard does not readily place its confidence in unknown formations. Only an extremely clear program of action, only concentrated agitation, only active participation in the fights and inner life of the mass organizations can anchor new parties in the consciousness of the proletarian vanguard. That has not yet been achieved in Holland and America. It can be said with certainty that our progress in France and Belgium is relatively more important than in Holland and America. To draw some general conclusions from that would be wrong, or at least premature. Every undertaking needs time to ripen. We should examine very closely the developments in the various countries, establish their similarities, examine the conditions for them, and only then draw the necessary conclusions. In any case, we should not lose too much time getting on with it.

As for the concrete Polish questions, it is extremely difficult for me—despite the important documents our Polish friends sent us—to make up my mind. The dominant tone of these documents could be called pessimistic: the working class is said to be in no state to fight; fascism supposedly could develop without resistance, etc. Is that really the case? The grossest mistake one can make in such cases is to underestimate the possibilities for fighting.

What does the PPS [Polish Socialist Party] represent? How many workers does it count in its ranks? What is its political influence in general, and inside the unions in particular? How is the inner life of the party developing? What the documents and letters have to say about this is too general. It can be supposed that our group—and this is explained by its whole past—keeps itself rather much apart from the PPS, has only superficial and casual relations with it, and consequently does not keep an eye on its inner life. Under these conditions the matter is revealed as an equation with too many unknowns.

From a hypothetical point of view, it can be supposed that even in the case where the triumph of the present regime is total and meets no resistance, and where the PPS similarly disappears without resistance, a revolutionary faction of the PPS must split
off under the pressure of events; in other words, the revolutionary elements of the old party will survive only in illegality. It would be very important, in this case too, to draw close to the proletarian wing of the party in good time.

If the regime is going to become totalitarian, attempts at a united front will be more energetic, and it is altogether possible that they might lead to practical results through an eventual split in the PPS. So the left wing of this party can thus also open the way for our comrades to those Stalinists capable of developing. Moreover, it seems altogether clear that, under these conditions, taking refuge in the Bund would mean turning one’s back on all opportunities for further development. On the other hand, one cannot help the Jewish workers to get out of the dead end of the Bund toward a larger arena except by revolutionary work crowned with success among the Polish proletariat.*

It seems, then, that our friends should, for a specific period, give up general discussions among themselves and, without expulsions and without pushing anyone aside, devote all their energies to creating for themselves connections with the left wing, particularly the proletarian elements in the PPS and the unions, and to collecting all the relevant material in such a way as to make definite decisions on the basis of the facts of this large inquiry; this, at the same time, can serve as propaganda for our ideas.

Trotsky

July 28, 1935

Dear Comrades:

I would like to complete my first letter with some remarks. The more I think about it the more inaccurate it seems to me to assert that, without great revolutionary events in other countries, the Polish proletariat would be incapable of struggling. In Poland there has not been any catastrophe to paralyze the working class for years. There is great disillusionment there, but underneath, the still-unbroken power of the proletariat is sleeping. It is possible that a powerful external blow is necessary; but a blow like this could also come from purely Polish events. First: the

*This, naturally, does not exclude the possibility of the eventual entry of one or another group of our comrades into the Bund. But the analysis is concerned with our general orientation.
situation of the peasantry seems unbearable. The agrarian question remains unsolved.* Second: the national question. Third: the conflicts between the bourgeois parties; boycott of the elections, etc. Fourth: the quarrel—almost inevitable—in the leaderless camp of Pilsudski.\textsuperscript{60} To diagnose these processes in good time one shouldn’t go to sleep from a pessimistic anticipation of events. Such a state of mind is particularly dangerous in a revolutionary general staff.

In my first letter I quoted the example of France and Belgium. I must now quote a third example, that of Switzerland. There, our group publishes an independent sheet! \textit{Trotz Alledem!} [In spite of everything!] Yet, at the same time, the majority of the group is inside the SP, gathers the left opposition there, and tries successfully to take over the leadership. You understand the differences: in France, entry with one’s own organization and paper; in Belgium, giving up the paper in favor of systematic, internal, faction work; in Switzerland, internal faction work plus an independent paper outside the party.

The PPS is a legal party. Our participation in its inner life and its activities (in whatever form this participation takes place) coincides to a large extent with a combination of legal and illegal work. If you were to succeed in creating a faction inside the PPS (and a complementary one inside the Bund) you would certainly have to complement your work with legal and illegal publications.

All this is only hypothetical. I hold firmly to my first proposal: devote some months to research work and making approaches, then and finally take a firm position.

\*The agrarian question appears, moreover, to be enormously preoccupying governmental circles at present. Don’t you think our organization could distribute a manifesto on this question to put it on the agenda for the working class?
TO YOUNG COMMUNISTS AND
SOCIALISTS WHO WISH TO THINK

July 22, 1935

The youth are at present deeply preoccupied with the question of the war danger. And rightly so. Their heads are at stake first.

We revolutionary Marxists reject absolutely those prescriptions against war that are issued by the leaders of the Second and Third Internationals. They preach “disarmament” and “accord” through the League of Nations. This means that they believe in the possibility of changing the nature of capitalism through peaceful reforms, since the armed struggle between capitalist states applies just as much to the nature of capitalism as the competition between individual capitalists or their trusts. There are people who call themselves Socialists or Communists who characterize the capitalist state as a thoroughly imperialist set-up but at the same time believe in the League of Nations, that is, in the stock exchange of the imperialist states.

For Marxists the struggle against war coincides with the struggle against imperialism. The means for this struggle is not “general disarmament” but the arming of the proletariat for the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a workers’ state. Our slogan is not the League of Nations, but the Soviet United States of Europe and of the entire world!

Today we see in France how the reformists and the so-called “Communists” (in reality only Stalinists) have allied themselves with the Radicals, ostensibly for the purpose of struggling against war and fascism. Who are the Radicals? A thoroughly imperialist party which stands for the Versailles treaty and for the French colonial empire. How can one lead a struggle against the imperialists’ war together with an imperialist party?

Naturally, the Radicals readily speak for peace. Hitler also works in the sweat of his brow for peace. They are all for peace: priests, bankers, generals. But what does the pacifism of the bourgeois governments and parties mean? Vile hypocrisy. Every robber prefers, if possible, to take away his victim’s purse
“peacefully” without taking his life. Mussolini would naturally prefer to pocket Ethiopia “peacefully,” that is, without the expenses and sacrifices of war. England and France would like to enjoy their plunder “in peace.” But woe to whoever hinders them! That is the meaning of capitalist love for peace.

Petty-bourgeois pacifism is in general sincere, but so much the more blind and helpless, since in essence it is but the belief of peasants and petty merchants that it is possible to make the ruling classes better, to disarm the great capitalist robbers and induce them to live peacefully side by side. But with all its good intentions petty-bourgeois pacifism becomes a drug with the help of which the imperialists overcome the masses at the proper moment and make cannon fodder out of them. We accuse the leaders of the Second and Third Internationals of helping capitalism to prepare a new world slaughter through their nonsensical twaddle. In a new war the reformists and the Stalinists will in the majority of cases stand on the side of their governments, especially in France, Belgium, and Czechoslovakia. Whoever really wants to fight against war must speak to the people clearly, must gather the fighters under one revolutionary banner, under the banner of the Fourth International.

Between the two old “Internationals” (which in reality are no longer that) and us, the champions of the Fourth International, stand many factions and intermediate groups, which we call centrist. This name is not an insult, as many simple minds suppose, but a thoroughly scientific term. We call those currents centrist which vacillate between Marxism (internationalism) and reformism (patriotism), but which tend, by their nature, to come nearer to reformism. The French *Bataille Socialiste* group, centrist in character, combines declaring itself for the defense of the fatherland with worship of pacifism (Zyromsky), and tolerates at its left wing a hazy internationalism (Pivert). Such currents are to be found in a number of countries. In the present period we can with justice point to the German Socialist Workers Party (SAP) as an example of centrism. The SAP is by no means a mass organization. But it has quite a number of old party and trade union functionaries who are scattered as emigrants in various countries. They often possess a considerable knack for practical work and a certain theoretical schooling, but never does their activity go beyond centrist conceptions. That is why they are against the Fourth International. That is why they combat parties and organizations which rally around the banner of the Fourth International. That is why they seek friends to the right, while they direct their enmity to the left.
From time to time they even declare that they are really not against the Fourth International as such, but that they find it not timely. This objection, however, is devoid of all content. What is involved is not a mathematical but a political problem, where the time factor is secondary. Socialism is also not “timely” as long as we are not in a position to realize it. But we have inscribed it on our banner and carry this banner quite openly to the masses. Once we become convinced that the struggle against war and for socialism requires the revolutionary consolidation of the proletarian vanguard on the basis of a new program, we must immediately set about the task.

Whoever is today, like the SAP, against the Fourth International, against its defenders and builders, shows thereby that consciously or unconsciously he wishes to leave open the back door to the reformists and patriots. This assertion may sound like “sectarianism” or even “slander” to the naive. The most recent, thoroughly anti-Marxist position of the SAP on the war question has, however, irrefutably confirmed our opinion. Whoever has not read the famous SAP resolution on the “struggle for peace,” must by all means get it and learn certain passages by heart. No high-sounding phrases on the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat can wipe away the real, that is, pacifist, character of the SAP policy which proposes to gather “all forces” for disarmament and peace, to form for this purpose an “all-inclusive committee.” Whoever preaches that the imperialists can—under the “pressure” of the masses—disarm peacefully, denies at the same time the necessity of proletarian revolution. For what sort of a revolution can there be against a disarmed bourgeoisie? There is an undeniable relation between pacifism in internal policy, and pacifism in foreign policy. A man may swear to us solemnly that he is a materialist, but if he goes to church on Easter he remains for us a miserable victim of the priesthood. Whoever combines phrases on the social revolution with agitation for pacifist disarmament is no proletarian revolutionist but a pitiful victim of petty-bourgeois prejudice.

But are there not, we are often reminded, good, revolutionary-minded workers in the SAP and similar organizations who must not be pushed away? This argument misses the mark. Very likely, almost certainly, there are in the SAP and similar organizations workers who are not satisfied with the vacillating, evasive policy of the leaders. However, we can best help these elements capable of development by exposing mercilessly the false policy of their leaders. At first even the advanced elements are taken unawares. Nevertheless, criticism penetrates their
minds. Then come new facts which strengthen our criticism. And finally the honest revolutionary worker says to himself: the Leninists are right, I must go with them. It was always so in the development of a revolutionary party. And it will be so this time.

Young comrades and friends! We combat everything that is ambiguous and confused not out of "fanatical" hatred, and certainly not out of personal animosity. Our stern epoch has little respect for sentimentality, personal consideration, and similar lovely things. It demands a correct program and an iron will to victory. To the masses that are seeking a revolutionary leadership we must display the greatest patience and attentiveness. Hundreds and thousands of times we must show them revolutionary principles through their daily experiences. But on those who appear before the masses as leaders, who unfurl their own banner, we must place the strictest demands. The first is clarity.

The shilly-shalliers, the confused, the centrists, the pacifists, can vegetate years on end, issue papers, hold conferences, yes, even register temporary organizational successes. Great historic turns, however—war, revolution—knock these parties over like a house of cards. On the other hand, organizations that have reached real revolutionary clarity and consciousness really develop their greatest strength in critical historic situations. Then the philistine is astonished, and the left philistine is exultant—without understanding, however, that the "miracle" of the successes was only possible through long and persevering preparatory work, and that Marxian intransigence was the best weapon in this preparatory work.

Splinters and chips fly in every big ideological struggle. The centrists are in the habit of making use of this miserable material to distract attention from what is important and decisive. Young workers who want to think must learn to despise the maliciously impotent gossip of the centrists. You must examine things to the very bottom! The most important questions for the shaping of proletarian revolutionists are at present the attitude toward war and the Fourth International. You must pose these questions before you in their full scope! We, Bolshevik-Leninists, issued more than a year ago the pamphlet War and the Fourth International. To become thoroughly acquainted with this programmatic document is the first duty of every revolutionist who wants to arrive at a position. Lose no time; study; reflect; discuss honestly; strive incessantly for revolutionary clarity!

With fraternal greetings,
L. Trotsky
REPORT IN ARBEIDERBLADET

Published July 26, 1935

In the Russian Bolshevik revolution of 1917, in the civil war until 1920, and in the following decisive years for the Soviet regime, there were two great leaders, only two who could truly be called leaders: Lenin and Trotsky. There were many other leaders and staff officers, one of whom—Stalin—has now even risen to the level of personal dictator of the Soviet state (which Lenin never was and Trotsky never wanted to be), but Lenin and Trotsky were revolutionary leaders of a special kind.

Trotsky is currently convalescing at the home of editor Konrad Knudsen near Honefoss, having recently arrived in Norway after he was given permission by the Labor government. A staff writer for Arbeiderbladet, along with a few other party members, visited the great former leader of the revolution.

Sick But Not Broken;
Big Book About Lenin on the Way

Trotsky is still rather weak and last week he had a relapse in his illness. But he was not broken; his vitality was astonishing in view of all he has gone through; he is a man who is still far from having said his last word and who has gained new hope for his health through his stay in Norway. In a few weeks Trotsky’s personal doctor is coming to Norway from Paris, and he, together with a Norwegian doctor, will then thoroughly go over the patient and make further plans for his treatment. It is hoped that in time this will succeed in bringing back his health.

It is a memorable experience to speak with Trotsky. People may differ in their appraisal of his deeds and his views, but few whose knowledge entitles them to an opinion on the subject will deny that he is one of history’s truly great figures. He has been a great man of action, but he is also a notable thinker. His books are profound, yet at the same time written in a brilliant style. For
some time Tiden Norsk Forlag has been negotiating with Trotsky's representative about the publication of a few of his books in Norwegian, and this may be arranged. His three-volume work on the Russian revolution has already become a classic and has been published in large editions in a number of countries. Trotsky is currently working, whenever he is able to, on a big book about Lenin, and we discussed it.

"In my manuscript Lenin has now reached the age of twenty-three," says Trotsky. "About one-third is now completely finished, and I have organized but not yet begun working on the material for the remaining two-thirds. It will be one or two volumes and at least 600 pages long."

**Italo-Ethiopian Conflict Could Become Prologue to New World War**

The conversation touches upon the historic world events, which Trotsky follows closely, but when it is a question of saying anything for publication he is very cautious, since he feels himself bound by the stipulations of his entry visa. Yet he can express his opinion on questions of a general historical or socialist nature, and in the course of the conversation we were able to obtain statements of the greatest interest.

First is the danger of war in connection with Italy's campaign in Ethiopia. Is it heading toward a new world war?

"It is very difficult to make any predictions," says Trotsky, "but I would say yes, in the sense that I believe that the prospective war between Ethiopia and Italy stands in the same relation to a new world war as the Balkan War in 1912 did to the World War of 1914-18. Before there can be any new big war, the powers will have to declare themselves, and in this regard the Ethiopian-Italian war will define positions and indicate the coalitions. It is impossible to say whether it will then take three, four, or five years or more before the big war breaks out. We should be prepared for a short rather than a long time."

**War Between Japan and Soviet Union Soon?**

"What exactly is the position of the Soviet Union?"

"The Soviet Union has its own danger in the Far East. The expansionist drive of Japanese militarism is very great. And the present policy in Tokyo is quite unpredictable. A war between Japan and the Soviet Union could—in spite of the latter's
genuine desire for peace—break out within even a year's time. Japan will perhaps succeed for a time in the beginning of such a war. But Japan would inevitably lose, if only because of the internal situation in the country. Indirectly, the Soviet Union's diplomacy is currently a means of support for Italy, which is leaning on France and the Soviet Union. In the international arena, the government of the Soviet Union has become a conservative power. It is for the status quo, against change. But it has not lifted a finger for the status quo in Ethiopia. That is an irony of history.

Trotsky's Work and Fate

Trotsky would not say any more about this subject, although it was clear that he had definite opinions about lots of things. We turn the conversation to the history of the Russian revolution and his work in the revolution, and mention among other things the myth, which some have attempted to give currency, that in reality the Red Army was victorious not because of Trotsky but in spite of Trotsky's leadership. Trotsky smiles at that and says:

"With some top circles in the Soviet Union it is just like with a man who strikes it rich in America—he has to get himself a family tree. When a new bureaucratic stratum comes to power it creates its own genealogy and prehistory. The past is distorted and all of its own advantages are put on display."

"I was a member of the Political Bureau from 1917 to 1927. At the beginning of 1928, I was exiled to Central Asia by an administrative measure; I was there for one year, and in the beginning of 1929 I was deported to Turkey. I remained there until 1933, when Daladier's short-lived government gave me an entry visa to France, where I stayed for two years."

The World Advances All the Same

We observe that most of the Old Bolsheviks are now either dead or in exile, and Trotsky says:

"Those who made the revolution never benefited from it. But the world has made a little progress all the same. The difference is that formerly, as in the French Revolution, the heads were cut off the leaders of the revolution; now they are sent into exile in Siberia and elsewhere. The new bureaucracy in the Soviet Union is made up of new elements—in part old enemies of the October Revolution. It is difficult for me to express myself on this; but it
was a truly Shakespearian scene that was acted out early this year in London, when representatives of the English labor movement went to the Soviet embassy in connection with the imprisonment of Zinoviev and Kamenev. There stood the Soviet ambassador, Maisky, who earlier had been a minister in Kolchak's government, and explained that the two old Bolshevik leaders were really counterrevolutionaries!

**On Socialism, Planning, and Control**

Trotsky did not want to say anything at the moment about the current state of affairs in the Soviet Union, but some things of prime interest were touched upon.

"The working people themselves must participate in the management of the economy if it is to really be socialism, that is, production and other economic activity for the benefit of the people," says Trotsky. "It must not be that the bureaucrats unilaterally make decisions and the people simply obey—in that case the plans will not be corrected by those whom these plans ostensibly should be serving. Under capitalism the correction takes place—or more accurately, took place—through competition. Under socialism that can only happen through workers' and farmers' control. If that is not done, disproportions can develop which can lead to unfortunate results."

**Great Technical Results in Soviet Union, But Still Not a Classless Society**

As far as the Soviet Union was concerned, he saw that it had achieved great technical results, but the people's standard of living has not kept up with the technical achievements. There is still no classless society there, and lately it has taken certain steps away from the socialist goal. Social differentiation has increased rather than diminished. The role played by the bureaucracy continues to grow. It has formed a new nobility. Economically speaking it is a question of the productivity of labor. Socialism will ultimately triumph only when the productivity of labor is higher than it is under capitalism. That is how capitalism defeated feudalism. But the productivity of labor is still higher in America and Europe than in the Soviet Union.

Trotsky did not want to say any more about that subject and he refused to say anything about the present situation in the Soviet Union. But in conclusion he had many nice things to say about
Norwegian nature and Norwegian hospitality, and not least of all the hospitality he is enjoying with the Knudsen family.

"In the short time I have been in Norway," says Trotsky, "I have been completely captivated by the landscape, nature's beauty and the people. I don't know if the so-called 'Aryan' race is directly descended from Norway, but I must say that the tall, strong figures and faces in which one reads such dignity make the best impression upon a person. Nature—at least in the small part of the country I have so far gotten to know—appears fascinating and soothing. To anyone who is looking for rest and recreation, who wants to engage in either intensive mental work or sports, I would warmly recommend Norway."
WHO DEFENDS RUSSIA?
WHO HELPS HITLER? 73

July 29, 1935

Jacquemotte, the pathetic little leader of the Belgian Stalinists, has asked Walter Dauge, leader of the left wing of the Belgian Socialist Party, if he would "march" in the event of a Hitler attack on the Soviet Union. 74 At one stroke the whole shallowness of this philistine mind is laid bare. What does "march" mean in this connection? If Belgium, in alliance with France, advances on Germany—certainly not for reasons of democracy or of friendship for the Soviets, but for purely imperialist purposes—and if Dauge is eligible for military service, then he must march along. He will also have to march, however, should Belgium decide to adhere to an anti-Soviet war coalition. Should Belgium remain neutral, Dauge will not be able to march. The very wise Jacquemotte and his followers and co-workers in France, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere, simply forget that it is not for the oppressed workers but for the oppressing bourgeoisie to decide when and under what circumstances the dogs of war shall be unleashed.

Vaillant-Couturier sought to settle this "small" point by advancing the thesis: "We are a realistic party, a government party." 75 It is quite true that we are not anarchists. But it is necessary to make a distinction between a proletarian and an imperialist government. To become the government party in reality, it is necessary to overthrow the powers-that-be by revolutionary action and to organize our own Red Army. Then and only then will we be able to decide if and for what purpose we shall "march." The Stalinist "theoreticians"—permit us to call them that—more and more obscure the main question of the conquest of power. More and more they place the defense of the Soviets in the hands of the deadly enemy of the working class—the national bourgeoisie. That is the betrayal in its final theoretical implications.

If we continue to promote the class struggle in France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, etc., answer the Stalinists and their worshipers,
we will weaken the allies that the Soviet Union has made and so harm the Soviet Union itself. Hitler will, as a result, be strengthened whether we like it or not. We cannot tell when the class struggle will lead to the conquest of power. Hitler, however, may have won his war before that time has come. Hitler as the ruler of Europe would delay or smash our fight altogether (in France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, etc.). To continue our class struggle activities would actually strengthen Hitler.

This explanation—logical as it would like to be—is nothing other than a repetition of the arguments the imperialists and social patriots (i.e., social imperialists) always and invariably invoked against their revolutionary opponents. Was not Liebknecht a lackey of the czar and Lenin an agent of the Hohenzollerns? And so forth, without end.

You will remind me that there was no Soviet Union at that time, and you are quite right. That fact proves only that the ideology of social patriotism existed before the October Revolution and that the greatest historical events have produced no change in the specious shallowness of the social patriots.

German Social Democrats—not only the mercenary scoundrels, but honest workers—said during the war: victory for the czar means that his cossacks would dissolve, devastate, destroy our party and our unions, papers, and halls. The average French worker likewise listened trustingly to the appeals of Renaudel, Cachin, etc., to keep the Republic and democracy out of the hands of the kaiser and his Junkers. The Soviet state, for its part, did not fall from the heavens. It came into existence only because of action by the proletarian vanguard. To defend the Soviet Union—and rightly—we must defend the organizations of labor in capitalist lands. These two tasks are politically the same, or in any event closely connected. It is our undeniable duty to defend the Soviet state as it is (with the theories of Doriot, Treint, etc., we have nothing in common), just as we defend any labor organization, though led by the worst reformists, against fascism and military reaction. The whole question is, however—how and with what methods?

Marxists say: Only with those means which we have at our disposal, which we can consciously utilize, that is, with the methods of revolutionary class struggle in all belligerent countries. Whatever the fortunes of war, the revolutionary class struggle will, in the last analysis, yield the best results to the workers. This applies to the defense of labor organizations and of the democratic institutions of capitalist lands, no less than to the defense of the Soviet Union. Our methods remain basically the
same. Under no circumstances or pretext can we transfer our revolutionary task into the hands of our national bourgeoisie.

All this—the wise philistine retorts—may be very well "theoretically." But who will disagree that the carrying on of the class struggle in France will strengthen Hitler’s position and will increase the possibility of a war outbreak and Hitler’s chances of victory in such a war? And is not fascist Germany the chief danger for the Soviets? And would not the defeat of the Soviet Union paralyze the development of the world revolution for years?

This argument—again a slavish repetition of the old arguments of Scheidemann, Wels, Vandervelde, de Man, Cachin, and consorts—is false all the way through. Touched by the wand of Marxian criticism it falls to pieces.

Fascism is nothing other than the idea of the identity of interest of the classes, carried to an extreme and invested with mysticism. If the French, Belgian, and Czech workers ally themselves with “their” bourgeoisie, the German workers are inevitably driven thereby to rally around the Nazis. Social patriotism can only be water in the millstream of racism. To weaken Hitler, the fire of the class struggle must be set blazing. A mighty movement of the workers in any nation of Europe would do more to cripple racially insane militarism than all kinds of combinations among the powers and with the Soviet Union. Every alliance thus formed against Germany gives the race fanatics more ammunition and drives antagonistic imperialist states to Germany’s side, especially since they are not concerned with democracy or the Soviet Union but with the notorious balance of power (Poland, Japan, England, etc.).

If the proletariat of those lands allied with the Soviet Union (for how long?) is to support its bourgeoisie in war, that political line must begin in time of peace. For before it can be hoped to prevent Hitler’s victory, efforts must be made to ward off the war itself. This means support of the anti-Hitler imperialist powers in peacetime to sway the balance of power against him early enough. This, however, signifies nothing more or less than the complete abandonment of the class struggle. This was also the purpose of the infamous declaration of Stalin. He approves, now, in peacetime, the military crimes of the French—naturally also of the Belgian and the Czechoslovakian—bourgeoisie. And how could it be otherwise?

If we are to do nothing to weaken the imperialist allies of the Soviet Union through the class struggle, that means naturally that we must strengthen the confidence of the people in their rule.
What will we do then, when French, Belgian, Czechoslovakian militarism, buttressed by their own proletariat, turn, in the course of the war—a perfectly credible and possible development—to direct their weapons against the Soviets? To delude ourselves with the idea that in such a case we can strongly oppose them is madness. The great masses do not make such sharp turns. The power which we have helped militarism to gain will not be so easily wished away. In such a case, we would have put ourselves into the position of being not only passive but active agents in the destruction of the Soviet Union.

The Stalinists hesitate, however, to draw the final conclusions from their premises. In order to maintain their status in at least a fake parliamentary opposition, they cry that there are fascists among the army officers. Such an argument testifies only to the entire hollowness and stupidity of Stalinist social patriotism. As far as the argument of utilizing the antagonisms between the imperialist powers goes, it is quite as feasible to play one group of fascists against the other. As an ally of France, Mussolini now also becomes an ally of the Soviet Union. The contradiction between Germany and France is by no means that of democracy vs. fascism, but rather that between a hungry and a sated imperialism. This contradiction will remain, even should France become fascist itself.

The readiness of the Communist Party of France to vote for the imperialist army, if only it is “cleansed” of fascist elements, proves that it has no more concern than Blum about the Soviet Union, but that its only worry is about French “democracy.” It has set itself a lofty goal—to implant pure democracy in the officer corps of the Versailles army (Versailles—in the sense of the Commune as well as of the Versailles peace). How? Through a government of Daladier. “Les soviets partout!” “Daladier au pouvoir!” [Soviets everywhere! Daladier to power!] Why, however, did the great democrat Daladier, who was war minister for two years (1932-34), do nothing to purge the army of fascists, Bonapartists, and royalists? Could it be because Daladier had not at that time been purified in the magic waters of the People’s Front? Could perhaps l’Humanite, with its depths of profound wisdom and honesty, clarify this riddle for us? Could it also answer: Why did Daladier capitulate at the first sign of pressure from the forces of armed reaction in February 1934? May we answer for them? It is because the Radical Socialist Party is the most wretched, cowardly, and servile of all the parties of finance capital. It is only necessary for Messrs. de Wendel, Schneider, Rothschild, Mercier, and Company to put their foot down.
Radicals will *always* bend the knee. Herriot first, then just a little later, Daladier.

Let us assume that the People’s Front should come to power and as a demonstration (that is, for purposes of duping the masses) should succeed in ousting some second-rank reactionaries from the army and should dissolve (on paper) some of the organized bandit gangs. What, fundamentally, would be changed? The army—then as now—would remain the chief imperialist weapon. The general staff of the army would continue to be the staff of the military conspiracy against the toilers. In wartime the most reactionary, determined, and ruthless elements in the officer corps would gain the upper hand. The Italian and German examples show that imperialist war is an excellent school of fascism for army officers.

Further, what of those lands whose position toward the USSR is not yet known, whose war stand is still a secret? The British Labour and trade union movement is already paralyzing the fight against its own imperialists on the ground that Great Britain *may* be forced to come to the defense of the Soviet Union. These political jugglers naturally refer to Stalin, not only successfully but properly. If the French Stalinists can promise to “control” the foreign policy of their own imperialists, the British Labourites can play the same game. And what is the Polish proletariat to do? The Polish bourgeoisie is bound to France by an *alliance* and entertains the closest *friendship* with Germany.

Whatever the pretext may be, civil peace (sacred union) always means the basest servility of the Socialists to imperialism, just at the time when it is performing its bloodiest and most horrible work. The last war showed the results of patriotic belly-crawling. The leaders of the Social Democracy came out of the school of “civil peace” completely crushed, politically annihilated, without faith or courage, honor or conscience. The workers of Germany had seized power after the war. But the leaders of the Social Democracy gave the power back to the generals and the capitalists. Had the leaders of French labor not come out of the war as wretched political invalids, France would today be a land of socialism.

The civil peace of 1914-18 did not merely sentence the people of the world to unheard-of sacrifices and burdens. It gave a rotting capitalism a new lease on life for decades. The civil peace of 1914-18 in the interests of “one’s own nation” only paved the way for the new imperialist war, which threatens the complete extermination of the nations. Under whatever slogans the social patriots may prepare for a new “civil peace” (“Defense of the fatherland,”
"Defense of democracy," "Defense of the USSR"), the result of this new betrayal will be the collapse of all modern culture.

Naturally, the Soviet bureaucracy wants to defend the USSR as well as to build socialism. This it wishes to do, however, after its own fashion, which is in gross contradiction to the interests of the international and thereby also of the Russian proletariat. This bureaucracy does not believe in the international revolution. It sees only the dangers, difficulties, and drawbacks, not the tremendous possibilities. Nor have Stalin's miserable yes-men in France, Belgium, and the whole world one bit of faith in themselves or in their parties. They do not regard themselves—and rightly so—as the leaders of the rebellious masses, but only as the agents of Soviet diplomacy, before the forum of these masses. With this diplomacy, they stand or fall.

The Comintern bureaucracy is, therefore, organically incapable of opposing the bourgeois patriots in time of war. That is why cowardly wretches like Cachin, Jacquemotte, Gottwald, cling to every miserable excuse to hide their capitulation to the unleashed floods of patriotic "public opinion." Such a pretext—a pretext, not a reason—they find in "defense of the Soviet Union." Doriot is of the same political physiognomy as Cachin and Duclos—a product of the same school. It is interesting to see, therefore, how easily he breaks with the idea of the defense of the Soviets and substitutes for it "understanding with Hitler." It should be clear to every St-Denis youngster that an understanding between the French bourgeoisie and Hitler must be directed against the Soviet Union. Such a gentleman has only to dump the Stalinist bureaucrats overboard immediately to turn his back on the USSR. These politicians lack only the minor matter of a backbone. Crawling on their bellies before the Stalin clique was only training for their obeisance before their own bourgeoisie.

With that amazing lack of decency that characterizes them, these people turn promptly to the attack on the revolutionary internationalists and accuse us—of supporting Hitler. They forget that Hitler can be conquered only by the German working class, at present unorganized and crushed by the crimes of the Second and Third Internationals. But it will rise again. To help it to its feet again, to invigorate it, the international revolutionary movement, especially in France, must be developed.

Every patriotic declaration of Blum, Zyromsky, Thorez, etc., is new grist for racial theory (nationalism) and, in the last analysis, aids Hitler. The uncompromising Marxian, Bolshevik line of the world proletariat—in peace as in war—will scuttle the race
fanatics, for it will prove in action that the fate of mankind is determined by the struggle of the classes and not of the nations. Is it really necessary to prove this? The Third International—walking in the footsteps of the Second—has finally sidetracked the class struggle for the “general” offensive against Hitler. Hitlerism has only been helped by this retreat. Undeniable facts and figures prove it: the growth of National Socialism [Nazism] in Austria, the Saar plebiscite, the elections in Bohemia (German Czechoslovakia). To fight fascism with nationalist weapons is but to throw oil on the flames. The first real success for the forces of proletarian revolution in France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, or any land, will sound in the ears of Hitler like the tolling of the death bell. This ABC must be understood by anyone who wishes to deal with the problems of socialism.

What the result of war may be—should the weakness of labor permit its outbreak—we cannot say in advance. The fronts will shift, national boundaries will be shattered. At the present stage of the development of aviation, all borders will be violated, all national territories will be laid waste. Only the most outspoken reactionary (who often goes by the name Socialist or even Communist) can, under these conditions, call upon labor to join with “its” bourgeoisie in defense of “its” frontiers. The real task of the workers is to use the war difficulties of the bourgeoisie in order to overthrow it and abolish national boundaries, which stifle industry and culture.

The bourgeoisie is strongest in the first period of the war. But with every month of warfare, its strength diminishes. Labor’s vanguard, on the other hand, if it has taken care to maintain its independence from the patriotic jackals, will grow firmer and stronger, not only every day but every hour. In the last analysis, the fate of the war is not determined so much on the military front as by the relationships of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Only the victorious revolution can mend the cares, the miseries, and the dislocations of war. Not only fascism but imperialism will thus receive its death blow. Not only will the external foes of the Soviet Union thereby be defeated, but the internal contradictions, which engender the barbarous dictatorship of the Stalin clique, will be overcome. The proletarian dictatorship will unite our dismembered, bled-dry continent, will rescue a culture threatened with ruin, will establish the Soviet United States of Europe. It will penetrate America and bring into motion the oppressed masses of the East. All mankind will be brought together into a socialist society and a harmonious culture.
To the National Committee
Workers Party of the U.S.

Dear Comrades:

I have received from Comrade Swabeck the motions and minutes of your June plenum. I need not say that I have studied these important documents with all the attention which they merit. You have opened up a discussion on disputed questions. The remarks I present here are my contribution to your discussion.

I wish to commence with an analysis of the motions of the Oehler group because the documents of this group may be regarded as the touchstone. The Oehler group proposes "the condemnation of the orientation of the ICL." The new orientation is best represented by the participation of our French section in the opportunist SFIO, which is a section of the Second International.

Most of the European sections were at the beginning opponents of the turn made in France. The French section was itself split on this question. The initial objections offered were the following: (a) It is an abdication of the slogan for the Fourth International. (b) It is a formal capitulation before the reformists. (c) Our French section will be unable to defend its ideas inside the SFIO. (d) Our comrades will be demoralized, little by little, by their reformist milieu.

We, the partisans of the entry into the SFIO, replied: All these dangers exist but at the same time we have the opportunity to combat them. We surely hope that our cadres are sufficiently tempered, that our international control is sufficiently efficacious, to assure that our French section remains faithful to its principles and gains in influence within the SFIO. Such was the point of
departure of the discussion and of the experiment itself. Almost a year has now gone by—and what a year!

The elementary duty of every Marxist is to draw the balance sheet of the experiment. Has our French section lost any of its clarity or its revolutionary vigor? Has it actually begun to use reformist methods? Has it forsaken the struggle for the Fourth International? Has it weakened its slogans? Has it drawn near to the masses or, on the contrary, has it been isolated from them? It seems incredible, yet it is nevertheless a fact: the Oehler group does not even pose these questions. In its motions there is not the slightest attempt to analyze and criticize the activity of our French section. It condemns the turn itself (not the activity and its results, but the turn) without regard for the realities of the class struggle.

Now, every comrade who is acquainted with the facts and documents must recognize that: (a) *La Vérité* [paper of the GBL] is the most revolutionary, the most Marxist paper of our entire international press—not because its editorial board is superior, but because this little newspaper reflects the struggles of the masses in an extremely tense situation. (b) The slogans of the French Bolshevik-Leninists are all confirmed by events and have found a great echo in the country. (c) The adult group, which has hardly reached out to the provinces, secured more than 2,000 votes on a Marxist motion at the Mulhouse congress.94 (d) The youth group dominates two of the most important sections, Seine and Seine-et-Oise, i.e., Paris and its environs, carrying with it groups which only yesterday were hostile, like Fred Zeller, etc.95 Under the influence of our youth it is possible to count six or seven thousand in the Socialist Party. (e) Through the medium of the Socialist organizations, our comrades have secured far more solid contact with Stalinist, trade union, and other circles. The conquests which have been made outside the Socialist Party will be revealed in the near future in a manner which will leave no room whatever for doubt. (f) The international connections of our French section are more solidly welded than ever and its struggle in behalf of the Fourth International is being waged unremittingly.

Does Comrade Oehler not know these facts? Is he deliberately closing his eyes, so that his formulas may remain intact? What does such an attitude signify? In any case, it has nothing in common with Marxism, which is not a game with formulas but an analysis of realities. It would appear that Oehler does not want revolutionary successes because they have arrived by the
road which he opposed. Let the revolution perish, so long as Oehler's prejudices triumph! What ideas does Oehler oppose to the French experience? Must one never, under any conditions, work in the reformist parties?

On the other hand, in the motion on the SP he recognizes the necessity for "faction work in the Second and in the Third Internationals." Is it "normal" that a revolutionary party should have its factions in the reformist parties? The faction is subordinated to the statutes of the reformist party. Is this not capitulation? If the work of the faction goes well, it can perhaps become two or three times larger than an independent organization. Wouldn't this be capitulation by two-thirds or three-quarters of one organization? Oehler can reply: But an independent organization directs the faction and thereby assures a correct policy. But our French section has been and is under the control of our international organization. It seems that Oehler forgets this circumstance. Or is it that that control has not been satisfactory? Why hasn't Oehler then indicated the faults committed by our French section? Why does he deprive it of his criticism and advice? Because he wants to know nothing, either of the successes or of the errors of our French section. He is like a man who does not want to allow his daughter to marry a wholly excellent man who has the misfortune of having been born out of wedlock. However, the entry into the SFIO is based on absolutely the same plan as the formation of factions in the Second and Third Internationals. These facts show that we do not yet have revolutionary parties, fully formed and strong in the confidence of the masses. It is a question of building such parties, and to succeed it is necessary to apply the method which corresponds to the given social and political conditions and not to suprahistorical formulas.

In any case, whoever speaks of the capitulation of the French section before the reformists is making use of slanders for purposes of factional struggle.

The Oehler group proposed to reject the draft of the *Open Letter* presented by the International Secretariat. To this text he opposed six lines which are the vague titles of unwritten chapters. We would all have been glad to have a better draft, but this manner of rejecting as a whole a text drawn up by our international center and offering in its stead a few phrases without content is absolutely unworthy of a Marxist. Light-mindedness and superficiality are not revolutionary virtues.
The Oehler group proposes to place under the *Open Letter* a number of different signatures, that of the SAP included, but excluding that of our French section. What the SAP is, the American comrades now know sufficiently well from the article beginning on page 129 of the July issue of the *New International* ["Centrist Alchemy or Marxism?"]*. You will receive almost simultaneously with this letter a translation of the article of Comrade Schmidt, chairman of the Dutch party (RSAP), which shows that the SAP is now carrying on a fierce struggle in our Dutch party against the Fourth International. The leaders of our Young Socialist comrades in France have been expelled from the SFIO because they were carrying on a struggle for the Fourth International. But Comrade Oehler insists upon the signature of the SAP and rejects the signature of the French section.

But he goes still further, in taking up the defense of the International Bureau of Stockholm.96 In his motion he affirms that "The Stockholm-Oslo Youth Bureau, with which the Spartacus Youth League of the U.S. is affiliated, is the only youth organization standing for the Fourth International, and must be preserved and developed further theoretically and organizationally." Now in fact, the whole crisis of the Stockholm Bureau is due to the fact that the majority of the Bureau is openly hostile to the Fourth International.

We know the attitude of the SAP. The Swedish group is even further to the right. It has handed over its mandate to the Norwegian group Mot-Dag, which consists of about a hundred reformist intellectuals who have fully approved bourgeois ministerialism and the declaration of Stalin.97 The proposal to delegate to the Stockholm Bureau a representative of the Dutch youth and a representative of the French youth is rejected by Oehler as "arbitrary." He evidently believes that Mot-Dag is far better fitted for a place in the Bureau. Oehler is afraid of a split with avowed opportunists and declared enemies of the Fourth International. But he has no fear of a split with the Bolshevik-Leninists. He calls for the signature of Vereecken, who broke from our international organization, but rejects the signature of the French section, which has remained faithful to it, just as, naturally, he rejects the signature of our Belgian section, which is now making considerable progress.

How is one to explain the fact that a representative of the intransigent "left wing" like Oehler is suddenly transformed into a defender of the SAP and the opportunist majority of the Stockholm Bureau against the sections of the Bolshevik-
Leninists? On what side of the barricades is Oehler, anyway? It will be necessary to clarify this point because we have already witnessed the case of Bauer, who assumed the defense of the Fourth International against our "capitulation" before the Second International and ended up as a member and agent of the SAP in its miserable struggle against the Fourth International.\(^98\)

In the same motion Oehler demands that the Socialist youth of Spain be represented in the Bureau. But those youth also belong to a party of the Second International. They are infinitely less advanced than our French youth. They have declared themselves for the Fourth International without drawing from their declaration the necessary consequences. We are all naturally ready to do everything possible to draw them to the Fourth International, but the simple phrase in Oehler's motion is not enough for this. It requires work. The crisis in the Stockholm Bureau is at hand. By rejecting the candidacy of a French delegate, which is a real and dependable candidacy, in favor of a Spanish candidacy which is purely imaginary and speculative, Oehler displays not only his animosity for the French section, which is on the line of battle, but also his incredible lightmindedness on questions upon which our whole struggle for the Fourth International depends.

I reserve the right to add to this letter one or two others in the nearest possible future.

Fraternally,
Leon Trotsky
To the National Committee
Workers Party of the U.S.

Dear Comrades:

I mentioned in my first letter that at the time of the French "turn" a large majority of the European sections opposed it. But the experience itself has been so eloquent, so striking, that an overwhelming majority of the comrades have since recognized the justice of the turn. The Naville group has not only entered the SFIO but has gone back into the Bolshevik-Leninist Group. The unity of the former League is fully reestablished, if we do not count the insignificant group of Lhuiller. It is not, however, the unity of the former League which is decisive, but its new role. From a propaganda group with some two hundred members, youth included, it has transformed itself into a revolutionary factor directly and indirectly exercising an influence upon the working class movement of the country. One can say without the least exaggeration that the specific gravity of our French section in the working class movement in France is far greater than the specific gravity of the Dutch or American parties in the labor movements of their respective countries. This means that progress has been made in France. The situation has changed not only quantitatively but qualitatively.

The fate of all Europe, and to certain degree the fate of the whole world, is being decided for the present in France. This objective fact doubles and triples the importance of the work of our French section. What is the elementary duty of all the other sections? To give their fullest attention to the activity of the Bolshevik-Leninist Group in France, to solidarize with it, and to extend to it material and moral support. This international duty is all the more imperative and urgent in view of the fact that the reformist bureaucracy—hand in hand with the Stalinist clique,
which is sparing neither effort nor money for this purpose—has embarked upon a war of extermination against the Bolshevik-Leninist Group. A new chapter is opening. This year of work in the SFIO is opening new opportunities for an independent revolutionary party. All the comrades of the Bolshevik-Leninist Group agree with this. Naturally, it is necessary to know how to act, and also how to maneuver, in order to create an independent party in the most favorable possible circumstances. This is the task of the next period.

Now, instead of supporting our French section with all its strength, the Oehler group occupies itself in belittling, misrepresenting, and even slandering our French comrades. I do not at all desire to sharpen the atmosphere of the discussion in the WP, but I must state frankly that the attitude of Oehler and his confreres looks very much to us like the attitude of strikebreakers.

In my letter to the Polish comrades I briefly characterized the first successes of our Belgian section (Lesoil). I underlined the fact that the left wing of the Socialist Party has come, more or less, under the influence of our comrades, or at least of our ideas, throughout the whole country, excepting Brussels. Brussels is the only city in which the local section of the former League was under the influence of Vereecken and remained with him after the split. We have here, then, an experiment that is almost chemical in its clarity. In the very center of Vereecken's activity, the left wing of the Socialist Party has fallen completely under the influence of Dr. Marteau, the Stalinist agent in the POB. Could there be any more striking proof of the absolute sterility of sectarianism? While Vereecken recruits with the utmost difficulty here and there a handful of young intellectuals and young, isolated workers, the group of Lesoil (our section) is actively influencing the development of the left wing in the Socialist Party and the Young Socialist Guards.

I do not at all mean by this that the American comrades must attempt a simple reproduction of the French or Belgian experience in the United States. The difference in existing conditions is obvious to the naked eye. The fusion of two independent organizations has opened up great possibilities for you. No tendency among you proposes entry into the Socialist Party. As part of your task as an independent organization, it is a question of knowing how to influence, directly and systematically, the development of the left wing in the Socialist Party. During the first months of 1917, the Bolshevik Party represented a far more considerable force than the Workers Party does today. Neverthe-
less, the Bolshevik Party maintained continuous relations with the left wing of the Mensheviks, and on occasion even drew up common electoral slates in the municipal elections in Petrograd with the left Mensheviks (Larin group). At the same time, in agreement with Lenin, I remained in the organization of the Internationalists to bring them as a whole toward fusion with the Bolshevik Party. A fusion congress was convoked in July 1917. In April, Lenin spoke at the Menshevik conference. At the fusion congress in July a representative of the left wing of the Menshevik congress delivered a speech of congratulations, etc. Bolshevik intransigence is indissolubly bound to an understanding of the real process in the workers' organizations, to the ability to influence this process, to a flexibility in maneuvering with regard to groupings and even individuals.

On the other hand, each sectarian wants to have his own labor movement. By the repetition of magic formulas he thinks to force an entire class to group itself around him. But instead of bewitching the proletariat, he always ends up by demoralizing and dispersing his own little sect.

I cannot express an opinion from this distance on the practical course to take with regard to the Socialist and Stalinist parties. From Europe, unfortunately, I see far less of America than Comrade Oehler, from America, sees of Europe. That is why I prefer to remain prudent rather than offer counsel which might prove unwise. But I am absolutely in agreement with Comrades Cannon and Shachtman when they say that a Leninist policy toward the Socialist Party and its left wing "cannot be pursued in an atmosphere of hysteria over the nonexistent danger that a realistic consideration of the dynamics of development in the Socialist Party represents the preparation of capitulation to the SP."104

I have read with attention the minutes of your plenum and with a certain horror I have read of your Control Commission. One seems to breathe in a somewhat nightmarish atmosphere when one reads of the suspicions and rumors directed against comrades who have long fought for the ideas of the proletarian revolutionary struggle. Such methods can paralyze and demoralize the party unless they are at once brought to an end by the will of all.

How does it happen that Comrades Oehler, Stamm, and others take recourse to such means? We have had in France an analogous case with Bauer, who, not content with a political struggle against the "turn," suddenly became an inexhaustible source of suspicions, accusations, and even unbelievable slanders
directed against all of us. He was, however, an honest and sincere man, devoted to socialism. His misfortune is that he is a sick sectarian. Such a man can remain tranquil and friendly so long as the life of the organization continues to revolve in familiar circles. But woe be it if events bring about a radical change! The sectarian no longer recognizes his world. All reality stands marshaled against him and, since the facts flout him, he turns his back on them and comforts himself with rumors, suspicions, and fantasies. He thus becomes a source of slanders without being, by nature, a slanderer. He is not dishonest. He is simply in irreconcilable conflict with reality.

Comrades Weber and Glotzer accuse the Cannon group of proceeding too rudely and bureaucratically against Oehler. I cannot express an opinion on this charge, since I have not had the opportunity to follow the development of the struggle. Hypothetically, I can concede the possibility of a certain hastiness on the part of the leading comrades. It would naturally be a mistake to desire to organizationally liquidate an opposition group before the overwhelming majority of the party has had the chance to fully understand the inconsistency and sterility of that group. Leaders are often impatient in seeking to remove an obstacle in the path of the party's activity. In such cases the party can and must correct the precipitateness of the leaders, since it is not only the leaders who educate the party but also the party that educates the leaders. Herein lies the salutary dialectic of democratic centralism.

But Comrades Weber and Glotzer are decidedly wrong when they place on the same plane the "mistakes" of Oehler and the mistakes of Cannon. Sectarianism is a cancer which threatens the activity of the WP, which paralyzes it, envenoms discussions, and prevents courageous steps forward in the life of the workers' organizations. I should like to hope that a surgical operation will not be necessary. But precisely in order to avoid expulsions, it is necessary to strike pitilessly at the Oehler group by a decision of an overwhelming majority. This is the preliminary condition of all possible future successes for the Workers Party. We all want it to remain independent, but before all and above all, independent of the cancer which is eating at its vitals.

Fraternally,
Leon Trotsky
The article by Comrade Schmidt, chairman of the Dutch party, is of the greatest importance. The old OSP was closely tied to the SAP. The heads of these two organizations made the same criticisms of us many times. Both organizations signed the Declaration of Four with us at one time. But after that their development proceeded in different directions.

The OSP broke definitively with the philistines and cowards of the de Kadt clique after the shock connected with the Jordaan events. It unified with our Dutch section to take up the struggle for the Fourth International. The SAP renounced its signature and directed its activity with hostility against the left, particularly against the work for the Fourth International. The essential points in this regard have been made in the article on centrist alchemy. That article concludes by stating that the work for the Fourth International must be carried on without the SAP and against the SAP. Amazingly this prediction, which contains a value judgment about the SAP, is now taken up by the latter as a pretext for working against the Fourth International. The absurdity of this “argument” is moreover sufficiently demonstrated by Comrade Schmidt.

The facts and documents presented by Comrade Adolphe in a short document show convincingly that for two years the ICL showed the greatest patience and goodwill toward the SAP, that is, the greatest indulgence toward its centrist weaknesses, in order not to close off the possibility of further collaboration. Many times in the course of those two years, for example, Bauer personally asked me in letters to finally break with the centrists and incorrigible philistines of the SAP. Despite our patience and our truly exaggerated indulgence toward centrist susceptibility, we have subsequently been accused by various individuals of lacking flexibility toward the SAP. We have often heard such criticisms from comrades of the OSP as well.
Thus Schmidt’s article has the greatest demonstrative value. It shows that even with the best intentions of collaborating, if one has revolutionary principles, nothing can be done with the SAP, or at least with its present leadership.

The SAP, as is well known, spares all criticism of its allies on the right. It provides their left flank with a defense. But at the moment when the RSAP is taking a decisive practical step toward the Fourth International, the SAP not only launches a violent criticism against the leadership of this organization, but starts doing faction work inside its “sister party” to tear it away from the Fourth International. Here we see again a confirmation of our analysis: the SAP fights only with the left; with the right it knows only accommodation. Thus it produces a document to show unequivocally its centrist-conservative, rightward-facing character.

The most important section of this in any case important article of Comrade Schmidt is the characterization of the activity—or, more precisely, the inactivity—of the IAG. Comrade Schmidt is not a “malicious Trotskyist” and poisoned opponent of this organization; on the contrary, he is one of its founders and is still at present its general secretary. But he proves that this “Labor Community” is not a community and thus accomplishes no labor. That we foresaw and predicted. The working class cannot be served by fictions. On the contrary, fictions must be swept away in order to clear the path toward the real International.

It is a shame, the forces we expended for the sake of discussion with the SAP, a good-hearted conciliator would say. We have an opposite viewpoint. The struggle against the SAP, that is, against its vague character and vulgar pacifism, against the ambiguity of its formulations and its actions, is an important preparatory school for all the tendencies and organizations moving toward the Fourth International. We are convinced that the RSAP can only gain clarity, cohesion, and fighting capacity in its struggle against the SAP. Moreover, this struggle will also benefit elements in the SAP that are capable of developing. As for us, the hostile and often slanderous writings of the SAP against us will not at all prevent us from waging a common struggle for the Fourth International together with the revolutionary wing of this party, if it actually becomes a political force.

Comrade Schmidt also expresses himself in critical terms in relation to the ICL. His criticism concerns, as he himself says, tactical and organizational questions, and not principled ones.
We do not want to take up here his passing remarks, which we consider erroneous. On the whole we consider our organization only as a constituent part of the Fourth International, which is being built, and if we defend our ideas rather forcefully we are also ready to learn assiduously from our allies. The whole history of the workers' movement shows that only those who put a certain value on their ideas are able to learn.
To the National Committee
Workers Party of the U.S.

Dear Comrades:

I send you herewith a copy of Revolution—which indeed breathes the very spirit of revolution. You will note that the Executive Committee of the Young Socialists of the Seine, expelled from the [Socialist] party, retains the support not only of Paris but of other sections of the country. You will see that it remains altogether faithful to our banner and that it is carrying on a vigorous campaign against social patriotism and class collaboration.

This little issue (a special edition), devoted to the revolt at Toulon, Brest, and le Havre, was ordered seized by the police. But five thousand copies were distributed and the police succeeded in getting only two. Our Bolshevik-Leninist Group put up posters in Paris for a general strike and against the “sacred union.” These posters were torn down simultaneously and systematically by Stalinists, fascists, and police.

I hope that you will republish in the New Militant or Young Spartacus [the parts] which I have marked with red pencil. I also call your attention to the articles on page 2—“The Entente Continues” and “To Members of the CP.” I ask you to show this paper to every comrade who declares his solidarity with Oehler. I would then like to see if he continues to accuse our French comrades of capitulation and treason.

Oehlerite comrades! Carry out a turn of 180 degrees in your attitude on the French question! Get to work to tell the American workers of the courage and devotion with which the Bolshevik-Leninists of France are conducting their struggle. We will gladly forget unmerited reproaches and false accusations. You will
again find your place of combat in our international ranks. But if you persist in your completely untenable attitude, you will be lost for a long time to come for the revolutionary movement.

Fraternally,
Leon Trotsky
Letter to the German Commission

August 19, 1935

Dear Comrades:

I very rarely get to read German newspapers nowadays. I get my information about German domestic affairs mostly from foreign papers. Thus I have considerable reservations about approaching German domestic problems. Moreover, these problems are in themselves quite unique. They are, so to speak, on the agenda of the working class for the first time. Therefore, we must—or so it seems to me at least—conduct this discussion with the utmost consideration for opposing views. Otherwise comrades can easily be discouraged from expressing their own views. Thus, what I have to say in the following lines can have no more than a tentative character.

1. Directing fire against the SAP and elements friendly to the SAP is the precondition for the further development of the German section. The SAP is conducting open warfare against the Fourth International. It is trying to undermine the Dutch section. The SAP leadership must be treated like strikebreakers. Any flirtation with SAP tendencies and elements like the Oehlerites must be sharply castigated.

2. I cannot agree with what is said about our tasks in the factories in section thirteen of the Emigre Committee's theses. It is precisely in periods of the deepest counterrevolution that work in the factories offers our greatest opportunity. In every plant there are certainly groups of old Social Democratic workers, and even old Communists, who know each other well, trust each other completely, and can make their minds known to each other with no more than a casual gesture. They are suspicious of everyone new, every outsider, but they trust each other completely. If we can gain entrance to their ranks, we will find a favorable milieu, protection from police agents, and a base for our further activities.
Thus we must orient toward work in the plants. However, since we are very weak, we should concentrate for a time on one plant or another until we establish a firm footing and from there gain entrance into other plants by utilizing the connections of the old workers. Otherwise we run the danger, as a purely propagandistic group, of overlooking the most important, the most decisive processes in the working class and of letting events take us by surprise.

Section fifteen addresses itself in very general terms to the necessity of combining illegal with legal work, and section sixteen rejects "ready-made formulas" for this task.

If illegal work is to consist of more than reading newspapers, it requires a sympathetic milieu. This can only be found in the plants. From this vantage point the opportunities for combining legal and illegal work can be gradually learned and extended in practice.

Sections seventeen and eighteen deal with the question of the Fourth International and defeatism. At present the war question provides the best avenue for successfully raising the question of the Fourth International. Here too, we must above all ridicule the SAP's charlatanry—worldwide struggle for peace, disarmament, democratic control of armaments, etc. If we annihilate left pacifism, then pacifism in general is finished. The question of defeatism must now be posed very concretely. The revolutionary German worker has absolutely no desire to become the tool of French imperialism either, and Stalinism is pushing in this direction. The Piecks, Cachins, etc., can only frighten the German workers away from defeatism. The defeatist-minded German worker will have to seek his cothinkers elsewhere—and they can only be the Bolshevik-Leninists. This is how we can recruit to the Fourth International.

3. On the church question—I think I can best get to the essence of the matter if I begin with the following quotation from the remarks of Comrade Dubois [Ruth Fischer] in the commission meeting of July 15: "Dubois: Can't understand how Nicolle [Erwin Wolf] can reconcile the terribly radical slogan 'Down with the Radical ex-ministers' [in France] with the slogan 'Support for the church in Germany'."

Of course, supporting the church is out of the question. For us it can only be a question of whether or not we support the political struggle of Catholics and Protestants to remain Catholics and Protestants and to act as such. The answer to this question is yes. It goes without saying that we do not in the process commit
ourselves to supporting religion and the church, but rather emphasize, insofar as possible, our opposition to religion and the church.

However it is not clear to me what that has to do with the slogan “Down with the Radical scoundrels” (not just the ex-ministers). This slogan is nothing more than the demand to break the class-collaborationist front. Since the reformists and the Stalinists refuse to carry out this break, they will be compromised in the eyes of the workers. Hence the slogan “Bourgeois Radicals out of the People’s Front” is a completely correct Marxist slogan at the present time.

Let us suppose, and this is not so difficult to do, that tomorrow the [French] fascists begin to storm Freemason temples or smash Radical newspapers (and this has already occurred episodically). It goes without saying that the workers will take to the streets to help defend the Freemason temples. But what is Freemasonry? It too is a kind of church charged with making the free-thinking petty bourgeoisie pliant to the interests of high finance. Can we support Freemasonry? No, never. We can and must, however, defend its right to exist against the fascist attacks, with gun in hand if necessary. To be capable of this, the working class must stay revolutionary-minded and ready to fight. However, the People’s Front makes this impossible. For this reason it is necessary to drive the Radical bourgeoisie out of the People’s Front to be able to defend even Freemasonry, should the occasion arise. There isn’t the slightest contradiction here. If we clear up this misunderstanding thoroughly, then, I believe, we can also throw some light on the German church question.

In modern society, the church follows the interests of finance capital, that is, of the ruling power. But its sphere of influence remains primarily the petty bourgeoisie and the workers under petty-bourgeois influence, their wives, etc. Among the workers, the function of the comforting, consoling church has long since been assumed by the Social Democracy, which has supplanted the church to a considerable extent. The petty bourgeoisie, subjected to ever-increasing pressure, cannot do without the church, insofar as it remains the petty bourgeoisie. That is the essence of the present conflict in Germany. Incredible internal contradictions, ones which are immeasurably deeper than the ones in Italy, and which are becoming continually worse, drive the state to higher and higher levels of concentration. The deified fascist state cannot and will not tolerate competition. National Socialism wants to absorb religion and make the state into a god.
But since the furiously rearming fascist state subjects the petty bourgeoisie to continually increasing pressure, the petty bourgeoisie cannot forego the mystical consolation of the church for the wounds inflicted by the state. Socially speaking, it is only a question of the division of labor between church and state. Every true-believing petty bourgeoisie is inwardly torn by this division of labor, which has become a political conflict. Alas! Two souls war within his breast. The task is to stir up this conflict and above all to direct it against the state.

The leading strata of the bourgeoisie are naturally not standing on the sidelines. They let the Hitler gang take power, but the fascists' adventurism gives them constant cause for concern. Hindenburg's wavering over appointing Hitler are still a symbol of the attitude of these strata. They regard the church as an eternal institution (as Lloyd George put it, the power station for all political, i.e., ruling, parties). They regard the Nazis, however, only as an emergency aid. Hence they encourage the church struggle and at the same time, along with the church fathers, they try to remain within the bounds of "reason." When we talk about "support" for this struggle, that means support first of all against the Nazi state and secondly against those strata of the ruling classes which simultaneously stir up the struggle and retard it in order to retain Hitler's respect.

Slogans like "Separation of church and state" and "Separation of school and church" are of course correct in themselves and should be raised also when the opportunity arises. But these slogans don't really hit the nail on the head. For what is at issue is the right of Catholics and Protestants to consume their religious opium without having their existence threatened or prejudiced—regardless of whether the church as such is separated from the state. It is first of all a matter of freedom of conscience, then of equal rights, regardless of faith (pagan, Catholic, Protestant, etc.), then of the right to form organizations (Catholic youth organizations, etc.).

The argument over the word unconditional support seems to me more a matter of semantics. Naturally no one wishes to suggest that we should support every demand raised by the church-oriented opposition, e.g., extension of religious instruction in the schools, or increasing the state subsidy to the church, etc. I took the word unconditional to mean that we have to fulfill our obligation toward this oppositional movement without placing any conditions on the organizations involved. This must be done as a matter of course. What conditions could we raise in the
present situation and what opposition party would accept them? The task is simply to find real and effective ways and means to intervene in the struggle to encourage and extend the religious-democratic opposition and to lend aid to the young Catholics—especially the workers—in their struggle (and not to the Nazi police, which wants to "destroy" the church organizations), etc. Similarly, in Russia, we always came to the defense of the Armenian church in its struggle for autonomy and supported the struggle of the various peasant and petty-bourgeois sects against the state-integrated Orthodox church—and at times we had great success in this.

It is highly likely that the slumbering forces of the proletariat will get a rousing shock from this awakening opposition to the fascist state, an opposition which has a petty-bourgeois social base. Naturally it is not a sure thing. It would be if there were a strong and sagacious revolutionary party on the scene. But there isn't. We are just in the beginning stages. We must do everything that lies within our power. Above all this question has considerable educational value for our cadres, who have maintained a purely propagandistic orientation for perhaps too long. A turn seems absolutely necessary to me. The church struggle can not only be a place to start; it can also create better conditions.
THE COMINTERN'S LIQUIDATION CONGRESS\textsuperscript{118}

August 23, 1935

The Seventh Congress of the Comintern, which at the writing of these lines still had not finished its work, will sooner or later go down in history as the liquidation congress. Even if all its participants do not today recognize the fact, they are all—with that obligatory unanimity which in general has characterized the Third International over recent years—busy in practice with the liquidation of the program, principles, and tactical methods established by Lenin, and are preparing the complete abolition of the Comintern as an independent organization.

The Third International arose directly out of the imperialist war. It is true that long before it, widely different tendencies had been struggling within the Second International; but even the furthest left of these, represented by Lenin, was far from the thought that the revolutionary unity of the world working class would have to be created by a complete break with the Social Democracy. The opportunist degeneration of the workers' parties, closely connected with the period of the flowering of capitalism at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century, was completely revealed only at the moment when the war bluntly posed the question: With the national bourgeoisie or against it? Political development made a sudden leap in 1914; to use Hegel's phrase, the accumulation of quantitative changes suddenly acquired a qualitative character.\textsuperscript{119}

The extent to which the sharp turn to patriotism by the sections of the International seemed at first completely unexpected can be seen perhaps most clearly from the example of Lenin. In the years before, more than once he had had to criticize the German Social Democracy; but invariably he considered it his party. And even when, in Switzerland, he received a fresh number of \textit{Vorwaerts} announcing that the Social Democratic fraction in the Reichstag had voted Wilhelm Hohenzollern credits for the war, he
declared with complete confidence to a circle of friends that this issue had been forged by the German general staff to prove the fictitious unanimity of the German people and to frighten the enemy. And when there was no longer any room for comforting illusions, the conclusions Lenin drew from the catastrophe were all the more decisive and categorical. The Social Democratic International was broken, its individual sections were in the service of the national general staffs, a new International must be constructed—this was Lenin’s program right from the first days of the war. From then on, parliamentary and trade unionist leaders of the workers’ organizations seemed in his eyes merely agents of militant imperialism inside the working class. He proclaimed the break with them as the first condition for further revolutionary work. The new International, purged of opportunism, must become an organization for civil war against imperialism. Lenin rejected the very name of Social Democracy, calling it a dirty shirt which must be changed for a clean one.

Reconsidering the theoretical bases of reformism in the light of the new experience, Lenin above all emphasized the theory of the state. The leaders of the Second International considered that the democratic state is an autonomous institution, suspended above classes, and consequently capable of serving different, even opposite, historical goals. The problem consisted for them in gradually, step by step, filling “pure” democracy with a new economic content. Jaures, the most inspired representative of reformism, preached: “The Republic must be socialized.” The idealization of democracy inevitably led to idealization of the democratic parties of the bourgeoisie. Cooperation with them was presented as a necessary condition for systematic “progress.”

If, in Germany, with its tempestuous economic development and backward political development, the democratic parties faded before they managed to bloom, then in conservative France, with its more stable intermediate classes and the traditions of the Great Revolution, the Radical Party continued to occupy a most important, by a superficial view even a decisive, position in the political life of the Republic. The theory of pure democracy as an arena of uninterrupted progress led in France directly to the bloc of the Socialists with the Radicals. This question became for decades the touchstone for the workers’ movement. Jaures stood for an alliance of all “pure republicans” for struggle against the “reaction.” Guesde, on the other hand, supported class struggle against all the parties of the bourgeoisie, including its treacherous wing. This antagonism at times took on a very sharp
character, but in the last analysis, in its practical consequences, it did not go beyond the limits of bourgeois democracy. In spite of all his theoretically irreconcilable formulas, Guesde in 1914 spoke for the defense of the Third Republic from “Prussian militarism,” and unexpectedly for others—and perhaps for himself—became minister of national defense. In Lenin’s eyes, his former comrade-in-arms—and even to some extent his teacher—became just as much a traitor to internationalism as the infamous Scheidemann.

The main force of Lenin’s theoretical critique was now directed against the theory of pure democracy. In his innovations he appeared as a restorer; he cleansed of admixtures and falsifications, and revived in all its uncompromising theoretical purity, Marx and Engels’s doctrine of the state as a tool of class oppression. To the myth of pure democracy he counterposed the reality of bourgeois democracy, grown on the foundation of private property and transformed by the course of development into a tool of imperialism. The class structure of the state, determined by the class structure of society, excluded, according to Lenin, the possibility of the proletariat’s taking power within the framework of democracy and with its methods. An opponent armed to the teeth cannot be defeated by methods dictated by the opponent himself, if, in addition, he also remains the supreme arbiter of the struggle. The advance of the socialist proletariat must inevitably lead to the revolutionary or counterrevolutionary collapse of democracy. As soon as the question passes from secondary points of parliamentary reform to the question of capitalist property, all the parties of the bourgeoisie, including the most “left” ones, inevitably join the most powerful nucleus of the ruling class, namely, finance capital. The perspective of peaceful progress or democratic socialization is revealed from this point of view as pure utopia. The preparation for revolution demands a simultaneous break not only with the bourgeois radicals but, as we already know, also with the democratic reformists in the working class itself.

It would be a fundamental error to draw from what has been said the conclusion that Lenin ignored the petty bourgeoisie, in particular the peasantry, as a political factor. On the contrary, he considered the ability of the workers’ party to lead behind it the petty-bourgeois masses of town and country as a necessary condition for revolutionary victory, and not only in Russia and the countries of the colonial East, but to a considerable extent also in the highly developed capitalist metropolitan countries. However, in the so-called middle classes he strictly distinguished
between the economically privileged upper layers and the oppressed lower ones—the parliamentary activists and the electoral sheep. To achieve a militant alliance of the proletariat with the petty bourgeoisie, he considered it necessary in the first place to purge the workers' ranks of reformists, and secondly to free the small people of town and country from the influence of bourgeois democracy. A parliamentary coalition of the Social Democracy with the bourgeois democrats meant for Lenin marking time and thereby preparing the way for the most reactionary dictatorship of finance capital. An alliance of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie presupposes the leadership of a revolutionary party, which can be won only in irreconcilable struggle with the historical parties of the middle classes.

That is the kernel of Lenin's teaching on the conditions for preparing the proletarian revolution. It was on these principles, thoroughly checked and confirmed by the experience of the October Revolution, that the Communist International was founded. Our brief theoretical survey should help the reader to determine correctly the historical position of the latest Communist congress, which, in all the key problems of our epoch, has liquidated Lenin's teaching, making an abrupt about-face to opportunism and patriotism.

In accordance with his doctrine of imperialism, Lenin considered it absurd to seek a so-called guilty party in the conflicts of capitalist states. The diplomacy of each country puts the responsibility for war on the other side, and the Social Democrats of each country servilely follow their diplomats in this. Even the most experienced detectives do not, as is well known, always catch the firebrand. And what if the powder magazines of Europe catch fire simultaneously from several sides? The legal criterion of "culpability" gets us nowhere. The real culprit of wars is imperialism, that is to say, the irreconcilability of the worldwide interests brought about by it. The peace of Versailles is just as much a link in the preparation of the next war as the program of Hitler, whom this very Versailles treaty helped to victory.

Meanwhile, in a complete break with all the founding charters of the Communist International, the makers of speeches at the Seventh Congress, and the participants in the discussions that followed them, have unanimously repeated that the source of the war danger is German fascism. The conclusion has been drawn from this that what is necessary is the firm unity of all "democratic" and "progressive" forces, all the "friends of peace" (there is such an expression) for the defense of the Soviet Union,
on the one hand, and Western democracy, on the other. This superficial, not to say, trivial, conception of world relations takes us right back to the official doctrine of the Entente in 1914-18; except that in place of Prussian militarism we now have fascism.\textsuperscript{122}

In actual fact, the cause of the passing of Germany from shamefaced curryng of favor to “equal” aggressiveness is not Hitler’s vocal chords, which do not possess any mystical power, but the revival of the powerful productive forces of the country after the upheavals of the war and the postwar period. England and France are defending against Germany not democratic principles but the artificial balance of power established as a result of the war. Participation in the victorious camp of the defenders of “democracy” did not prevent Italy from being the first to come to fascism. And to return to the present, it is precisely Italy, the ally of French democracy—and indirectly of the Soviet Union too—that is preparing to open the bloody brawl by its rapacious raid on Ethiopia. In the light of these simple and incontrovertible facts, the attempt to present the imperialist antagonisms of Europe as a clash of the principles of fascism and democracy is absolutely ridiculous. To this must be added that the fascist tendencies in France, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, etc., would develop irresistibly in the event of a war, but that the complete victory of fascism in Europe would not mitigate one whit the antagonisms which are tearing it apart.

True enough, in the speeches of the delegates to the congress the arguments for the defense of the Central European and Western democracies from the attacks of National Socialism invariably took second place to the argument for the defense of the Soviet state. However, this hierarchy of arguments can in fact easily be overthrown and will inevitably be. The duty to defend “democracy” and “national independence” from National Socialism must evidently preserve its force whether or not the Soviet Union takes part in the war. As far as the actual defense of the land of the Soviets is concerned, this slogan was in fact written on the banner of the Third International from the first day of its existence. The Seventh Congress remains formally under the sign of this tradition. But what a difference in perspectives and methods!

Under Lenin, and in the first years after his death, the main opponents on the world arena were social patriotism and its foster brother, democratic pacifism. It was considered unshakably established that they were the ones who were lulling the minds of the toilers and thereby freeing the hands of imperialism.
Soviet diplomacy, to be sure, had even earlier not shrunk from taking advantage of the contradictions of imperialism (though never pretending that they were contradictions between "reaction" and "democracy"); but the chief guarantee for the existence and development of the Soviet Union was seen by the leadership in the time of Lenin as being the development of the European and world revolution. It was precisely for this reason that in that period there could not be talk of any prolonged alliance of the Soviets with one of the conflicting imperialist groups, nor could the thought possibly have entered anyone's head that in those capitalist countries with which the Soviet Union had established temporary treaty relations the proletariat should replace revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie by reformist and pacifist cooperation with the "left" bourgeois parties and with all the "friends of peace" in general. In the question of war, pacifism, and "civil war" there has thus been an almost 180-degree turn.

Of course, none of the delegates to the Seventh Congress directly rejected proletarian revolution, or the dictatorship of the proletariat, or all the other terrible things. On the contrary, the official speechmakers swore that in the depths of their souls they had not altered at all, and that the change in tactics concerns only a particular historical stage, when both the Soviet Union and the remnants of Western democracy have to be defended from Hitler. It is not, however, advisable to believe these solemn oaths. If the methods of revolutionary class struggle are useless in difficult historical conditions, that means that they are bankrupt in general, especially as the coming epoch is going to be one of increasing difficulties. How Lenin once scoffed at the social patriots, who also swore that it was only "for the duration of the war" that they were consigning to the archives their international obligations!

At the center of all the debates at the congress stood the most recent experience in France, in the form of the so-called "People's Front," which was a bloc of three parties: Communist, Socialist, and Radical. Direct and indirect cooperation with the Radicals (the so-called cartel) had always been a component part of the policy of the Socialist Party. But in contradistinction to the German Social Democrats, the French section of the Second International, bound by the revolutionary traditions of its proletariat, could never make up its mind to take cooperation with the bourgeois left as far as the setting up of a coalition government with it. Confining itself to electoral agreements and common parliamentary votes, the cartel proclaimed as its task
"the defense of democracy" from internal reaction and external dangers. The French Communist Party, it may be said, grew up in the struggle against the cartel. When the Socialists, warding off the blows from the left, adduced in their justification the necessity for union with the middle classes, the Communists answered that even though the Radicals were mainly supported by the petty bourgeoisie, in all questions of importance they sacrificed its interests to the bankocracy. Alliance with the party of the Versailles peace, they asserted, was a preparation for a new war and a new betrayal by the Socialists.

The overthrow of Daladier's ministry by an open uprising of the armed leagues of reaction (February 6, 1934) brought about radical changes in the distribution of political forces. Under the influence of the agitation among the masses the Socialist Party hastily drew back from the compromised Radicals; it even expelled from its ranks the faction of the right parliamentarians, the so-called Neo-Socialists, who considered cooperation with the bourgeois left to be the principal content of a Socialist policy. On the other hand, the approach of the fascist danger in France and the growth of German armaments produced an exactly opposite evolution in the Comintern, and at a breathtaking pace. The very same leaders who until February 6 had proclaimed the left Radical Daladier as nothing but a fascist, and the Socialist leader Leon Blum as a social fascist, now, under the shock of real fascism, completely lost faith in themselves and in their banner and decided—at the direct bidding of Moscow, of course—to seek salvation in an alliance with the democratic parties, and not only with the Socialists but also with the Radicals.

The talks, which lasted for several months, had a thoroughly theatrical character, with a fair admixture of involuntary comedy. The Socialists did not believe in the sincerity of the Communists' outpourings of ardent friendship; the "social fascists" of yesterday were afraid of a plot. And when they finally realized the strength of the terror of their recent bitter opponents and agreed to a united front, the second chapter began: the struggle for an alliance with the Radicals. The Socialists were obstinate, citing the political fruitlessness—proved by long experience—of a bloc with the party of Herriot and Daladier, conservatives through and through; but the insistent pressure of the Communists, the belated neophytes of the cartel, won the day. The Radicals, from whom their left allies did not even demand a break with the extreme reaction represented in the coalition ministry of Laval, reluctantly accepted the tripartite cartel as a political means of strengthen-
ing their shaky parliamentary positions and ensuring for France the help of the Red Army as an ultimate reserve. As soon as the People's Front was established, the Neo-Socialists took up their natural place in it, beside the party of Briand. Their previous expulsion thus proved to have been a simple misunderstanding.

In putting forward the French experience as the model of the most successful application of the new realistic policy, neither the speaker, Dimitrov, nor the French delegates took the slightest trouble to analyze what that episodic grouping of forces bearing the high-flown name of "People's Front" in fact amounted to, in the social and economic sense. On the contrary, all the orators stubbornly refused to analyze the program of the new cartel and its perspectives. This is hardly surprising: the crisis of French parliamentarianism is above all the crisis of French Radicalism. The petty-bourgeois masses are increasingly losing faith in the heroes of the Jacobin phrase, who in fact always turn out to be one of the instruments of finance capital. Fascism exploits the political disillusionment of the petty bourgeoisie of town and country with the Radical Party. Behind the scenes, finance capital generously supports the fascist leagues, preparing a new support for itself. The present regime has a transitional character. The Radicals are still necessary to support the unstable national government of Laval.

But the two-faced and thoroughly rotten character of this party is nowhere so deadly clear as in the fact that on the one hand it is represented by its authoritative leaders in the national government, which is issuing draconian financial decrees, and on the other it is part of the People's Front, which is waging a noisy struggle against the government and its decrees. The Socialists and the Communists declare that the financial decrees of Laval are an excellent political gift to fascism; at the same time they carefully avoid the question of the responsibility of the Radicals for the government's policy. The whole People's Front is founded on equivocations, silences, and falsifications. No wonder the struggle against fascism has assumed a purely decorative character. The discrediting of the Radicals among the popular masses has automatically spread to their allies. The "People's Front," very noisy but paralyzed by internal contradictions, shifts from one foot to the other helplessly. At the same time, the fascists are broadening their political base and perfecting their military organization. Nobody so much as breathes a word of this at the congress, where the obligatory monolithism, prescribed in advance, reigned.
Essentially, the Seventh Congress was called to raise into a law and to extend to all countries without exception the about-face carried out by the French Communist Party. The chief paradox of this congress, by the way, is that, while preaching the necessity for “a strictly realistic account of the national peculiarities of each country,” it lays down with a stroke of the pen for all its sections the “People’s Front” as the model to be followed. Since Dimitrov has acquired a certain moral authority by his courageous conduct in the well-known Reichstag fire trial—Dimitrov never had and does not now have any other right to political authority—it was he who was assigned the delicate mission of announcing in a wordy but unsubstantial speech the fact that the Comintern in the struggle with fascism had entered the road of democratic coalition and patriotism. In distinction from the Socialists, who as we already know could never make up their minds to a governmental combination with the Radicals, the Seventh Congress carried through its about-face to the end and directly posed the problem of the new course as the construction of a People’s Front government.

If, in the immediate future, Marcel Cachin, Thorez, and other leaders of the French Communist Party do not manage to form a common government with the “Radical fascist” Daladier and the “social fascist” Blum, then the cause at any rate must be sought in the snares of the historical process and not in the ill will of the Communist leaders. But if in spite of all the objective indications (crisis, financial difficulties, revolutionary outbursts in Toulon, Brest, le Havre, etc.),126 the coalition government of the left bloc nevertheless comes about, it is possible, without being a prophet, to say in advance that it will be merely a brief episode, and that, when it itself falls, it will bring down the “People’s Front.” We shall be very fortunate if it does not bury in its ruins the remnants of French democracy.

The first great imperialist war broke out when capitalism seemed at the peak of its powers, and parliamentarism an eternal regime. The reformism and patriotism of the Second International were supported on this foundation. War? But this is the last war. . . . Since then all the illusions, both the primary ones and the derivative ones, have blown away like smoke. The merciless character of our epoch, which has bared all contradictions to the root, lends an especially ominous character—and, it may be said, an especially shabby one—to the capitulation of the Comintern to those ideas and idols on which at the start of its existence it had declared a holy war.
Nothing now distinguishes the Communists from the Social Democrats except the traditional phraseology, which is not difficult to unlearn. Even now the Communist leaders are already not unsuccessfully picking up drawing-room language in their dealings with their allies on the right; the old reserve of curses is preserved only against opponents from the left. It would be no wonder if the united front is proclaimed the first step towards full organizational fusion of the parties of the Second and Third Internationals.

The obstacles in the way of this fusion are rooted not so much in ideas as in the apparatuses. In England, Belgium, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries the sections of the Comintern are too insignificant for the reformist parties to consider themselves interested in experiments with a united front or in attempts at fusion. But where the forces are more evenly distributed, above all in France, the question of fusion is already being posed from both sides as a practical problem. Will it be decided in the immediate future? The programmatic and tactical differences of opinion have been reduced to a minimum since the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet pact; the Social Democrats promise to defend the Soviet Union, in exchange for which the Communists promise to defend the French Republic. In relation to war and national defense—and this is the basic problem of our epoch—the basis for unity is thereby present. But there remains the question of the traditions of the two closed bureaucratic apparatuses and of the material interests of a considerable number of people who are bound up with the apparatuses. Whether the united pressure of fascism and Moscow diplomacy will prove sufficiently strong to overcome this secondary but very considerable obstacle on the path of fusion, the future will show. In any case the Seventh Congress has openly and decisively proclaimed the need to unite with that very Social Democracy which Stalin a few years ago was calling the twin of fascism.

If we take the ideological and political development of the Comintern, leaving aside the question of its fate as an organization—the body goes on decaying long after the living soul has departed from it—we can say that the history of the Third International has found in the Seventh Congress its ultimate conclusion. Twenty-one years ago Lenin proclaimed the slogan of a break with reformism and patriotism. Since then, all the opportunist and intermediate, so-called centrist leaders have imputed to Lenin above all the guilt of sectarianism. One may consider Lenin right or wrong, but it cannot be disputed that it was precisely on the idea of the irreconcilability of the two basic
tendencies in the workers' movement that the Communist
International was founded. The Seventh Congress has arrived at
the conclusion that sectarianism was the source of all the
subsequent great defeats of the proletariat. Stalin is thus
correcting the historical "error" of Lenin, and correcting it
radically: Lenin created the Communist International; Stalin is
abolishing it.

It is, however, already possible to say that even the complete
union of the two Internationals would in no way assure the unity
of the working class. The principles of social patriotism exclude
in advance the possibility of preserving international unity,
especially in an epoch of approaching military clashes. But there
will not prove to be unity even within national limits. At a new
historical stage there will inevitably take place a new irreconcilable
split in the workers' organizations and a regrouping of their
elements along two axes: opportunist and revolutionary. Even
now, in almost all countries of the world, the banner of the
Fourth International has already been raised. For the moment, of
course, it is merely an affair of small vanguard groups. But
anyone who knows the history of the workers' movement will
understand their symptomatic importance. This side of the
question, however, goes beyond the limits of this article, the aim
of which is to give a general evaluation of the Seventh Congress.
We repeat again: it will go down in history as the liquidation
congress.
Dear Comrades:

I am an attentive and, you may be sure, friendly reader of Action Socialiste Revolutionnaire, and it is in this capacity that I am sending this letter. You have published your program. This is a very important document. Its publication represents a major step forward. But despite the absolutely correct general thrust of your program, the text also contains some imprecise formulations, which make you vulnerable to your enemies (and you do have some), and which can even lead to deviations within your own tendency. I greatly regret that you did not submit your draft for a preliminary discussion, not only nationally but also internationally: not only can socialism not be created in one country, but neither can revolutionary socialist politics. Comrades who would have been eager to participate in a preliminary discussion can now only give their opinions of the published text.

1. You distinguish between the "conquest of political power" and the "conquest of economic power." This distinction is incorrect. It lends itself to dangerous equivocation. The ferociously anti-Marxist anarcho-syndicalists are the ones who invented the concept of "economic power" in order to sidestep the question of how to transform society without the conquest of state power. The reformists willingly use this same formula for their "plans," which are supposed to allow (anonymous) "collective" control to render economic power to the (still anonymous) "collectivity." Mr. de Man, this magician of the ambiguous formulation, this falsifier of scientific socialism, needs the distinction between political power and economic power. But it is precisely for this reason that we must reject this terminological trap. "Economic power," as such, does not exist. There is property, different forms of property. State power provides the opportunity to retain or, on the contrary, to abolish capitalist property, depending on whether
state power belongs to the bourgeoisie or to the proletariat.

I am sure that we are in fundamental agreement. But you develop your artificial distinction between two powers in a dangerous way. On Italy, you say: "It was not the occupation but the abandonment of the factories which gave rise to fascism." You also say that the Charleroi miners, in occupying the mines, "thus show the way which will result in the expropriation of the capitalist bourgeoisie." This is not correct. The occupation of factories and mines is in no way sufficient. If state power remains in the hands of the bourgeois class, the occupiers will inevitably be evicted and crushed.

You see that the formulation can be used equally well against you by the camouflaged, corrupted reformists like de Man and by both types of syndicalists: anarchists and collaborationists.

In the next to the last paragraph, which speaks of the dictatorship of the proletariat, you say: "By the conquest of power, we mean . . . the seizure of the banks, the factories, the land, . . ." etc. Why this new, ambiguous paraphrase? By the conquest of power is meant the conquest of power, that is, the total takeover of the state. But the conquered state must act as an instrument for the transformation of property, beginning with the expropriation of the capitalists. These are two different stages which can be separated by months and even, in the case of some types of small capitalists, by years.

Power is power; that is, the most concentrated strength of the ruling class. Its nature is political (in the most general sense of the word), because the state, the instrument of power, is the political superstructure par excellence upon the economic foundation. But this political power serves not only to regulate "political" matters, in the narrow, technical sense of the word, (that is, internal matters of the state apparatus itself), but also and above all economic, cultural, ecclesiastical and other matters.

2. You propose a "fair redistribution of the land" among the peasants. What about farm workers? You speak neither of collective farms, nor of peasant cooperatives aided by the workers’ state. In this way, you fail to advance a socialist perspective for agriculture.

3. "Down with big business!" But we aren’t for perpetuating small business. You do not speak of the state monopoly of foreign trade, which will have exceptional importance for Belgium. With the monopoly as a tool, the workers’ state could truly help the productive layers of the petty bourgeoisie and above all guide them toward socialism.

You fail to mention the abolition of business secrets and
To the Editors of ASR

workers' and peasants' control of banks and industry. Yet, every worker and peasant can well understand that now—when asked only to sacrifice—they have the right to scrutinize the accounting "secrets" of the capitalist thieves. This slogan could win enormous popularity. Charlatans like de Man are always ready to come up with a whole new "plan," but they're careful not to mention business secrets, which are the key to exploitation.

4. You vaguely call for the "shorter workweek." Why not the forty-hour week, an international slogan?

5. On fascism: "These gangs," you say, "benefit from the support or the protection of the repressive forces that serve the capitalist bourgeoisie." Why this descriptive formulation? What "repressive forces?" This refers to the police, the courts, the headquarters of Vandervelde, de Man, and Spaak. You should have named these honorable institutions.

6. You propose the creation of "shock troops" to fight fascism. Why this technical and nonpolitical expression? The rest of us Marxists speak in this respect of a workers' militia. Why not solidarize yourselves with this precise slogan, which has become popular in France and elsewhere?

7. "The struggle against war." This paragraph is best because it's the most precise. But there is also an important gap. You speak against national defense. You are right. But you only give the negative formulation. You should say: We wish neither to perpetuate nor to defend the "narrow cages" known as national states. On the contrary, we wish to abolish borders in order to create a Socialist United States of Europe, while preparing a United States of the entire world.

8. At the end you say, "Down with reformist illusions." Unfortunately, you do not explain in the text what these reformist illusions consist of or who represents them in Belgium. This is perhaps the greatest weakness in the program.

There you have, dear comrades, the remarks which I allow myself in all friendship, and which do not prevent me from recognizing that your program, despite its imperfections, is permeated with a proletarian and revolutionary spirit. This spirit is the sure sign of your victory.

P.S.—I notice with astonishment that you say nothing in your program about women (salaries, night work, maternity leaves, etc.). A truly revolutionary tendency which wants to ensure its future must never neglect questions concerning either young people or women or oppressed peoples (there is nothing on colonies in your program!).
At a picnic with their Norwegian hosts, summer 1936.
A CASE FOR A LABOR JURY

August 29, 1935

On August 9, according to a news item in *l'Humanite*, the Italian Communist Montanari was murdered in the Metro Belleville [in Paris]. On August 12, *l'Humanite* printed an altogether monstrous, but, of course, in no way unusual, explanation for the murder. The anonymous article appeared under the title, “Laval and the Fascists Swell the Provocations.” This headline, which is part of the official campaign against the Laval ministry and the fascists, was accompanied by a subhead, “Montanari Murdered by a Trotskyist Provocateur.”

Fundamentally, the juxtaposition of these two headlines is quite characteristic of the article, the author, and the newspaper itself. But the text contains not only vile assertions but innumerable downright contradictory ones.

“The murderer is Guido Beiso, the well-known Italian Trotskyist who has been carrying on provocateur activities for a long time among the Italian emigres.” What is implied by “provocateur activities” in this connection? Has he been making speeches against social patriotism or is he in the employ of Mussolini? We are kept uninformed on this score. Further on we are told that Montanari “had become the target for the hatred of the Trotskyist elements who had been expelled from the party, and who subsequently” (that is, after their expulsion) “resorted to open and criminal provocateur activities.”

The case becomes more and more involved. It seems that not only Guido Beiso, but an entire group of expelled Italian “Trotskyists” was engaged in “open (!) provocation.” In the service of the fascist police? Again no direct statement. But in order not to leave the reader in doubt as to the meaning of the word “provocation,” the article adds that Beiso has been living “like a lord.” Finally we discover that in Nice, Beiso had been “exposed as a provocateur (by whom?) who was bound up (??) with the entire fascist work of penetrating the antifascist masses.”
This confused statement already contains a direct charge of a connection with the fascists. Let us bear this in mind.

From Nice, Beiso arrived in Paris and murdered Montanari. It is well known that the fascists murder Communists and particularly revolutionists. It is quite in the nature of things for a fascist provocateur to pose as a "Socialist" or a "Communist" or a "Trotskyist." But we have been told beforehand that the murderer was a "well-known Italian Trotskyist." Does this mean to say that he turned from a Trotskyist to a fascist, i.e., changed his revolutionary position? Such cases are not unknown. But l'Humanite does not raise this question. In harmony with the two headlines, it proceeds to develop the dual version: simultaneously both a "Trotskyist" and a fascist. This amalgam is the pivot for the entire indictment.

Further down we read, not without surprise, "His explanation that he wanted to avenge himself for unjust charges is only a screen intended to hide the truth." We are not clearly and expressly informed as to what this "truth" is. Instead we shortly and incidentally discover that the murderer had felt himself to be maliciously slandered, had protested, and in revenge had used the revolver. At any rate that is the murderer's own version. Let us keep this in mind as well.

The anonymous article proceeds to state further that the Italian CP had long since issued a warning to be on guard against the "dubious actions of this individual." Why dubious? Only dubious? Hadn't we just been told that Beiso was "exposed" as a fascist provocateur in Nice? Exposed! The work of a provocateur has never yet been assumed to be dubious. A provocateur is a mercenary scoundrel, nothing more. If one maintains that another's activities are dubious, then it means that one has only suspicions but no proof. In such cases, genuine revolutionary organizations gather the necessary evidence before proceeding with open indictments. That has been the revolutionary tradition from time immemorial. And yet from the words of l'Humanite itself we have to draw the conclusion that Beiso was not exposed as a provocateur, but only suspected of being one (by whom? for what? when?), and that besides he himself angrily objected to these charges. And on top of this we are also told that "Beiso decided to come to Paris, where he did not conceal his murderous intentions." At this point we become entirely perplexed. Had Beiso really been in the employ of the fascists, had he "lived like a lord," had he really been exposed as a provocateur and arrived in Paris in order to perpetrate a fascist murder, how could he have failed to hide his murderous intentions? Here the version
A Case for a Labor Jury

provided by l'Humanite contains a fresh and patent absurdity. The author is unable to present his own version consistently.

As the anonymous article proceeds, it becomes more and more entangled. We read that “the provocateur was never a member of the CP” (yet we had just been told that he belonged to a group of expelled “Trotskyists”), “this agent of fascism among the Italian emigres naturally found sympathy and shelter among the Trotskyist groups. . . .” And in this manner we get a new version: he was not a “well-known Italian Trotskyist,” as was originally stated, who became a fascist provocateur after his expulsion from the party; no! he was a fascist provocateur, never a member of the party, who “naturally” (of course! of course!) found sympathy among the Trotskyists. And to leave no further doubt as to the source of the information or its purpose, the anonymous author appends to this the following: “It was almost (!) in the same way that our comrade Kirov was murdered.”129 Almost! But Kirov was indeed murdered by a party member, as was established by the official documents, and no one had placed the blame on fascist provocation.

After several more new zigzags, the article concludes with an utterly amazing political moral: “The French workers, made more cautious and wiser by the lessons of Austria and Spain, will not be led into this criminal trap.” A remarkable revelation! The defensive uprisings of Austria and Spain, which even the social-patriotic and procoalition congress of the Communist International was compelled to recognize as heroic actions on the part of the proletariat—these, in the judgment of l'Humanite, were in reality the product of the activities of fascist provocateurs, the very same ones who killed Kirov in Leningrad and Montanari in Paris. This abysmally profound moral of the Marxists from l'Humanite is obviously especially intended for the workers of Toulon and Brest.

The reader will agree with us if we say that this article resembles a page from the diary of a lunatic. Only there is method in this madness, and it has not yet said its last word. So let us pursue the further developments of this case.

The Italian Bolshevik-Leninists, against whom the anonymous author leveled his anonymous charges, declared on August 14, through Comrade Jean Rous, a leading member of the French Socialist Party, that “Beiso was never a member of our organization, nor did we have any sort of relations with him, and we never even heard his name before.”130 Isn’t that clear enough? On August 15, l'Humanite, which had flung a political denunciation full of lies, finds itself compelled to state: “We are taking
under consideration the declaration of the Italian Trotskyist group.” But *l’Humanite* would have remained true neither to itself nor to its lord and master had it simply bit its tongue and kept quiet. No. This rag immediately adds that it has in its possession certain letters of the murderer which clearly indicate that Beiso “was imbued with the counterrevolutionary Trotskyist ideology.” On the heels of all they had said previously, this rings a trifle overstrained. “Ideology”! We are well aware what can be done with this subtle substance in the chemical laboratory of Messrs. Duclos and Company.

After several new and this time entirely amorphous and elusive insinuations, in which impotence is mixed with malice, *l’Humanite* concludes: “Naturally, the tie-up between the murderer and the Trotskyists (who have just categorically denied it—L.T.) does not exclude an understanding between Beiso and the fascist provocateurs. It all ties together.” “Naturally”! But why do these bold cowards now say that “it does not exclude”? Is it only a question of something not being excluded? On August 12 they did indeed proclaim that Beiso, this “well-known Trotskyist,” had been exposed as a fascist provocateur, who “lived like a lord,” obviously on Mussolini’s gold. Now it appears only that the large and sharp ears of *l’Humanite* are able to distinguish notes of a Trotskyist ideology (ideology!) in the letters of the murderer, which circumstance “does not exclude” (that is all: does not exclude) a tie-up between Beiso and the fascists. “It all ties together” . . . with stitches of white thread.

Finally, on August 18, *l’Humanite* published a proclamation of the Central Committee of the Italian CP: Montanari was the victim of “a murder, for which counterrevolutionary mission the agents of the fascist reaction had prepared themselves in the circles of the Trotskyist and Bordigist emigre groups.” No more, no less! This information is all the more interesting because in it the Bordigists appear on the scene for the first time, a group which is neither ideologically nor organizationally connected with the so-called “Trotskyists,” but which—and we have not the slightest doubt about it—had as little to do with the murder as the Bolshevik-Leninists. The Bordigists are dragged in only so as to widen the radius of the slander: the Italian Stalinists have to reap a little additional profit on their own account. But what is most remarkable about the communication of the Italian CP is that it does not at all mention in any way Beiso’s connection with the fascists. No, the matter is much more involved, or, if you will, much simpler: the Trotskyists and the Bordigists are “in general”
the agents of fascist reaction and Beiso prepared himself for his mission in these “circles,” i.e., within both these circles, which are fighting one another. Now, at last, we can grasp the meaning of the words, “It was almost in the same way that our comrade Kirov was murdered.” That is to say: it was almost in the same way that scores of people were indicted in the Kirov assassination who were in no way implicated in the murder.

Out of this entire snarl of interlinking slanders and insinuations that crumble into dust, one thing stands out each time, namely, that Guido Beiso came into some sort of sharp conflict with the organization of the Italian CP, or some of its members. If one were to leave aside the all-embracing and therefore in no way illuminating “ideology,” then any normal thinking individual would ask the question: What was it that really drove Beiso to commit murder? If we do not proceed from the assumption that he was mentally unbalanced (there is no evidence for this as yet), we can only arrive at the conclusion that he must have been subjected to an extraordinarily painful personal experience, which he found insufferable, which finally threw him off balance and drove him to a senseless and criminal act. But who drove him through this insufferable experience? Was it the “Trotskyist” organization with whom Beiso had had no relation whatsoever, or was it the organization in whose name l’Humanite speaks? Thus, and only thus, does the question stand. Doesn’t it follow from this that the Italian Stalinists accuse Beiso, whom they despise, of provocation, without any real evidence, perhaps without any evidence at all, i.e., they utilize those poisonous weapons which serve these people as political arguments for the most part? As is evident from l’Humanite itself, Beiso himself had protested most violently against the accusations, and threatened the authors with death. No provocateur who had undertaken the murder of a revolutionist would act that way; but an unknown and a hotheaded emigre could act in this manner, finding no other means of defense against the slander campaign. By these hypothetical considerations (and it is only a question of hypothesis) we do not mean to cast the slightest shadow on the murdered Montanari. It is entirely possible that he fell an accidental victim, or—if he did participate in hounding the alleged “provocateur”—he did so in good faith because he trusted his party and its thoroughly demoralized leadership. But Montanari’s personality does not solve the question of Beiso’s motives.
Scoundrels will say that we advocate or justify murder as a method for solving conflicts within revolutionary circles. But we are not writing for scoundrels. The Montanari-Beiso case is important precisely because a conflict on the political plane has led to a supremely senseless act of murder of one emigre by another. In this lies an ominously serious warning, and it is necessary to grasp its significance in time!

The matter is now in the hands of the bourgeois law courts. The official investigation is obviously not intended to cast light on the bloody tragedy from the standpoint of revolutionary proletarian morals. The prosecution will probably try only to compromise the proletarian emigres and the revolutionary organizations in particular. But the agents of the Comintern will also try to exploit the trial for every vile purpose, as they are obliged to do. The duty of workers’ organizations, regardless of their political banners, lies in one thing: in shedding the greatest light possible on this case, and thereby, insofar as it is possible, preventing the repetition of gunplay in revolutionary circles.

In our opinion the labor organizations must establish, without any further delay, an authoritative and nonpartisan committee which would go over all the material, including Beiso’s letters mentioned in l’Humanite, and examine all the witnesses and representatives of the parties and groups who are concerned or interested in the case, so that the political, moral, and personal circumstances in the case may be clearly established. This is necessary not only in memory of Montanari, not only to reveal Beiso’s real motives, but also to purge the atmosphere of all working class organizations of treachery, slander, harassment, and gunplay. Naturally, the interests of the case would be best served if representatives of l’Humanite and of the Central Committee of the Italian CP were to take part in this committee. But we may safely predict that they will most certainly refuse: these politicians stand only to lose from an impartial investigation, and much more than would appear on the surface. But the investigation ought not to be wrecked by their refusal to participate. Every honest participant in the labor movement is deeply interested in seeing to it that this abcess is opened, which can otherwise develop into gangrene. The tragic case of Montanari-Beiso must be brought before a labor jury.
AN APPEAL

Published September 1935

In the last two years our Biulleten has appeared less frequently than in previous years. The reasons were many, not the least being what are called "circumstances beyond our control." We hope that in the future we will manage to bring out the Biulleten more regularly and more frequently.

The need for our publication to come out on a more normal basis is absolutely clear. The question of the Soviet Union, linked as it is with the growing danger of war, now assumes exceptional significance for the world workers' movement. At the same time the internal contradictions of the workers' state have reached an unprecedented sharpness. On the one hand we hear from reporters at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern that "the classless society" has already been built, that socialism has been completely and definitively established, etc. On the other hand the Soviet newspapers are full of news about hooliganism among the youth, barbarous family customs, desertion and neglect of children. Near the end of the second five year plan the government passed and put into effect a law allowing juvenile criminals to be shot. At the slightest show of critical thought the uncontrolled bureaucracy of the "socialist society" (!) replies with rabid terrorism. At the same time we note the fact, paradoxical at first sight but in reality profoundly natural, that the reformists and bourgeois democrats, who had a hostile attitude toward Soviet power in the first heroic years of its existence, now seek friendship with the Moscow bureaucracy, willingly declare themselves to be "friends of the Soviet Union," and maintain a conspiracy of silence about the crimes of the Stalinist clique.

In these pages we propose to examine in Marxist terms the internal development of the Soviet Union, its conquests as well as its contradictions. The regroupment in the world workers' movement has begun and it will go on at an accelerated pace. The last Moscow congress will give it a new impulse. The Russian
Bolshevik-Leninists must once and for all shake from their boots the dust of the so-called "Communist International." The Biulleten is the unofficial organ, but no less the genuine one, of the Russian section of the Fourth International, which is being built. We propose to examine in the pages of our journal the fundamental questions of the world workers' movement. In addition, we reserve to ourselves the right to that principled intransigence which constitutes the finest tradition of Marxism.

In every country, without exception, the organizations of the Fourth International have powerful enemies, beginning on the right flank with imperialist reaction (let us recall the campaign, monstrous in its malignancy, of Hitler and the French bourgeois press in connection with the "discovery" of L.D. Trotsky at Barbizon), passing through the reformists (let us recall the recent expulsion of the leading group of the Bolshevik-Leninists from the organization of the French Socialist Youth), ending up with the Stalinists, with their amalgams, trials, and shootings. Moreover, first place in this concert of hatred goes unquestionably to the Stalinists.

Our friends at present are incomparably less numerous than our enemies. But we know how to be in the minority. We have confidence in the strength of our ideas. History has already shown in one case how a small minority, armed with a correct program, at the decisive moment came to the head of the entire people. The ebbing historic wave has thrown the revolutionary vanguard back. There is nothing to be done about it! We do not complain about history's whims; we take it as it is. We rely on its inner forces and begin the new ascent.

Everywhere, our friends are in the minority. But they are genuine friends, tempered and tested. Their number grows steadily in every country of the world. The logic of events educates them and strengthens their resolve.

We firmly hope that our friends will help the Biulleten to carry out its task.

Collect subscribers for us! Organize the sale of single copies! Collect money! Use every trip to the Soviet Union for taking in the Biulleten, collecting information, and establishing connections. A great part of this work can be done successfully not only by the Russian comrades but by the foreign comrades as well.
HOW HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY ARE WRITTEN

Published September 1935

A considerable portion of Pravda for August 5 is devoted to the fortieth anniversary of the death of Engels. Poor Engels! Surely he is undeserving of this mockery. Engels was not only a man of genius but also the soul of conscientiousness. In literary work as well as in practical affairs he could not bear sloppiness, inaccuracy, and inexactitude. He checked every comma (in the literal sense of the term) of Marx's posthumous work, and carried on a correspondence on the subject of secondary orthographic errors. Then why does the central organ of the Moscow bureaucracy come down upon the great thinker and writer with this flood of articles in which side by side with the tendentious and, so to speak, standard lies one meets at every step with the lie that is unpremeditated, born of ignorance, heedlessness, and irresponsibility?

The leading article reads: "The reverberations of the shots on the barricades of the bourgeois revolutions had hardly subsided . . . when Marx and Engels were already pointing to the majestic figure of the proletariat, this gravedigger . . ." and so forth and so on. What sort of "bourgeois revolutions" are made mention of here? During the barricades in the year 1830, Marx and Engels were still children and incapable of pointing out the "majestic figure of the proletariat." Consequently the statement must relate only to the revolutions of 1848. But The Condition of the Working Class in England, the work of genius by the young Engels, appeared as early as 1845. Finally, Marx and Engels did not at all await the reverberation of 1848 to proclaim to the world the doctrine of scientific socialism. The Communist Manifesto—and let the editors of Pravda be apprised of this—appeared not after the "last shots had sounded" but prior to the time the first bullets hummed in the revolutions of 1848.

But what does a functionary fulfilling the duties of a publicist
care about the chronology of revolutions, or the ideological
development of Marx and Engels to boot? Not for nothing did
Bismarck say, “Give me a journalist and I’ll make a good
functionary out of him; but there is no making a good journalist
even out of a dozen functionaries.”

Quoting from the obituary in the *Neue Zeit* (1895) the sentence
to the effect that with the death of Engels “Marx finally died
too,” the leading article unexpectedly appends the following: “the
leaders of the Social Democracy who had slid down into the
swamp of reformism and opportunism made haste to inter
together with the remains of Engels the revolutionary teachings
of Marxism.” This is indeed sharpshooting: aim a finger at the
sky and hit the bull’s eye! Revisionism appeared only in 1897; the
name itself came still later; the weekly *Neue Zeit* was the organ
not of revisionism but of the struggle against revisionism. The
above-quoted sentence did not at all imply that revolutionary
Marxism was being buried together with Engels. To ascribe such
a notion to the *Neue Zeit* of 1895 is tantamount to being an utter
ignoramus about the history of Marxism. In reality, the thought
expressed in the *Neue Zeit* was to the effect that with Engels's
death there also died that part of Marx’s living personality which
had continued to exist in Engels. In these words is beautifully
expressed the well-nigh indivisible creative collaboration of Marx
and Engels. But the functionary fulfilling the duties of a publicist
is of the opinion that he best expresses his belated hostility to
revisionism when he provides a stupid and pettifogging interpre­
tation of a clever and correct thought. And this at the moment
when the entire policy of the Communist International is being
directed into channels of reformism!

The Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute publishes in the same issue a
letter from Engels to Kautsky which subjects to criticism the
Lassallean formula of “the single reactionary mass of the ruling
classes.” The aim of publishing it is quite clear: the institute for
the falsification of Marxism and Leninism seeks by means of this
quotation to provide a prop for the policy of coalition with the
“democratic” bourgeoisie. It is unnecessary to dwell here on the
political fraud: toil and moil as Messrs. Functionaries may, they
will not succeed in transforming Engels into the theoretician of
conciliationism with the bourgeoisie. But at any rate, these
gentlemen have forgotten to explain to us how the negation of the
“single reactionary mass of the ruling classes” is reconcilable
with the immortal aphorism of Stalin on the subject of—fascism
and Social Democracy. But here is the remarkable part:
publishing the letter in its own solemn name, the Institute in a brief introduction commits, in the course of eight lines, two, if not three, gross mistakes.

Says the learned Institute: “In this letter, Engels subjects to criticism the draft of the Erfurt program in which Kautsky, despite the instructions of Marx and Engels, was smuggling in the Lassallean thesis of the single reactionary mass.”

There could have been no instructions from Marx to Kautsky for the reason that Marx had died some eight years prior to the drafting of the Erfurt program; the only letter that Marx did write to Kautsky (in 1881) says absolutely nothing concerning the question that interests us. As regards Engels, in his letter to Kautsky he actually did subject to merciless criticism the phrase on the “single reactionary mass.” But he did not at all ascribe it to Kautsky; he knew that this phrase was inserted by someone (obviously Wilhelm Liebknecht) into Kautsky’s original draft, which had been approved in essence by Engels. Engels’s critical letter was intended to supply Kautsky with support against Liebknecht, and especially against the old Lassalleans. “Ordinary” mortals have the privilege of not knowing this. But the learned Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute?!

Further on we read: “The instructions of Engels to the leaders of the German Social Democracy were not executed when the final text of the program was accepted” (our emphasis). The style itself is noteworthy: the “instructions” of the head of the department were not “executed” by an underling. But Engels was not the one and indivisible “leader.” He issued “instructions” to nobody. He was merely a thinker of genius and he gave theoretical and political advice to different parties. Nobody was duty-bound to “execute.” This sentence, so remarkable stylistically, is all the worse for being false in essence. The formula of the “single mass” was deleted from the text of the Erfurt program, and Engels in his correspondence expressed his complete satisfaction on this score. What a lot of lying in eight lines for a learned institution!

In the third article devoted to Engels’s attitude to the Russian revolution we are informed that in a letter to the Emancipation of Labor Group, Engels warned against a mechanistic and doctrinaire understanding of Marxism. And the sage Pravda remarks in this connection: “Alas! The outstanding members of the group gleaned little benefit (!) from this warning of Engels; two decades later they turned up in the camp of the Mensheviks. . . .” But what happened in the course of these two
decades? Plekhanov’s splendid and victorious struggle against philosophical idealism, against historic subjectivism and the economic superstition of the Narodniki; the entire work of the Emancipation of Labor Group, unprecedented in courage and staunchness—the work directly upon which was nurtured the oldest generation of the Russian Marxists, including Lenin himself—all this is a “trifle” to the ignorant and bombastic Pravda. But Lenin, indeed, was enthralled by Plekhanov, he was, to use his own expression, “in love” with Plekhanov, nor did he forget the latter’s great Marxist services even during the periods of irreconcilable struggle with him. Why, even Engels himself, after the letter to Zasulich in 1883, had the opportunity over a period of some twelve years to observe directly the activity of the Emancipation of Labor Group, and he referred with extreme praise to the work of Plekhanov. Generally speaking, the old man was quite chary of praise. But the functionary who has been able to understand neither Engels nor Lenin nor Plekhanov sets upon the activity of the Emancipation of Labor Group the seal of his severe verdict: “little benefit.” One is impelled to say that only harm can come from such bureaucratic insects in literature.

One could cull another dozen similar pearls, for each author contributed his bit to the public treasure chest of ignorance. But the reader must be fed up to his neck already. We shall only add a few words on the score of bureaucratic pathos. The leading article speaks of “the chapters of Capital and Anti-Duehring flaming with revolutionary passion and hatred of the exploiters, and icy in their wondrous philosophic profundity. . . .” It is impossible to write more choicely. A philosophic profundity which turns into an iceberg at the same time that the flames of hatred flare. It is clear that at the mere sight of Capital the editors of Pravda get fever and chills. Further on, mention is made of the “immortal and destructive (?) lines on the Gotha program” and of the “flame-belching pamphlet” on the Paris Commune. In short, the flame-belching functionaries-in-waiting write in a wondrous manner: the reader breaks out in a rash of burns and blisters. But the first prize indubitably goes to D. Zaslavsky. In the literary sense he is immeasurably more literate than the rest, and in regards to flame-belching pathos he can give anybody cards and spades. Zaslavsky concludes his article with the following words: “It was not by accident that the remarkable and well-worth-studying friendship between Marx and Engels found its counterpart in the remarkable kinship, the great friendship between Lenin and Stalin.” An immortal Russian satirist has
made a remark bearing upon such a case. Said he: "After this, the son of a gun squats on his haunches and waits to be petted."

Marx and Engels were bound together by forty years of titanic mental labor. The most informed and penetrating students of Marxism, like Ryazanov, have been unable—for it is unthinkable in general—to conclusively establish the line of demarcation between their creative work. As regards Lenin and . . . Stalin, we want to be shown not a line of demarcation, but a line of contiguity. In the titanic mental labor of Lenin, Stalin occupied the post of an ordinary "activist" side by side with a score of others. As regards "friendship" it is enough to recall Lenin's testament and his letter written on his deathbed, in which he broke off all personal and comradely relations with Stalin. But why pick on . . . D. Zaslavsky? He is the same scribbler who in 1917 hounded Lenin in the bourgeois chauvinist press as the paid agent of the German Kaiser. In a whole series of articles Lenin never made reference to Zaslavsky otherwise than as a "scoundrel." Only after the NEP and after the first pogrom against the Left Opposition was this individual able to enter the employ of the Soviet bureaucracy. At any rate, he remains true to himself in one thing: he slandered Lenin while Lenin was alive and he continues to slander him after he is dead. Such gentlemen are capable of proposing, say, for the eighteenth anniversary of October, to rename a dozen volumes of Lenin as the Collected Works of Stalin, in accordance with the same method by which a city like Tsaritsin is renamed Stalingrad: a single decree—and the matter is in the bag.

But let the lackeys sweat as they will, they will not attain their goal: we will stand in defense of Marx and Engels and Lenin against all the institutes and all the Zaslavskys.
Dear Comrades:

1. I read the German circular letters which I received from — with the greatest interest. First of all they give an informative picture of the internal situation. Second, they prove that we have cadres in Germany whose Marxist capabilities we can really be proud of. What the report from J— says about the situation in the factories is very important, and it further encourages me in the analysis I put forward in the comments on the theses of the Emigre Committee.

The second report (on the German situation) is highly revealing, also, with respect to the church question, over which there has been far too much debate. Possibly some German comrades still have too purely propagandistic an orientation. This is connected with the attitude taken by Unser Wort. The paper has to be strengthened. It has a base in Germany and with the intervention of our cadres we can expand it successfully. However, the prerequisite is that Unser Wort appear regularly, at least twice a month, and at least once a month with six pages. This would provide the opportunity to give two pages to more current, agitational themes, without disregarding theoretical questions and international information. Every issue should have, I repeat, some columns filled with little notes (five to ten lines) about the internal affairs of the workers' organizations. The German comrades are highly interested in these questions, as the reports show.

2. I hear that some comrades think or perhaps thought that the turn on the SAP question, externally connected with the article about alchemy, came about in a way that was not completely democratic. This question seems to me of such importance for an understanding of democratic centralism that I would like to say a few words about it here. The last convention of the IKD
unquestionably adopted the line of approaching the SAP. At that time the representatives of the Emigre Committee considered this perspective hopeless. But they rightly thought it necessary to give the German section the opportunity to go through its own experience in this field, for it was really much easier to come to an appropriate conclusion abroad (where the leadership was close at hand) than in Germany. But the sense of the resolution passed by the convention was not that it should be valid forever. It was a question of making a practical attempt and proceeding further on the basis of the results obtained. The attitude of the SAP leadership abroad, as well as the reports from Germany itself, showed without any doubt that there was nothing more to be gained by negotiating with the SAP and that these negotiations only serve to paralyze our own organization. This was what the Emigre Committee thought. It was in agreement with the conclusions I drew from our international experience. In the discussion with Comrade Braun the agreement on this question proved to be unanimous.

What should the leadership do in this situation? Several comrades thought that the leadership should initiate a new discussion and on that basis hold a new convention or a referendum. This would be real “democracy.” Perhaps. But of revolutionary centralism, initiative, readiness to act, and sense of responsibility, there would not be the slightest trace. If you proceed in such a way that in every question the responsibility is left up to the membership, there is no point in having a leadership. An adding machine would do. Especially given the German conditions, the idea of pure party democracy (minus Bolshevik centralism) is clearly utopian. The leadership must also have the courage to declare that an action decided on by the next highest body, the convention, is outlived, and draw the necessary conclusions from this. Of course, in doing so the leadership must be sure that it is expressing the genuine experience of the majority of the organization. And the Emigre Committee and the author of the article were firmly convinced of this.

Was this assessment confirmed? Completely. First by the fact that after brief consideration the comrades in Germany concurred with this necessary turn. Second, by the SAP’s latest heroics in the international arena. I repeat, a leadership which in a critical moment cannot summon up the courage to carry out a turn within twenty-four hours, on its own initiative, without losing time, and while still reflecting the experience of the whole
organization, is not worth calling a leadership. Of course, in doing so they run the risk of committing a blunder, of being chastised by the organization, or even of being removed. Every profession has its hazards, and this in particular is the hazard of the leadership profession.

With Communist greetings,
L. Trotsky
THE TERROR OF BUREAUCRATIC SELF-PRESERVATION

September 6, 1935

We have a remarkable document in the letter of Comrade Tarov, one of the Soviet Bolshevik-Leninists, a mechanic who of necessity finds himself today outside the Soviet Union. Early in 1928, Tarov was arrested as a "Left Oppositionist"; he spent three years in exile, and four years in prison, in harsh solitary confinement, and then, once again, several months in exile.

What crimes did Tarov commit against the revolution? It appears that as early as 1923 he was of the opinion that the October Revolution had created the opportunities for immeasurably more rapid industrialization than was the case with capitalist countries. Together with other Tarovs he raised the alarm against the policy of staking everything upon the kulak, which would lead to a crisis for the entire Soviet system. He demanded that efforts be focused upon the peasant poor and the systematic switching of the rural economy onto the rails of collectivization. Such were his chief crimes for the period of 1923-26. He was more penetrating and farsighted than the ruling upper crust. In any case, such were the crimes of the tendency for which Tarov bore the responsibility.

In 1926, all the Tarovs demanded that the Soviet trade unions bring to an end the political friendship with the General Council of British Trades Unions, which was betraying the miners' strike, together with the general strike: it was precisely for this service that Citrine, the head of the General Council, the former ally of Stalin and Tomsky, was knighted by His Royal Majesty during the Jubilee celebrations. Together with other Leninists, Tarov protested in 1926 against the Stalinist theory of a "democratic workers' and peasants' state"—a theory which impelled the Polish Communist Party to support Pilsudski's coup. But even this does not exhaust the list of Tarov's crimes. As an internationalist, he was vitally interested in the fate of the
Chinese Revolution. He considered those Kremlin decisions criminal which compelled the young and heroic Communist Party of China to enter into the Kuomintang and to submit to its discipline; in addition to which, the Kuomintang itself, a purely bourgeois party, was accepted into the Communist International as a "sympathetic" organization. The time came when Stalin, Molotov, and Bukharin sent a telegram from Moscow, calling upon Chinese Communists to put down the agrarian movement of the peasants, so as not to "scare away" Chiang Kai-shek and his officers. Tarov, together with other disciples of Lenin, considered such a policy to be a betrayal of the revolution.

The Tarovs had several other similar crimes to their credit. From 1923 on, they demanded that work proceed on the drafting of the five year plan; and when, in 1927, the draft of the first five year plan was finally outlined, all the Tarovs argued that the annual increase in industry should be set not at 5-9 percent, as was done by the Political Bureau, but at two or three times that. True, this was all soon confirmed. But since the Tarovs, by virtue of their foresight, had exposed the backwardness of the ruling upper crust, they were therefore guilty of undermining the revolution (i.e., the prestige of the bureaucracy).

The Tarovs paid a great deal of attention to the working class youth. In their opinion, the youth had to be given an opportunity to do some independent thinking, to study, make mistakes, and learn to stand on their own feet. They protested against the fact that revolutionary leadership had been replaced by a regime of bulldozing corporals. They forecasted that this barracks-room strangulation of the youth must lead to demoralization and to the growth of outright hooligan and reactionary moods in its midst. These warnings were branded as an attempt to set the young generation against the old, as a mutiny against the "Old Guard"—the very same "Old Guard" which has been slandered, smashed, and committed to jails, or demoralized by Stalin with the aid of his prae tors.

Such are Tarov's crimes. To this we must add that the Bolshevik-Leninists, including Tarov, never attempted to impose their ideas by force. They did not call for an uprising against the bureaucracy. For a period of almost ten years they sought and hoped to convince the party. They fought primarily for their right to bring their criticism and their proposals before the party. But the bureaucracy, which had raised itself to autocratic rule upon the defeats of the world proletariat, counterposed to the Leninist Opposition not the force of argument, but the armed detachments of the GPU. Tarov happened to be among several thousands
who were arrested during the Thermidorean annihilation of the Opposition in 1928.157 Thereafter he spent more than three years in exile, and about four years in jail. From his present brief story the reader is able to acquaint himself with the conditions that prevail in these jails: abuse, corporal punishment, the fourteen-day torture of a hunger strike, and, in answer to it, forced feeding and new abuse. All this because the Bolshevik-Leninists posed the problem of collectivization before Stalin did, because they issued a timely warning against the consequences of the perfidious alliance with Chiang Kai-shek and the future Sir Walter Citrine. . . .

But then came a new thunderclap from the blue: Hitler came to power in Germany. The policy of the Communist International had cleared the road for him. When Hitler was hoisting himself into the saddle, his stirrup was held by none other than Stalin. All the floods of eloquence poured forth by the Seventh Congress will not wash away from the ennobled leaders the blots of this historic crime. All the more rabid became the hatred of the Stalinist clique for all those who had foreseen and forewarned in time. The captive Leninists had to pay with their ribs for the deadly policy which combined ignorance with perfidy: it is precisely this combination that provides the essence of Stalinism.

Yet Tarov, alarmed by the triumph of National Socialism, turned to the authorities in Moscow with the following proposal: he pledges to give up Oppositionist activity, in return for which he, Tarov, is to be given the right to return to the ranks of the party, as a disciplined soldier, and there carry on the struggle against the fascist danger.

It is not difficult to explain the psychological causes for Tarov’s step. There is no position more torturous for a revolutionist than to be bound hand and foot while the imperialist reaction is capturing one proletarian trench after another. But Tarov’s political proposal was doubly unrealistic. In the first place, to support Stalin’s struggle against fascism uncritically is, in the last analysis, to help fascism—this has been irrefutably proved by the entire history of the last twelve years; in the second place, Tarov’s proposal was not acceptable, and could not have been accepted by the bureaucracy. Even a single Leninist unselfishly and courageously fulfilling the tasks assigned him, in full view, without recanting publicly and without spitting upon the best traditions of Bolshevism, would be a silent refutation of the legend entitled “Trotskyism as the vanguard of the bourgeois counterrevolution.” This asinine legend wobbles on its mythical underpinnings, and has to be propped up daily. Furthermore,
Tarov’s example, if he were successful, would inevitably arouse emulation. This could not be allowed. It is impermissible to allow bold men, who surrender only the public expression of their views, to return to the party—no, they must renounce their ideas, their right to think altogether. They must spit upon views which have been confirmed by the entire course of events.

Nothing so characterizes the Stalinist regime, its internal corruption and fraud, as its utter inability to assimilate a sincere revolutionist who is ready to serve obediently, but refuses to lie. No! Stalin needs apostates, bellowing renegades, people who are shamelessly ready to call black white, who beat their hollow breasts pathetically, while their minds are actually occupied with pie-cards, automobiles, and summer resorts. The party and the state apparatus is overrun with such swindlers, double-dealers, and corrupt cynics. They are unreliable but indispensable: bureaucratic absolutism, which has come into irreconcilable contradiction with the economic and cultural requirements of the workers’ state, is in acute need of swindlers ready for anything.

Thus, Tarov’s attempt to return to the ranks of the official “party” met with complete failure. Tarov was left with no recourse other than to flee from the Soviet Union. His experience, for which he paid so dearly, is an invaluable lesson for both the Soviet and the world proletariat. The Open Letter issued by the organizations standing under the banner of the Fourth International finds a new and a clear-cut confirmation in the Tarov case. The Open Letter states: “By means of persecutions, frame-ups, amalgams, and bloody repressions, the ruling clique seeks to nip in the bud every manifestation of Marxist thought. Nowhere in the world is genuine Leninism hounded so bestially as in the USSR.”

These lines, superficially considered, appear exaggerated: Isn’t Leninism being ruthlessly hounded in Italy and Germany? As a matter of fact there is no exaggeration in the Open Letter. In fascist countries the Leninists are subjected to persecution along with other opponents of the regime. Hitler, as is well known, vented his greatest malice upon his oppositionist brothers-in-arms in the party, the “left wing,” which reminded him of his own yesterday. The Stalinist bureaucracy vents the same bestial cruelty upon the Bolshevik-Leninists, the genuine revolutionists, who embody the traditions of the party and of the October Revolution.

The political conclusions to be drawn from the case of Comrade Tarov are quite evident. It would be sheer insanity to think of
"reforming" and "regenerating" the CPSU today. A bureaucratic machine which serves primarily the purpose of keeping the proletariat in a vise cannot possibly be made to serve the interests of the proletariat. Revolutionary terror, which during the heroic period of the revolution served as a weapon in the hands of the awakened masses against the oppressors, and as a direct safeguard of the rule of the proletariat, has been completely supplanted by the cold-blooded and venomous terror of the bureaucracy, which fights like a mad beast for its posts and sinecures, for its uncontrolled and autocratic rule—against the proletarian vanguard. This is precisely why Stalinism is doomed!

On February 20, 1889, Engels wrote Kautsky a truly remarkable letter—published only recently—on the class relations during the epoch of the Great French Revolution. Among other things, it states the following: "As far as the Terror is concerned, it was a war measure, insofar as it had a meaning. Not only did it serve to maintain at the helm the class, or fraction of a class, which alone could secure victory for the revolution (that was the least thing after the victory over the uprisings), but also assured it freedom of movement, elbow-room, the possibility of concentrating its forces at the decisive points—the frontiers." But once the frontiers had been safeguarded, thanks to military victories, and after the destruction of the frenzied Commune, which had sought to carry liberty to other peoples on bayonets, terror outlived itself as a weapon of the revolution. Robespierre, it is true, was at the height of his power; but, says Engels, "henceforth terror became a means of self-preservation for him, and thus it was reduced to an absurdity" (Engels's emphasis).

These lines are remarkable for their simplicity and profundity. There is no need here to expatiate upon the distinction between the present and the past epoch: it is quite well known. No less clear is the difference between the historic roles played by Robespierre and Stalin: the former assured the victory of the revolution over its internal and foreign enemies during the most critical period of its existence; but in Russia this work was accomplished under the leadership of Lenin. Stalin came to the forefront only after this period had come to a close. He is the living embodiment of a bureaucratic Thermidor. In his hands, terror was and remains primarily the instrument for crushing the party, the trade unions, and the soviets, and for establishing a personal dictatorship which lacks only . . . an imperial crown. Terror, which has fulfilled its revolutionary mission and has become transformed into a weapon of self-preservation for
usurpers, thus transforms itself into an "absurdity," to use Engels's expression. In the language of dialectics this means that it is doomed to inevitable collapse.

The senseless bestialities that grew out of bureaucratic methods of collectivization, as well as the vile reprisals and violence against the best elements of the proletarian vanguard, inevitably arouse exasperation, hatred, and yearning for revenge. This atmosphere engenders moods of individual terrorism among the youth. The petty Ukrainian Bonaparte S. Kosior,\textsuperscript{161} famous for his brazenness, said not long ago that Trotsky "calls in the press for the assassination of Soviet leaders," while Zinoviev and Kamenev—as proved, if you please, by the Yenukidze case—participated directly in the preparation of the Kirov assassination. Since everybody who has access to the writings of Trotsky can easily verify whether or not Trotsky has called for "the assassination of Soviet leaders" (if one were to allow, in general, that there are mature people who have to verify canards of this sort), this itself casts sufficient light upon the other half of Kosior's lie, that concerning Zinoviev and Kamenev. We do not know whether there are now in process of manufacture any fraudulent documents with the aid of "Latvian consuls" or "Wrangel officers."\textsuperscript{162} The Kosiors of the Bonapartist regime are still able to hound, strangle, and shoot quite a number of impeccable revolutionists, but this will not change the essence of the matter: their terror is an historical absurdity. It will be swept away together with its organizers.

Do we call for the assassination of the Soviet leaders? The bureaucrats who have deified themselves may be sincerely under the delusion that they are making history, but we on our part do not share this illusion. Stalin did not create the apparatus. The apparatus created Stalin—after its own image. The replacement of Kirov by Zhdanov changed absolutely nothing in the state of affairs.\textsuperscript{163} Unlike the situation that prevails with goods for mass consumption, the assortment of Kosiors is unlimited. They vary from one another a centimeter or so in height and a few centimeters in girth. That is all! In everything else they are as alike as their own eulogies of Stalin. The replacement of Stalin himself by one of the Kaganoviches would introduce almost as little novelty as did the replacement of Kirov by Zhdanov.\textsuperscript{164} But would a Kaganovich have sufficient "authority"? There is no cause for worry; all the Kosiors—the first, the fifteenth, and the one thousand and first—would immediately provide the necessary authority for him by means of the bureaucratic conveyor,
just as they created Stalin's "authority," i.e., "authority" for themselves, for their uncontrolled rule.

That is why individual terror appears so pathetic and puny in our eyes. No, we have not unlearned the ABC of Marxism. Not only the fate of the Soviet bureaucracy but the fate of the Soviet regime as a whole depends on factors of a world historic magnitude. Only successes on the part of the international proletariat can restore self-confidence to the Soviet proletariat. The basic condition for revolutionary successes is the unification of the world proletarian vanguard around the banner of the Fourth International. The struggle for this banner must be waged in the USSR as well—prudently but unyieldingly. The historical absurdity of an autocratic bureaucracy in a "classless" society cannot and will not endlessly endure. The proletariat that has achieved three revolutions will once again lift up its head. But won't the bureaucratic "absurdity" resist? The proletariat will find a large enough broom. And we shall assist them.
THE REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONALISTS NEED OUR HELP!\textsuperscript{165}

September 7, 1935

The recently published letter of the Bolshevik-Leninist who made his escape from the USSR depicts a horrible scene of persecutions and reprisals on the part of the bureaucracy, and a no less horrible picture of the physical straits in which hundreds and thousands of devoted, unselfish, and self-sacrificing revolutionists find themselves. Recently their terms of exile and imprisonment have been extended two, three, and even five years, without any new charges whatsoever. A considerable number of them have been in prison and exile since the beginning of 1928, i.e., for a period of almost eight years. It is apparent even from the official Soviet press that additional hundreds, if not thousands, of old and young revolutionists have been subjected to arrests, exile, and incarceration during the current year, for not sharing the international policy of Stalin, or for merely disapproving of his brutality with regard to Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others.

Letters from exile received by relatives, as rare exceptions, depict a situation that is hopeless and gives no sign of improvement. For instance, an old revolutionist writes from exile: “There is no sense in sending money here; it cannot be used here. . . . Nothing is to be obtained here, not even vegetables.” Another exile, cut off from his friends for years, deprived of the opportunity to correspond with his family, even with his children, writes on a postcard which came through accidentally: “We are on the road of the old Lafargues”—thus hinting at an attempt at collective suicide, most probably through a hunger strike.\textsuperscript{166} News from prison arrives much more rarely than from exile, and depicts new horrors, which leave far behind everything that Stalin perpetrated during the first years of his struggle against the Left Opposition. That is how matters stand.
Moral and material assistance must be given, and it is needed immediately. The moral aid should consist in the exposure on the widest scale possible of the Bonapartist bestialities to which the captive revolutionists are being subjected. Any scrap of information that arrives must be given the widest possible circulation; the attention and sympathy of the workers must be aroused for those true heroes who have remained faithful to the banner of revolutionary internationalism over a period of several years, under conditions of complete isolation, cut off from all information and subjected to unheard-of privations. It is necessary to protest openly and with all our might and main against the Stalinist terror, which is directed not in defense of the revolution against the class enemies but in defense of the autocratic rule of the bureaucracy against the vanguard workers.

The material assistance must come in the form of collections of funds for transmission to addresses in our possession: the men in exile and in prison, wherever they are able, share the remitted sums fraternally among themselves.

But agitation, protests, and collection of funds do not suffice. It is necessary to provide constant and correct organizational assistance to those revolutionary internationalists about whom the Second and Third Internationals remain unconcerned, who are ignored by the reformist trade unions, and whom the bourgeoisie of the entire world rightly consider to be their bitterest enemies.

The question, of course, is not restricted to the USSR. In China, the prisons of Chiang Kai-shek, the former ally of Stalin, hold numerous Bolshevik-Leninists, with Chen Tu-hsiu at their head—an old revolutionist, founder of the Communist Party, who is serving an eleven-year prison term. The leaders of the so-called “united front” painstakingly avoid all reference to the very name of Chen Tu-hsiu, a name that should, however, become known to every revolutionary worker. In Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland, Greece, Indochina, and a number of other countries, the fighters for the Fourth International fill the jails and concentration camps of the reactionary dictatorships in increasing numbers. Even in Holland, the classic land of “democracy,” revolutionary internationalists like Sneevliet and Schmidt have paid a heavy toll to the jails of capitalism during recent years.

However, concerned here are not only the Bolshevik-Leninists and the fighters for the Fourth International. In the countries of the old and new worlds, the numerous revolutionary organizations and groups that stand outside both old Internationals and
that have not taken their place under the banner of the New International count no few victims in their own ranks. The same applies to the colonies. It suffices to name, for instance, the Indian revolutionist Roy, now serving a fourteen-year jail sentence, who was shamefully betrayed by the Comintern, in whose ranks he had fought.\textsuperscript{168}

The still closer drawing together of the Second and Third Internationals, as well as the trade union bureaucracies, on a common platform of social patriotism—the ground for which was laid by the Moscow congress—holds in store especially severe trials for the proletarian fighters, who stand under the banner of internationalism and revolutionary defeatism. Screening themselves by patriotic necessity, and even perhaps by concern for the “defense of the USSR,” the police and the prosecuting attorneys of capital will henceforth deal the internationalists redoubled blows, in order thus to remove the obstacles in the path of the “united front” of Stalin-Laval-Cachin-Blum-Jouhaux,\textsuperscript{169} and also in the path of . . . the new imperialist war. Whoever fails to see this perspective is blind, or at any rate nearsighted. Revolutionists must prepare themselves beforehand for supreme trials and sacrifices.

The working class is divided into different political camps; between those organizations which enter into neither the Second nor the Third International there are also serious disagreements. These cannot be eliminated artificially. But if there is any sphere in which honest revolutionary workers can and should combine their efforts, it is in the organization of assistance to the fighters who are captives of the bourgeoisie and who have been betrayed by the social patriots. It is necessary to set immediately about creating an international interparty association to give aid to the revolutionists persecuted for their fidelity to the principles of internationalism.

All the parties and groups standing under the banner of the Fourth International would of course readily join such an organization. But this is not enough. It is necessary to come to an agreement with all the other independent revolutionary parties, as well as the left-wing minorities within the old Internationals and the trade unions. The question is of a burning political character. Great battles are ahead. It is necessary not only to build the army, but also at the same time to prepare the Red Cross and the sanitary corps.
I owe an apology to the readers of our international press for not having commented upon the Seventh Congress prior to now, despite several reminders. The causes for this lie beyond my control. On the one hand, the debates at the congress were extremely amorphous and intentionally diffuse, and on the other hand, they were purely theatrical in character. The questions were discussed and settled behind the scenes, often over the telephone connecting the Kremlin with the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. There was some semblance of a conflict of opinions within the narrow bureaucratic circle. However, once the decision was finally reached by the Political Bureau, orators were appointed who were instructed to present the decision in such a manner as would least compromise the upper crust of the Communist International, and, in any case, cast not the slightest shadow upon the infallibility of the “Leader.” What passed for “discussion” at the congress amounts, in fact, to a long and, one must add, a frightfully boring comedy, with roles cast beforehand. Moreover, the actors are rotten.

For this reason, the reports of the discussions must be scrutinized in the same manner as one goes over diplomatic documents, asking at every step the questions: What does the orator really have in mind? What is he slurring over? And why? Diplomatic documents are usually worded succinctly; the speeches of the reporters at the congress, however, are inordinately long. The wearisome scope of the reports provides an added measure of bureaucratic self-insurance: it is necessary to let loose the greatest possible number of the least precise assertions possible, without getting embarrassed over their contradictory nature. One never can tell precisely which of these assertions will come in handy in the future. Then, add to this the frightfully bad newspaper accounts. Where clear thinking and a political will obtain, when an open ideological struggle takes place, which is always an aid to precision of thought, the form of presentation...
can be clear, good, and convincing; but when a functionary-orator is busy covering up his own tracks, and those of his superiors, and when the functionary-journalist retails the muddled speech in constant panic lest he run afoul of a submarine reef, then the newspaper reports inevitably amount to a miserable hash of generalities poorly strung together. Such are the reports in *l'Humanite* which I have had to use up to now. When, for instance, I sought on the basis of these reports to determine even approximately what the working class movement in Japan amounts to, under the conditions of the present-day Far East crisis, and the role played in it by the Communist Party of Japan, I was able to establish conclusively only one fact, namely, that in Japanese the impassioned love for the Leader is expressed by the word, "Banzai!" But I was already equipped with this piece of information, since it is proper to yell "Banzai!" in honor of the Mikado as well. Incidentally, at the congress, Stalin scintillated in silence, also after the Mikado's fashion.

The so-called "discussions" revolved around two questions: the policy of the "united front" (today, that is the only policy in existence) *against fascism*, and the same policy *against war*. The speeches of the reporters, the fulsome and flat report of Dimitrov as well as jesuitical sophistry of Ercoli, added nothing to those asseverations which during recent months flooded the press of the Communist International, particularly in France. The experience of the French Communist Party occupied the center of the stage, and it was boosted as an exemplar worthy of emulation. But it was precisely upon the basic questions before the congress that the organizations of the Fourth International had already expressed themselves quite adequately. In the light of the debates at Moscow, we, the revolutionary Marxists, do not have to change a single line in all we have hitherto said on the questions of war, fascism, the "united front," and the "People's Front."

This does not at all mean to say that we can disregard the Seventh Congress. Far from it! Whether the debates be brimful of meaning or hollow, the congress itself represents a stage in the evolution of a certain section of the working class. It is important if only for the fact that by legalizing the opportunistic turn in France, it immediately transplants it to the rest of the world. We have a curious specimen of bureaucratic thinking in that while granting, on paper at any rate, a liberal autonomy to all sections, and while even issuing instructions to them to do independent thinking and adapt themselves to their own national conditions, the congress, immediately thereupon, proclaimed that all coun-
tries in the world, fascist Germany as well as democratic Norway, Great Britain as well as India, Greece as well as China, are equally in need of the "People's Front," and, wherever possible, a government of the People's Front. The congress is important because it marks—after a period of vacillation and fumbling—the final entry of the Communist International into its "fourth period," which has for its slogan, "Power to Daladier!"—for its banner, a tricolor—for its hymn, the "Marseillaise," drowning out the "Internationale."

In any case, the resolutions would have provided a great deal more than the verbose discussions toward the appraisal of the depth of the turn and its concrete content pertaining to conditions in different countries. The drafts of the resolutions, however, were not published beforehand upon a single one of the questions that were discussed. The discussions did not take place around definitive documents, but seeped over an illimitable expanse. The special committee busied itself with drafting the resolutions only after all the orators had bellowed praise to the Leader and begun packing their bags. It is an unprecedented fact: the official congress adjourned without arriving at any decisions. This job has been left to the new leaders, appointed prior to the congress (Dimitrov!), who are to take into consideration, insofar as possible, the moods and wishes of the honorable delegates. Thus, the very mechanics of this congress made it extremely difficult to give any sort of a timely critical evaluation of its labors. Today, at any rate, the principal material of the congress has been published, and thus, at last, it is possible to draw up theoretical and political balance sheets. I will try to fulfill this task as soon as possible in a special pamphlet or series of articles. At this time, I should like to sketch in advance a few political conclusions in connection with the turn of the Communist International, which was sealed at the congress.

It would be a fatal mistake on our part to think that the theory and practice of the "third period" has been entirely and painlessly liquidated by the "self-criticism" of the leaders, and that the opportunistic and patriotic turn is guaranteed a cloudless future. While the bureaucracy has consigned to the flames all it so highly revered with such scandalous ease, it is otherwise with the masses. Their attitude toward slogans is more serious and genuine. The moods of the "third period" are still entirely alive in the consciousness of those workers who follow the Communist International. And precisely these moods were in evidence among the French Communists in Toulon and Brest. The leaders were able to curb the opposition of the rank and file for a time only by
giving "secret" assurances on their oath that here was involved a cunning maneuver aimed to hoodwink the Radicals and the Socialists, take the masses away from them, and then... "then we will show ourselves for what we are." On the other hand, the pro-coalition and patriotic turn of the Communist Party is attracting to it the sympathy of new strata considerably removed from the working class, those who are very patriotic and very much dissatisfied with the financial decrees and who see in the Communist Party only the most energetic wing of the People's Front. This means that inside the Communist Party and on its periphery are accumulating to an increasing degree contradictory tendencies, which must lead to an explosion or series of explosions. From this flows the duty for the organizations of the Fourth International to follow most attentively the internal life of the Communist parties in order to support the revolutionary proletarian tendency against the leading social-patriotic faction, which will henceforth become more and more enmeshed in the attempts of class collaboration.

Our second conclusion touches upon centrist groupings and their relation to the strategic turn of the Communist International. The right-centrist elements will inevitably be attracted by this turn as though by a magnet. One need only read the theses on war by Otto Bauer, Zyromsky, and the Russian Menshevik Dan,\textsuperscript{173} to see clearly that it is precisely these consummate representatives of the golden mean who have expressed the very essence of the Comintern's new policy better than Dimitrov and Ercoli. But not they alone. The field of magnetic attraction also extends further to the left. \textit{Die Neue Front}, the organ of the SAP, in its last two issues (16 and 17), while screening itself behind a pile of cautious qualifications and warnings, in essence hails the opportunistic turn of the Communist International, as its emancipation from sectarian ossification, and its transition to the road of "more realistic" policy. How ill-judged are all the discussions to the effect that the SAP is supposedly in agreement with us on all the principled questions, but merely disapproves of our "methods." In reality, every major question reveals the incongruity between their principled position and ours. The impending war danger impelled the SAP to advance immediately, against our slogans, the demoralizing slogan of "disarmament," which is rejected even by Otto Bauer, Zyromsky, and Dan as "unrealistic." The same clash of positions became manifest in the evaluation of the evolution of the Communist International. In the very heat of the "third period" we forecasted with absolute precision that this paroxysm of ultraleftism would inevitably lead
to a new opportunistic zigzag, immeasurably more profound and fatal than all those preceding. In the days when the Communist International still played motley variations on the theme of "revolutionary defeatism," we warned that from the theory of "socialism in a single country" would inevitably flow social patriotic conclusions with all their treacherous consequences. The Seventh Congress of the Comintern provided a truly remarkable confirmation of the Marxian prognosis. And what happened? The leaders of the SAP, who have forgotten everything and learned nothing, hail the new and severest stage of an incurable disease, discovering in it symptoms . . . of a realistic convalescence. Isn't it clear that we have two irreconcilable positions before us?

From the above-indicated point of view, it will be in the highest degree interesting to see what will be the precise reaction to the Seventh Congress of that left centrist party which has hitherto been closest to the Communist International, namely, the ILP of England. Will it be attracted by the vile "realism" of the Seventh Congress ("united front," "masses," "middle classes," etc., etc.) or will it, on the contrary, be repelled by the belated and all the more fatal opportunism (class collaboration under the hollow banner of "antifascism," social patriotism under the cover of "defense of the USSR," etc.)? The fate of the ILP hinges upon this choice.

One may say, in general, that regardless of the isolated partial stages and episodes, the turn of the Communist International sealed by the congress simplifies the situation in the working class movement. It consolidates the social-patriotic camp, bringing closer the parties of the Second and Third Internationals, regardless of how matters proceed with organizational unity. It strengthens the centrifugal tendencies within the centrist groupings. To the revolutionary internationalists, i.e., the builders of the Fourth International, it opens up all the greater possibilities.
The resolution on Dimitrov’s report on fascism is finally here. It is just as longwinded and diffuse as the report itself. Here we will deal only with the first sentence of the first paragraph of the resolution, which takes up a bare dozen newspaper lines of l’Humanite, but which at the same time constitutes the cornerstone of the whole theoretical and strategic structure of the so-called Communist International.

Let us examine a little more closely what this cornerstone is like. We quote this first sentence literally: “The final, irrevocable victory of socialism in the land of the Soviets, a victory of world-historical significance, has enormously enhanced the power and the importance of the Soviet Union as the rampart of the exploited and oppressed of the entire world and has inspired the toilers to the struggle against capitalist exploitation, bourgeois reaction, and fascism, and for peace, freedom, and the independence of the peoples.”

The assertions contained in this sentence, however categorical they may sound, are false to the core. What is the “final, irrevocable victory of socialism in the land of the Soviets” supposed to mean? No official theoretician has tried to explain it to us. The resolution also spares itself the slightest hint of the criteria upon which this assertion is based. We must therefore call to mind all over again the ABC of Marxism. The victory of socialism, especially the “final, irrevocable” one, can only consist in this, that the average productivity of every member of the socialist society is higher, even substantially higher, than that of a capitalist worker. Even the most daring Comintern theoretician will not venture such an assertion with regard to the USSR. We hope to establish statistically in the near future the still very great backwardness of the Soviet Union with respect to both national and individual incomes. Our present task requires no such proof. The fact that the Soviet government must hold fast to
the monopoly of foreign trade, represents a sufficient confirmation of the existing backwardness—despite all the successes—of the Soviet economy. For if the costs of production in the country were lower than the capitalist costs, the monopoly of foreign trade would be superfluous. The latest reform of foreign trade, interpreted by many all-too-superficial observers as a surrender of the foreign trade monopoly, is in reality only a technico-bureaucratic reform, which does not in the least infringe upon the basic pillars of the monopoly. Since, on the other hand, the Soviet bureaucracy has based itself upon nationalized means of production since the introduction of the five year plan and collectivization, and, on the other hand, the Soviet product is still much more expensive than the capitalist one, the Soviet bureaucracy, for the sake of its own preservation, cannot abandon the foreign trade monopoly. This decisive fact—the low productivity of labor power in the Soviet Union—provides the key that puts us in a position to open up all the other secrets.

If the per capita national income in the USSR were approximately as high as in the United States of America, and if the bureaucracy did not squander unproductively and consume parasitically much too large a part of it, then the standard of living of the population would have to be incomparably higher than in the capitalist countries, the United States included. But that is not the case in the slightest degree. The Russian peasant, that is, the overwhelming mass of the population, still lives in deep poverty. Even the position of the majority of the industrial proletariat has not yet attained the American, or even the European, level. The honest establishment of this fact naturally says nothing, in any respect, against the socialist mode of production, for in the case of capitalism we are dealing with a decomposing system and in the case of socialism with one which is just in its incipiency. We ought not, however, content ourselves with the general tendencies of development, but characterize quite accurately the stage attained, lest we lose ourselves in meaningless commonplaces.

If the socialist society gave its members a halfway assured well-being, with the perspective of an uninterrupted improvement of the position of everyone, then the burning worries about individual existence would begin to vanish; greed, anxiety, and envy would make their appearance merely as increasingly rare remnants of the old state of affairs; economic solidarity would pass from a principle into a daily custom. That this is not the case in the least hardly needs to be proved: the creation of a
semiprivileged labor aristocracy under the fully privileged Soviet bureaucracy; the endeavors to translate all relationships among men into the language of money; the draconian laws for the protection of state property; finally, the truly barbaric law against "criminal" children; all these prove in the most striking, most irrefutable manner that socialism is still far from "irrevocably" assured in that field which is decisive precisely for socialism: in the consciousness of the people.

If socialism has "finally, irrevocably" triumphed, as the resolution dares to assert, then why does the political dictatorship continue to exist? Still more, why does it congeal with every passing day into a bureaucratic-Bonapartist regime of insufferable harshness, arbitrariness, and rottenness? A guaranteed, "irrevocably" rooted socialism cannot possibly require an omnipotent bureaucracy, with an absolute ruler on top of it, for the dictatorship in general is after all nothing but a state means of preserving and protecting the menaced and not the assured foundations of the socialist state. The intrepid attempt of many "theoreticians" to refer to external dangers is much too absurd to be taken seriously. A society whose socialist structure is assured, whose internal relations thus repose upon the solidarity of the overwhelming mass, does not require an internal dictatorship for protection from external foes, but only a technico-military apparatus, just as it requires a technico-economic apparatus for its welfare.

Also, the fear of war in which the Soviet bureaucracy lives, and which determines its whole international policy, can only be explained by the fact that socialist construction, upon which the Soviet bureaucracy bases itself, is, historically speaking, not yet assured. The struggle of the workers' state against a menacing capitalism is—at least it should be—a component part of the class struggle of the international working class. War thus has—at least it should have—the same significance for the workers' state as revolution has for the proletariat of the capitalist countries. We are of course against any "premature," artificially evoked revolution because, given an unfavorable relation of forces, it can lead only to defeat. The same holds true of war. A workers' state should avert it only if it is "premature," that is, if socialism is not yet finally and irrevocably assured. The current view that internally socialism is assured but that it may be crushed by military force is senseless: an economic system which effects a higher productivity of human labor cannot be overthrown by military measures. The victory of the semifeudal European coalition over Napoleon did not lead to the destruction of
France’s capitalist development but to its acceleration in the rest of Europe. History teaches that the victors—should they be situated on a lower economic and cultural plane than the vanquished—take over the latter’s technology, social relationships, and culture. It is not military force as such that menaces Soviet socialism, but the *cheap commodities* which would follow on the heels of the victorious capitalist armies. Moreover, if socialism really were assured in the Soviet Union in the above-described manner, that is, higher technology, higher productivity, higher well-being of the whole population, higher solidarity, there could be no possible talk of a military victory of the internally torn capitalist states over the Soviet Union.

We thus see how thoroughly false is the most important, the really decisive contention of the Seventh World Congress. Revolutionary Marxists would have said: the technical successes in the USSR are very significant; the economic successes lag behind. To guarantee even that “well-being” which obtains in the advanced capitalist countries and to reeducate the population, many years are still required, even if one disregards the internal contradictions and the increasingly destructive role of the Soviet bureaucracy, that is, two factors which are by themselves capable of demolishing the not-yet-assured social achievements. The decomposition of capitalism, the thrust of fascism, the growing war danger—all these processes stride forward much more rapidly than the construction of socialism in the USSR. Only narrow-minded fakers and bureaucratic pietists can think that this candid and honest posing of the question will dampen the “enthusiasm” of the international working class. Revolutionary enthusiasm cannot be permanently nurtured on lies. But lies form the basic pillar of the strategic system of the Comintern. Socialism is irrevocably assured in the USSR, on one-sixth of the world’s surface, if only the world proletariat will help to leave the Soviet state in peace. Thus the slogan is not preparation for the international revolution, but the *assurance of peace*. Thence the alliance with the “friends of peace,” the substitution of class collaboration for class struggle, the creation of the People’s Front with the Radical parties of finance capital, etc., etc. All these means are, in themselves, incapable of prolonging the peace, to say nothing of assuring it. Yet the whole peace program of the Comintern is strategically built upon the premise of an internally “assured” socialism. With this premise, the Seventh World Congress stands and falls; and it is, as indicated above, irrevocably false.
THE ILP AND
THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

In the Middle of the Road

September 18, 1935

If we were to leave aside the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (RSAP) of Holland, which stands under the banner of the Fourth International, we could surely say that the ILP of Britain stands on the left wing of the parties that adhere to the London-Amsterdam Bureau. In contrast to the SAP, which has shifted recently to the right, to the side of crassest petty-bourgeois pacifism, the ILP has undoubtedly undergone a serious evolution to the left. This became definitely revealed by Mussolini’s predatory assault upon Ethiopia. On the question of the League of Nations, on the role played in it by British imperialism, and on the “peaceful” policy of the Labour Party, the New Leader has perhaps carried the best articles in the entire labor press. But a single swallow does not make a spring, nor do a few excellent articles determine as yet the policy of a party. It is comparatively easy to take a “revolutionary” position on the question of war; but it is extremely difficult to draw from this position all the necessary theoretical and practical conclusions. Yet this is precisely the task.

Compromised by the experience of 1914-18, social patriotism has today found a new source to feed from, namely, Stalinism. Thanks to this, bourgeois chauvinism obtains the opportunity to unleash a rabid attack against the revolutionary internationalists. The vacillating elements, the so-called centrists, will capitulate inevitably to the onset of chauvinism on the eve of the war, or the moment it breaks out. To be sure, they will take cover behind the argument of “unity,” the need not to break away from mass organizations, and so on. The formulas of hypocrisy, which supply the centrists with a screen for their cowardice in the face of bourgeois public opinion, are quite diversified, but they all
serve the same purpose: to cover up capitulation. "Unity" with the social patriots—not a temporary coexistence with them in a common organization with a view to waging a struggle against them, but unity as a principle—is unity with one's own imperialism, and consequently, an open split with the proletariat of other nations. The centrist principle of unity at any price prepares for the most malignant split possible, along the lines of imperialist contradictions. Even today, we can observe in France the Spartacus group, which translates into the French language the ideas of the SAP, advocating, in the name of "unity" with the masses, political capitulation to Blum, who was, and remains, the chief agent of French imperialism within the working class.

After its split with the Labour Party, the ILP came into close contact with the British Communist Party and, through it, with the Communist International. The acute financial difficulties under which the New Leader labors right now indicate that the ILP was able to preserve complete financial independence from the Soviet bureaucracy and its methods of corrupting. This can only be a source of gratification. Nevertheless, the connection with the Communist Party did not pass without leaving a trace: despite its name, the ILP did not become really independent but turned into a sort of appendage to the Communist International. It did not pay the necessary attention to mass work, which cannot be carried on outside of the trade unions and the Labour Party; instead it was seduced by the Amsterdam-Pleyel masquerade, the Anti-Imperialist League, and other surrogates for revolutionary activity. As a result, it appeared to the workers to be a Communist party of the second order. So disadvantageous a position for the ILP did not arise, accidentally: it was conditioned by its lack of a firm principled basis. It is a secret to nobody that Stalinism long overawed the leaders of the ILP with those rubber-stamp formulas which comprise the miserable bureaucratic falsification of Leninism.

More than two years ago the writer of this article sought to arrive at an understanding with the leaders of the ILP by means of several articles and letters. The attempt was barren of results: during that period, our criticism of the Communist International seemed to the leaders of the ILP to be "preconceived," and "factionally," perhaps even "personally," motivated. Nothing remained except to yield the floor to time. For the ILP, the last two years have been scanty in successes, but bountiful in experience. The social-patriotic degeneration of the Communist International, the direct consequence of the theory and practice of "socialism in one country," was turned from a forecast into a
living, incontestable fact. Have the leaders of the ILP fully plumbed the meaning of this fact? Are they ready and able to draw all the necessary conclusions from it? The future of the ILP depends upon the answer to these questions.

From pacifism toward proletarian revolution—such has indubitably been the general tendency of the evolution of the ILP. But this development has far from reached a rounded-out program as yet. Worse yet: not uninfluenced by the hoary and expert opportunistic combinations of the German SAP, the leaders of the ILP have apparently halted in the middle of the road, and keep marking time.

In the following critical lines, we intend to dwell primarily upon two questions: the attitude of the ILP toward the general strike in connection with the struggle against war, and the position of the ILP on the question of the International. In the latter as well as in the former question there are to be found elements of a halfway attitude: on the question of the general strike this hesitancy assumes the guise of irresponsible radical phraseology; on the question of the International hesitancy pulls up short of the radical decision. And yet Marxism, and Leninism as the direct continuation of its doctrine, are absolutely irreconcilable both with an inclination to radical phraseology, and with the dread of radical decisions.

The question of the general strike has a long and rich history, in theory as well as practice. Yet the leaders of the ILP behave as if they were the first to run across the idea of general strike as a way to stop war. In this is their greatest error. Improvisation is impermissible precisely on the question of the general strike. The world experience of the struggle during the last forty years has been fundamentally a confirmation of what Engels had to say about the general strike toward the close of the last century, primarily on the basis of experience of the Chartists and, in part, the Belgians. Cautioning the Austrian Social Democrats against a much too flighty attitude toward the general strike, Engels wrote to Kautsky on November 3, 1893, as follows: “You yourself remark that the barricades have become antiquated (they may, however, prove useful again should the army turn one-third or two-fifths socialist and should the question arise of providing it with the opportunity to turn its bayonets), but the political strike must either prove victorious immediately by the threat alone (as in Belgium, where the army was very shaky), or it must end in a colossal fiasco, or, finally, lead directly to the barricades.”

These terse lines provide, incidentally, a remarkable exposition
of Engels's views on a number of questions. Innumerable controversies raged over Engels's famous introduction to Marx's *The Class Struggles in France* (1895), an introduction which was in its time modified and cut in Germany with a view to censorship. Philistines of every stripe have asserted hundreds and thousands of times during the last forty years that "Engels himself" had apparently rejected once and for all the ancient "romantic" methods of street fighting. But there is no need to refer to the past: one need only read on this subject the contemporary and inordinately ignorant and mawkish discourses of Paul Faure, Lebas, and others, who are of the opinion that the very question of armed insurrection is "Blanquism."180 However, if Engels rejected anything, it was first of all *putsches*, i.e., untimely flurries of a small minority; and secondly antiquated methods, that is to say, forms and methods of street fighting which did not correspond to the new technological conditions.

In the above-quoted letter, Engels corrects Kautsky, in passing, as if he were referring to something self-evident: barricades have become "antiquated" only in the sense that the bourgeois revolution has receded into the past, and the time for the socialist barricades has not come as yet. It is necessary for the army, one-third, or better still, two-fifths of it (these ratios, of course, are given only for the sake of illustration), to become imbued with sympathy for socialism; then the insurrection would not be a "putsch"; then the barricades would once again come into their own—not the barricades of the year 1848, to be sure, but the "new" barricades, serving, however, the same goal: to check the offensive of the army against the workers, to give the soldiers the opportunity and the time to sense the power of the uprising, and by this to create the most advantageous conditions for the army to pass over to the side of the insurrectionists.

How far removed are these lines of Engels—not the youth, but the man, seventy-three years of age!—from the asinine and reactionary attitude to the barricade as a piece of "romanticism"! Kautsky has found the leisure to publish this remarkable letter just recently, in 1935! Without engaging in a direct polemic with Engels, whom he never understood fully, Kautsky tells us smugly, in a special note, that toward the end of 1893, he had himself published an article in which he "developed the advantages of the democratic-proletarian method of struggle in democratic countries as against the policy of violence." These remarks about "advantages" (as if the proletariat has the freedom of choice!) have a particularly choice ring in our day, after the policies of the Weimar democracy, not without
Kautsky’s cooperation, have fully revealed all their . . . disadvantages. To leave no room for doubt as to his own attitude on Engels’s views, Kautsky goes on to add: “I defended then the same policy I defend today.” In order to defend “the same policy” Kautsky needed only to become a citizen of Czechoslovakia: outside of the passport, nothing has changed.

But let us return to Engels. He differentiates, as we have seen, between three cases in relation to the political strike:

1. The government takes fright at the general strike, and at the very outset, without carrying matters to an open clash, makes concessions. Engels points to the “shaky” condition of the army in Belgium as the basic condition for the success of the Belgian general strike (1893). A somewhat similar situation but on a much more colossal scale, occurred in Russia in October 1905. After the miserable outcome of the Russo-Japanese War, the czarist army was—or, at any rate, seemed—extremely unreliable. The Petersburg government, thrown into a mortal panic by the strike, made the first constitutional concessions (Manifesto of October 17, 1905).

It is all too evident, however, that unless the workers resort to decisive battles, the ruling class will make only such concessions as will not touch the basis of its rule. That is precisely how matters stood in Belgium and Russia. Are such cases possible in the future? They are inevitable in the countries of the East. They are, generally speaking, less probable in the countries of the West, although here too they are quite possible as partial episodes of the unfolding revolution.

2. If the army is sufficiently reliable, and the government feels sure of itself; if a political strike is promulgated from above; and if, at the same time, it is calculated not for decisive battles, but to “frighten” the enemy; then it can easily turn out a mere adventure, and reveal its utter impotence. To this we ought to add that after the initial experiences of the general strike, the novelty of which reacted upon the imagination of the popular masses as well as governments, several decades have elapsed—discounting the half-forgotten Chartists—in the course of which the strategists of capital have accumulated an enormous experience. That is why a general strike, particularly in the old capitalist countries, requires a painstaking Marxist accounting of all the concrete circumstances.

3. Finally, there remains a general strike which, as Engels put it, “leads directly to the barricades.” A strike of this sort can result either in complete victory or in defeat. But to shy away from battle, when the battle is forced by the objective situation, is
to lead inevitably to the most fatal and demoralizing of all possible defeats. The outcome of a revolutionary, insurrectionary general strike depends, of course, upon the relationship of forces, covering a great number of factors: the class differentiation of society, the specific weight of the proletariat, the mood of the lower layers of the petty bourgeoisie, the social composition and the political mood of the army, etc. However, among the conditions for victory, far from the last place is occupied by the correct revolutionary leadership and its clear understanding of the conditions and methods of the general strike and of its transition to open revolutionary struggle.

Engels's classification must not, of course, be taken dogmatically. In present-day France not partial concessions but power is indubitably in question: the revolutionary proletariat or fascism—which? The working class masses want to struggle. But the leadership applies the brakes, hoodwinks and demoralizes the workers. A general strike can flare up just as the movements flared up in Toulon and Brest. Under these conditions, independently of its immediate results, a general strike will not of course be a "putsch" but a necessary stage in the mass struggle, the necessary means for casting off the treachery of the leadership and for creating within the working class itself the preliminary conditions for a victorious uprising. In this sense the policy of the French Bolshevik-Leninists, who have advanced the slogan of general strike, and who explain the conditions for its victory, is entirely correct. The French cousins of the SAP, the Spartacists, who at the beginning of the struggle are already assuming the role of strikebreakers, come out against this slogan.

We should also add that Engels did not point out another "category" of general strike, examples of which have been provided in England, Belgium, France, and some other countries: we refer here to cases in which the leadership of the strike previously, i.e., without a struggle, arrives at an agreement with the class enemy as to the course and outcome of the strike. The parliamentarians and the trade unionists perceive at a given moment the need to provide an outlet for the accumulated ire of the masses, or they are simply compelled to jump in step with a movement that has flared over their heads. In such cases they come scurrying through the backstairs to the government and obtain permission to head the general strike, this with the obligation to conclude it as soon as possible, without any damage being done to the state crockery. Sometimes, far from always, they manage to haggle beforehand some petty concessions, to serve them as figleaves. Thus did the General Council of British
Trades Unions (TUC) in 1926. Thus did Jouhaux in 1934. Thus will they act in the future also. The exposure of these contemptible machinations behind the backs of the struggling proletariat enters as a necessary part into the preparation of a general strike.

To which type does a general strike belong which is specially intended by the ILP in the event of mobilization as a means to stop war at the very outset? We want to say beforehand: it pertains to the most ill-considered and unfortunate of all types possible. This does not mean to say that the revolution can never coincide with mobilization or with the outbreak of war. If a large-scale revolutionary movement is developing in a country, if at its head is a revolutionary party possessing the confidence of the masses and capable of going through to the end; if the government, losing its head, despite the revolutionary crisis, or just because of such a crisis, plunges headlong into a war adventure—then the mobilization can act as a mighty impetus for the masses, lead to a general strike of railwaymen, fraternization between the mobilized and the workers, seizure of important key centers, clashes between insurrectionists and the police and the reactionary sections of the army, the establishment of local workers’ and soldiers’ councils, and finally the complete overthrow of the government, and consequently, to stopping the war. Such a case is theoretically possible. If, in the words of Clausewitz, “war is the continuation of politics by other means,” then the struggle against war is also the continuation of the entire preceding policy of a revolutionary class and its party.

Hence it follows that a general strike can be put on the agenda as a method of struggle against mobilization and war only in the event that the entire preceding developments in the country have placed revolution and armed insurrection on the agenda. Taken, however, as a “special” method of struggle against mobilization, a general strike would be a sheer adventure. Excluding a possible but nevertheless exceptional case of a government plunging into war in order to escape from a revolution that directly threatens it, it must remain as a general rule that precisely prior to, during, and after mobilization the government feels itself strongest, and consequently is least inclined to allow itself to be scared by a general strike. The patriotic moods that accompany mobilization, together with the war terror, make hopeless the very execution of a general strike, as a rule. The most intrepid elements who, without taking the circumstances into account, plunge into the struggle would be crushed. The defeat and the partial annihilation of the vanguard would make revolutionary work difficult for a long time in the atmosphere of dissatisfaction that war breeds.
A strike called artificially must turn inevitably into a putsch, and into an obstacle in the path of the revolution.

In its theses accepted in April 1935, the ILP writes as follows: “The policy of the party aims at the use of a general strike to stop war and at social revolution should war occur.” An astonishingly precise but—sad to say—absolutely fictitious obligation! The general strike is not only separated here from the social revolution but also counterposed to it as a specific method to “stop war.” This is an ancient conception of the anarchists, which life itself smashed long ago. A general strike without a victorious insurrection cannot “stop war.” If, under the conditions of mobilization, the insurrection is impossible, then so is a general strike impossible.

In an ensuing paragraph we read: “The ILP will urge a general strike against the British government, if this country is in any way involved in an attack on the Soviet Union. . . .” If it is possible to forestall any war by a general strike, then of course it is all the more necessary to stop a war against the USSR. But here we enter into the realm of illusions: to inscribe in the theses a general strike as punishment for a given capital crime of the government is to commit the sin of revolutionary phrasemongering. If it were possible to call a general strike at will, then it would be best called today to prevent the British government from strangling India and from collaborating with Japan to strangle China. The leaders of the ILP will of course tell us that they have not the power to do so. But nothing gives them the right to promise that they will apparently have the power to call a general strike on the day of mobilization. And if they are able, why confine it to a strike? As a matter of fact, the conduct of a party during mobilization will flow from its preceding successes and from the situation in the country as a whole. But the aim of revolutionary policy should not be an isolated general strike, as a special means to “stop war,” but the proletarian revolution, into which a general strike will enter as an inevitable or a very probable integral part.

The ILP split from the Labour Party chiefly for the sake of keeping the independence of its parliamentary fraction. We do not intend here to discuss whether the split was correct at the given moment, and whether the ILP gleaned from it the expected advantages. We don’t think so. But it remains a fact about every revolutionary organization in England that its attitude to the masses and to the class is almost coincident with its attitude toward the Labour Party, which bases itself upon the trade unions. At this time, the question of whether to function inside
the Labour Party or outside it is not a principled question, but a question of actual opportunities. In any case, without a strong fraction in the trade unions, and consequently in the Labour Party itself, the ILP is doomed to impotence even today. Yet, for a long period the ILP attached much greater importance to the "united front" with the insignificant Communist Party than to work in mass organizations. The leaders of the ILP consider the policy of the opposition wing in the Labour Party incorrect out of considerations which are absolutely unexpected: "they (the opposition) criticize the leadership and policy of the party but, owing to the bloc vote and the form of organization of the party, they cannot change the personnel and policy of the executive and parliamentary party within the period necessary to resist capitalist reaction, fascism, and war" (p. 8).

The policy of the opposition in the Labour Party is unspeakably bad. But this only means that it is necessary to counterpose to it inside the Labour Party another, a correct Marxist policy. That isn't so easy? Of course not! But one must know how to hide one's activities from the police vigilance of Sir Walter Citrine and his agents until the proper time. But isn't it a fact that a Marxist faction would not succeed in changing the structure and policy of the Labour Party? With this we are entirely in accord: the bureaucracy will not surrender. But the revolutionists, functioning outside and inside, can and must succeed in winning over tens and hundreds of thousands of workers. The criticism directed by the ILP against the left-wing faction in the Labour Party is of an obviously artificial character. One would have much more reason for saying that the tiny ILP, by involving itself with the compromised Communist Party and thus drawing away from the mass organizations, hasn't a chance to become a mass party "within the period necessary to resist capitalist reaction, fascism, and war."

Thus the ILP considers it necessary for a revolutionary organization to exist independently within the national framework even at the present time. Marxist logic, it would seem, demands that this consideration be applied to the international arena as well. A struggle against war and for revolution is unthinkable without the International. The ILP deems it necessary for it to exist side by side with the Communist Party, and consequently against the Communist Party, and by this very fact it recognizes the need of creating against the Communist International—a new International. Yet the ILP dares not draw this conclusion. Why?

If in the opinion of the ILP the Comintern could be reformed, it
would be its duty to join its ranks and work for this reform. If, however, the ILP has become convinced that the Comintern is incorrigible, it is its duty to join with us in the struggle for the Fourth International. The ILP does neither. It halts midway. It is bent on maintaining a “friendly collaboration” with the Communist International. If it is invited to the next congress of the Communist International—such is the literal wording of its April theses of this year!—it will there fight for its position and in the interests of the “unity of revolutionary socialism.” Evidently, the ILP expected to be “invited” to the International. This means that its psychology in relation to the International is that of a guest, and not of a host. But the Comintern did not invite the ILP. What to do now?

It is necessary to understand first of all that really independent workers’ parties—independent not only of the bourgeoisie, but also of both bankrupt Internationals—cannot be built unless there is a close international bond between them, on the basis of the same principles, and provided there is a living interchange of experience and vigilant mutual control. The notion that national parties (which ones? on what basis?) must be established first, and coalesced only later into a new International (how will a common principled basis then be guaranteed?) is a caricature of the history of the Second International: the First and Third Internationals were both built differently. But today, under the conditions of the imperialist epoch, after the proletarian vanguard of all countries in the world has passed through many decades of a colossal and common experience, including the experience of the collapse of the two Internationals, it is absolutely unthinkable to build new, Marxist, revolutionary parties, without direct contact with the same work in other countries. And this means the building of the Fourth International.

To be sure, the ILP has in reserve a certain international association, namely, the London Bureau (IAG). Is this the beginning of a new International? Emphatically, no! The ILP comes out against “split” more decisively than any other participant: not for nothing has the bureau of those organizations who themselves split away inscribed on its banner . . . “unity.” Unity with whom? The ILP itself yearns exceedingly to see all revolutionary socialist organizations and all sections of the Communist International united in a single International, and that this International have a good program. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. The position of the ILP is all the more hopeless since nobody else shares it inside the London Bureau itself. On the other hand, the Communist International,
having drawn social-patriotic conclusions from the theory of socialism in one country, today seeks an alliance with powerful reformist organizations, and not at all with weak revolutionary groups. The April theses of the ILP console us: "... but they (i.e., the other organizations in the London Bureau) agree that the question of a new International is now theoretical (!), and that the form (!) which the reconstructed International will take will depend upon historical events (!) and the development of the actual working class struggle" (p. 20).

Remarkable reasoning! The ILP urges the unity of the "revolutionary socialist organizations" with the sections of the Communist International; but there is not and there cannot be any desire on the part of either for this unification. "But," the ILP consoles itself, the revolutionary socialist organizations are agreed upon... what? Upon the fact that it is still impossible to foresee today what "form" the reconstructed International will take. For this reason, the very question of the International ("Workers of the World Unite!") is declared to be "theoretical." With equal justification one might proclaim the question of socialism to be theoretical, since it is unknown what form it will take; besides, it is impossible to achieve the socialist revolution by means of a "theoretical" International.

For the ILP, the question of a national party and the question of the International rest on two different planes. The danger of war and fascism demands, as we were told, immediate work for the building of a national party. As regards the International, this question is... "theoretical." Opportunism reveals itself in nothing else more clearly and incontestably than in this principled counterposing of a national party to the International. The banner of "revolutionary socialist unity" serves only as a cover for the yawning gap in the policy of the ILP. Are we not justified in saying that the London Bureau is a temporary haven for vacillators, strays, and those who hope to be "invited" to one of the existing Internationals?

While acknowledging that the Communist Party has a "revolutionary and theoretical basis," the ILP discerns "sectarianism" in its conduct. This characterization is superficial, one-sided, and fundamentally false. Which "theoretical basis" has the ILP in mind? Is it Marx's *Capital*, Lenin's *Works*, the resolutions of the first congresses of the Comintern?—or the eclectic program of the Communist International accepted in 1928, the wretched theory of the "third period," "social fascism," and finally, the latest social patriotic avowals?

The leaders of the ILP make believe (at any rate, such was the
case up to yesterday) that the Communist International has preserved the theoretical basis that was established by Lenin. In other words, they identify Leninism with Stalinism. To be sure, they are unable to make up their minds to say it in so many words. But in their passing silently over the enormous critical struggle that took place first inside the Communist International and then outside it; in their refusal to study the struggle waged by the “Left Opposition” (the Bolshevik-Leninists) and to determine their attitude toward it, the leaders of the ILP turn out to be backward provincials in the sphere of the questions of the world movement. In this they pay tribute to the worst traditions of the insular working class movement.

As a matter of fact, the Communist International has no theoretical basis. Indeed, what sort of theoretical basis can there be, when yesterday’s leaders, like Bukharin, are pronounced to be “bourgeois liberals,” when the leaders of the day before yesterday, like Zinoviev, are incarcerated as “counterrevolutionists,” while the Manuilskys, Lozovskys, Dimitrovs, together with Stalin himself, never generally bothered much with questions of theory.183

The remark in relation to “sectarianism” is no less erroneous. Bureaucratic centristm, which seeks to dominate the working class, is not sectarianism but a specific refraction of the autocratic rule of the Soviet bureaucracy. Having burnt their fingers, these gentlemen are abjectly crawling today before reformism and patriotism. The leaders of the ILP took for gospel the assertion of the leaders of the SAP (poor counselors!) that the Comintern would be perfect, if not for its “ultraleft sectarianism.” In the meantime, the Seventh Congress has spurned the last remnants of “ultraleftism”; but as a result, the Communist International did not rise higher but fell still lower, losing all right to an independent political existence. Because the parties of the Second International are, in any case, more suitable for the policy of blocs with the bourgeoisie and for the patriotic corruption of workers: they have behind them an imposing opportunist record, and they arouse less suspicion on the part of bourgeois allies.

Aren’t the leaders of the ILP of the opinion that after the Seventh Congress they ought to radically reconsider their attitude toward the Communist International? If it is impossible to reform the Labour Party, then there are immeasurably fewer chances for reforming the Communist International. Nothing remains except to build the new International. True, in the ranks of the Communist parties quite a few honest revolutionary
workers are still to be found. But they must be led out from the quagmire of the Comintern onto the revolutionary road.

Both the revolutionary conquest of power and the dictatorship of the proletariat are included in the program of the ILP. After the events in Germany, Austria, and Spain, these slogans have become compulsory. But this does not at all mean that in every case they are invested with a genuine revolutionary content. The Zyromskys of all countries find no embarrassment in combining the "dictatorship of the proletariat" with the most debased patriotism, and moreover, such fakery is becoming more and more fashionable. The leaders of the ILP are not social patriots. But until they blow up their bridges to Stalinism, their internationalism will remain semi-idealistic in character.

The April theses of the ILP enable us to approach the same question from a new standpoint. In the theses two special paragraphs (27 and 28) are devoted to the future British councils of workers' deputies. They contain nothing wrong. But it is necessary to point out that the councils (soviets) as such are only an organizational form and not at all a sort of immutable principle. Marx and Engels provided us with the theory of the proletarian revolution, partly in their analysis of the Paris Commune, but they did not have a single word to say about the councils. In Russia there were Social Revolutionary and Menshevik soviets, i.e., antirevolutionary soviets. In Germany and Austria in 1918, the councils were under the leadership of reformists and patriots and they played a counterrevolutionary role. In autumn 1923, in Germany, the role of the councils was fulfilled actually by the shop committees that could have guaranteed fully the victory of the revolution, if it had not been for the craven policy of the Communist Party under the leadership of Brandler and Company. Thus, the slogan of councils, as an organizational form, is not in itself of a principled character. We have no objection, of course, to the inclusion of councils as "all-inclusive organizations" (p. 11) in the program of the ILP. Only the slogan must not be turned into a fetish, or worse yet—into a hollow phrase, as in the hands of the French Stalinists ("Power to Daladier!"—"Soviets everywhere!").

But we are interested in another aspect of the question. Paragraph 28 of the theses reads, "The workers' councils will arise in their final form in the actual revolutionary crisis, but the party must consistently prepare for their organization" (our italics). Keeping this in mind, let us compare the attitude of the ILP toward the future councils with its own attitude toward the
The ILP and the Fourth International

future International: the erroneousness of the ILP's position will then stand before us with the sharpest clarity. In relation to the International we are given generalities in the spirit of the SAP: "the form which the reconstructed International will take will depend upon historic events and the actual development of the working class struggle." On this ground the ILP draws the conclusion that the question of the International is purely "theoretical," i.e., in the language of empiricists, unreal. At the same time we are told that "the workers' councils will arise in their final form in the actual revolutionary crisis, but the party must consistently prepare for their organization."

It is hard to become more hopelessly muddled. On the question of the councils and on the question of the International, the ILP resorts to methods of reasoning that are directly contradictory. In which case is it mistaken? In both. The theses turn the actual tasks of the party upside down. The councils represent an organizational form, and only a form. There is no way of "preparing for" councils except by means of a correct revolutionary policy applied in all spheres of the working class movement: there is no special, specific "preparation for" councils. It is entirely otherwise with the International. While the councils can arise only on the condition that there is a revolutionary ferment among the many-millioned masses, the International is always necessary: both on holidays and weekdays, during periods of offensive as well as in retreat, in peace as well as in war. The International is not at all a "form," as flows from the utterly false formulation of the ILP. The International is first of all a program, and a system of strategic, tactical, and organizational methods that flow from it. By dint of historic circumstances the question of the British councils is deferred for an indeterminate period of time. But the question of the International, as well as the question of national parties, cannot be deferred for a single hour: we have here in essence two sides of one and the same question. Without a Marxist International, national organizations, even the most advanced, are doomed to narrowness, vacillation, and helplessness; the advanced workers are forced to feed upon surrogates for internationalism. To proclaim the building of the Fourth International as "purely theoretical," i.e., needless, is cravenly to renounce the basic task of our epoch. In such a case, slogans of revolution, of the dictatorship of the proletariat, councils, etc., lose nine-tenths of their meaning.

The August 30 issue of the New Leader carries an excellent article: "Don't Trust the Government!" The article points out that
the danger of "national unity" draws closer with the approaching danger of war. At a time when the ill-fated leaders of the SAP call for the emulation—literally so!—of British pacifists, the *New Leader* writes: "It (the government) is actually using the enthusiasm for peace to prepare the British people for imperialist war."

These lines, which are printed in italics, express with utmost precision the political function of petty-bourgeois pacifism: by providing a platonic outlet for the masses' horror of war, pacifism enables imperialism all the more easily to transform these masses into cannon fodder. The *New Leader* lashes the patriotic position of Citrine and other social imperialists who (with quotations from Stalin) mount upon the backs of Lansbury and other pacifists. But this same article goes on to express its "astonishment" at the fact that the British Communists are supporting Citrine's policy on the question of the League of Nations and the "sanctions" against Italy ("astonishing support of Labour line").

The "astonishment" in the article is the Achilles' heel of the entire policy of the ILP. When an individual "astonishes" us by his unexpected behavior, it only means that we are poorly acquainted with this individual's real character. It is immeasurably worse when a politician is compelled to confess his "astonishment" at the acts of a political party and, what is more, of an entire International. For the British Communists are only carrying out the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International. The leaders of the ILP are "astonished" only because they have failed up to now to grasp the real character of the Communist International and its sections. Yet, there is a twelve-year history behind the Marxist criticism of the Communist International. From the time the Soviet bureaucracy made as its symbol of faith the theory of "socialism in one country" (1924), the Bolshevik-Leninists forecasted the inevitability of the nationalist and patriotic degeneration of the sections of the Communist International, and from then on they followed this process critically through all its stages. The leaders of the ILP were caught off guard by events only because they had ignored the criticism by our tendency. The privilege of being "astonished" by major events is the prerogative of a pacifist and reformist petty bourgeois. Marxists, especially those claiming the right to leadership, must be capable not of astonishment but of foresight. And, we may remark in passing, it is not the first time in history that Marxist doubt turned out more penetrating than centrist credulity.
The ILP broke with the mighty Labour Party because of the latter's reformism and patriotism. And today, retorting to Wilkinson, the New Leader writes that the independence of the ILP is fully justified by the patriotic position of the Labour Party. Then what are we to say about the ILP's interminable flirtation with the British Communist Party, which now tails behind the Labour Party? What are we to say about the ILP's urge to fuse with the Third International, which is now the first fiddle in the social-patriotic orchestra? Are you "astonished." Comrades Maxton, Fenner Brockway, and others? That does not suffice for a party leadership. In order to put an end to being astonished, one must evaluate critically the road that has been traveled, and draw a conclusion for the future.

Back in August 1933, the Bolshevik-Leninist delegation issued a special declaration officially proposing to all the participants in the London Bureau, among them the ILP, that they review jointly with us the basic strategic problems of our epoch and, in particular, that they determine their attitude to our programmatic documents. But the leaders of the ILP deemed it below their dignity to occupy themselves with such matters. Besides, they were afraid they might compromise themselves by consorting with an organization which is the target of a particularly rabid and vile persecution at the hands of the Moscow bureaucracy: we should not overlook the fact that the leaders of the ILP awaited all the while an "invitation" from the Communist International. They waited, but the awaited did not materialize. . . .

Is it conceivable that even after the Seventh Congress the leaders of the ILP will be so hardy as to present the matter as if the British Stalinists turned out to be the squires of the little-honored Sir Walter Citrine only through a misunderstanding, and only for a split second? Such a dodge would be unworthy of a revolutionary party. We should like to entertain the hope that the leaders of the ILP will come at last to an understanding of how lawful is the complete and irremediable collapse of the Communist International as a revolutionary organization, and that they will draw from this all the necessary conclusions. These are quite simple:

Work out a Marxist program.

Turn away from the leaders of the Communist Party and face toward . . . the mass organizations.

Stand under the banner of the Fourth International.

On this road we are ready to march shoulder to shoulder with the ILP.

L. Trotsky
October 20, 1935

A Necessary Addition

In my article I approved of the attitude of this party on the question of sanctions. Later, friends sent me a copy of an important letter from Comrade Robertson to the members of the ILP.\textsuperscript{18} Comrade Robertson accuses the leadership of the party of maintaining pacifist illusions, particularly in the matter of "refusal" of military service. I can only associate myself wholly with what is said in Comrade Robertson's letter. The ILP's misfortune is that it doesn't have a truly Marxist program. That too is why its best activities, such as sanctions against British imperialism, are always influenced by pacifist and centrist mixtures.

L.T.
Dear Comrade Vereecken:

I have received your two letters that speak of the need to work together in the event of war. But politics in the event of war can only be the continuation of politics during peacetime. *I am quite ready to do everything possible for a rapprochement,* but your two letters contain no concrete suggestions. You have found the differences over entry to be important enough to separate yourself from our tendency. You condemn our internal regime. At the same time you call for the Fourth International. That is the actual situation. The Fourth International will not be composed only of Bolshevik-Leninists. *For my part, I am completely for accepting your admission.* But you represent a different tendency from ours with regard to politics and regime (and in addition, your attitude is incomprehensible). *What practical steps can you suggest to me for a rapprochement that will be effective?*

My best greetings,

L.D.T.
SECTARIANISM, CENTRISM, AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

October 22, 1935

It would be absurd to deny the presence of sectarian tendencies in our midst. They have been laid bare by an entire series of discussions and splits. Indeed, how could an element of sectarianism have failed to manifest itself in an ideological movement which stands irreconcilably opposed to all the dominant organizations in the working class, and which is subjected to monstrous, absolutely unprecedented persecutions all over the world?

Reformists and centrists readily seize upon every occasion to point a finger at our "sectarianism." Most of the time they have in mind not our weak but our strong side: our serious attitude toward theory; our effort to plumb every political situation to the bottom, and to advance clear-cut slogans; our hostility to "easy" and "comfortable" decisions, which deliver from cares today, but prepare a catastrophe on the morrow. Coming from opportunists, the accusation of sectarianism is most often a compliment.

Curiously enough, however, we are often accused of sectarianism not only by reformists and centrists but by opponents from the "left," the notorious sectarians who might well be placed as exhibits in any museum. The basis for their dissatisfaction with us lies in our irreconcilability to themselves, in our striving to purge ourselves of the infantile sectarian diseases and to rise to a higher level.

To a superficial mind it may seem that such words as sectarian, centrists, etc., are merely polemical expressions exchanged by opponents for lack of other and more appropriate epithets. Yet the concept of sectarianism, as well as the concept of centrism, has a precise meaning in a Marxist dictionary. Marxism has built a scientific program upon the laws that govern the movement of capitalist society and were discovered by it. This is a colossal conquest! However, it is not enough to create a correct program. It
is necessary for the working class to accept it. But the sectarian, in the nature of things, comes to a stop upon the first half of the task. Active intervention into the actual struggle of the masses of workers is supplanted for him by propagandistic abstractions of a Marxist program.

Every working class party, every faction, during its initial stages, passes through a period of pure propaganda, i.e., the training of its cadres. The period of existence as a Marxist circle invariably grafts habits of an abstract approach onto the problems of the workers' movement. Whoever is unable to step in time over the confines of this circumscribed existence becomes transformed into a conservative sectarian. The sectarian looks upon the life of society as a great school, with himself as a teacher there. In his opinion the working class should put aside its less important matters, and assemble in solid rank around his rostrum. Then the task would be solved.

Though he may swear by Marxism in every sentence, the sectarian is the direct negation of dialectical materialism, which takes experience as its point of departure and always returns to it. A sectarian does not understand the dialectical action and reaction between a finished program and a living—that is to say, imperfect and unfinished—mass struggle. The sectarian's method of thinking is that of a rationalist, a formalist, and an enlightener. During a certain stage of development rationalism is progressive, being directed critically against blind beliefs and superstitions (the eighteenth century!). The progressive stage of rationalism is repeated in every great emancipatory movement. But rationalism (abstract propagandism) becomes a reactionary factor the moment it is directed against the dialectic. Sectarianism is hostile to dialectics (not in words but in action) in the sense that it turns its back upon the actual development of the working class.

The sectarian lives in a sphere of ready-made formulas. As a rule life passes him by without noticing him; but now and then he receives in passing such a fillip as makes him turn 180 degrees around on his axis, and often makes him continue on his straight path, only . . . in the opposite direction. Discord with reality engenders in the sectarian the need to constantly render his formulas more precise. This goes under the name of discussion. To a Marxist, discussion is an important but functional instrument of the class struggle. To the sectarian, discussion is a goal in itself. However, the more he discusses, the more the actual tasks escape him. He is like a man who satisfies his thirst with
salt water: the more he drinks, the thirstier he becomes. Hence the constant irritability of the sectarian. Who slipped him the salt? Surely, the “capitulators” from the International Secretariat. The sectarian sees an enemy in everyone who attempts to explain to him that an active participation in the workers’ movement demands a constant study of objective conditions, and not haughty bulldozing from the sectarian rostrum. For analysis of reality the sectarian substitutes intrigue, gossip, and hysteria.

Centrism is in a certain sense the polar opposite of sectarianism; it abhors precise formulas, seeks routes to reality outside of theory. But despite Stalin’s famous formula, “antipodes” often turn out to be . . . “twins.” A formula detached from life is hollow. Living reality cannot be grasped without theory. Thus both of them, the sectarian and the centrist, depart in the end with empty hands and join together . . . in their feeling of animosity toward the genuine Marxist.

How many times have we met a smug centrist who reckons himself a “realist” merely because he sets out to swim without any ideological baggage whatever and is tossed by every vagrant current. He is unable to understand that principles are not dead ballast but a life line for a revolutionary swimmer. The sectarian, on the other hand, generally does not want to go swimming at all, in order not to wet his principles. He sits on the shore and reads lectures on morality to the flood of the class struggle. But sometimes a desperate sectarian leaps headlong into the water, seizes hold of the centrist and helps him drown. So it was; so it will be.

In our epoch of disintegration and dispersion there are to be found a good many circles in various countries that have acquired a Marxist program, most often by borrowing it from the Bolsheviks, and who then turned their ideological baggage into a greater or lesser degree of ossification.

Let us take for example the best specimen of this type, namely the Belgian group led by Comrade Vereecken. On August 10, Spartacus, the organ of this group, announced its adherence to the Fourth International. This announcement was to be welcomed. But at the same time it is necessary to state beforehand that the Fourth International would be doomed if it made concessions to sectarian tendencies.

Vereecken was in his own time an irreconcilable opponent of the entry of the French Communist League into the Socialist Party. There is no crime in this: the question was a new one, the
step a risky one, and differences were entirely permissible. In a certain sense, equally permissible, or at any rate unavoidable, were exaggerations in the ideological struggle. Thus, Vereecken predicted the inevitable ruin of the international organization of the Bolshevik-Leninists as a result of its “dissolution” in the Second International. We would advise Vereecken to reprint today in Spartacus his prophetic documents of yesteryear. But this is not the chief evil. Worse yet is the fact that in its present declaration Spartacus confines itself to evasively pointing out that the French section remained true to its principles “in a considerable, we may even say a large, measure.” If Vereecken behaved as a Marxist politician should, he would have stated clearly and definitely wherein our French section departed from its principles, and he would have given a direct and open answer to the question of who proved to be right: the advocates or the opponents of entry?

Vereecken is even more incorrect in his attitude toward our Belgian section, which entered the reformist Labor Party [POB]. Instead of studying the experiences resulting from the work carried on under new conditions, and criticizing the actual steps taken, if they merit criticism, Vereecken keeps on complaining about the conditions of the discussion in which he suffered defeat. The discussion, you see, was incomplete, inadequate, and disloyal: Vereecken failed to satisfy his thirst with salt water. There is no “real” democratic centralism in the International Communist League! In relation to the opponents of the entry, the League evinced . . . “sectarianism.”

It is clear that Comrade Vereecken has a liberal and not a Marxist conception of sectarianism: in this he obviously draws close to the centrists. It is not true that the discussion was inadequate; it was carried on for several months, orally and in the press, and on an international scale, besides. After Vereecken had failed to convince others that marking time in one place is the best revolutionary policy, he refused to abide by the decisions of the national and international organizations. The representatives of the majority told Vereecken on more than one occasion that if experience proved that the step taken was incorrect, we would rectify the mistake jointly. Is it really possible that after the twelve-year struggle of the Bolshevik-Leninists, you lack sufficient confidence in your own organization to preserve discipline of action even in case of tactical disagreements? Vereecken paid no heed to comradely and conciliating arguments. After the entry of the majority of the Belgian section into
the Labor Party, the Vereecken group naturally found itself outside our ranks. The blame for this falls entirely upon its own shoulders.

If we return to the gist of the question, then Comrade Vereecken's sectarianism stands out in all its dogmatic uncouthness. What's this! cried Vereecken in indignation: Lenin spoke of breaking with reformists but the Belgian Bolshevik-Leninists enter a reformist party! But Lenin had in mind a break with reformists as the inevitable consequence of a struggle against them, and not an act of salvation regardless of time and place. He required a split with the social patriots not in order to save his own soul but in order to tear the masses away from social patriotism. In Belgium the trade unions are fused with the Belgian Labor Party; the Belgian party is essentially the organized working class.

To be sure, the entry of revolutionists into the Belgian Labor Party not only opened up possibilities but also imposed restrictions. In propagandizing Marxist ideas it is necessary to take into account not only the legalities of the bourgeois state, but also the legalities of a reformist party (both these legalities, it may be added, coincide in large measure). Generally speaking, adaptation to an alien "legality" carries with it an indubitable danger. But this did not prevent the Bolsheviks from utilizing even czarist legality: for many years the Bolsheviks were compelled to call themselves, at trade union meetings and in the legal press, not Social Democrats, but "consistent democrats." True, this did not pass scot-free; a considerable number of elements adhered to Bolshevism who were more or less consistent democrats, but not at all international socialists; however, by supplementing legal with illegal activity, Bolshevism overcame the difficulties.

Of course, the "legality" of Vandervelde, de Man, Spaak, and other flunkeys of the Belgian plutocracy imposes very onerous restrictions upon the Marxists, and thus engenders dangers. But Marxists who are not as yet sufficiently strong to create their own party have their own methods for the struggle against the dangers of reformist captivity: a clear-cut program, constant factional ties, international criticism, etc. The activity of a revolutionary wing in a reformist party can be judged correctly only by evaluating the dynamics of development. Vereecken does not do this in regard to either the ASR faction, or the Verite group. Had he done so, he would have been compelled to admit that the ASR has made serious advances in the recent period. What the final balance will be is impossible to forecast as yet. But
the entry into the Belgian Labor Party is already justified by experience.

Extending and generalizing his mistake, Vereecken asserts that the existence of isolated small groups that split away at different stages from our international organization is proof of our sectarian methods. Thus, the actual relationships are stood on their head. As a matter of fact, into the ranks of the Bolshevik-Leninists during the initial stages came a considerable number of anarchistic and individualistic elements generally incapable of organizational discipline, and occasionally an incompetent, who could not make his career in the Comintern. These elements viewed the struggle against "bureaucratism" in approximately the following manner: no decisions must ever be arrived at; instead, "discussion" is to be installed as a permanent occupation. We can say with complete justification that the Bolshevik-Leninists showed a good deal of patience—perhaps even a good deal too much—toward such types of individuals and grouplets. Only since an international core has been consolidated, and has begun to assist the national sections in purging their ranks of internal sabotage, has actual and systematic growth of our international organization begun.

Let us take a few examples of groups that split from our international organization at various stages of its development. The French periodical *Que faire?* [What Is To Be Done?] is an instructive specimen of a combination of sectarianism with eclecticism. On the most important questions this periodical expounds the views of the Bolshevik-Leninists, changing a few commas and directing severe critical remarks at us. At the same time, this periodical permits a defense of social-patriotic garbage, under the guise of discussion, and under the cover of "defending the USSR," to go on with impunity. The internationalists of *Que faire?* are themselves unable to explain how and why they happen to cohabit peacefully with social patriots, after breaking with the Bolsheviks. It is clear, however, that with such eclecticism *Que faire?* is least capable of replying to the question what to do (*que faire*).

The "internationalists" and the social patriots are agreed on only one thing: never the Fourth International! Why? One must not "break away" from the Communist workers. We have heard the same argument from the SAP: we must not break away from the Social Democratic workers. In this instance too, antipodes turn out to be twins. The peculiar thing, however, is that *Que
faire? is not connected and, by its very nature, cannot be connected with any workers.

There is even less to be said about such groups as Internationale or Proletaire. They also abstract their views from the latest issues of La Verite, with an admixture of critical improvisations. They have no perspectives at all of revolutionary growth; but they manage to get along without perspectives. Instead of trying to learn within the framework of a more serious organization (to learn is difficult), these haters of discipline, very pretentious "leaders," desire to teach the working class (this appears to them to be easier). In moments of sober reflection they must themselves realize that their very existence as "independent" organizations is a sheer misunderstanding.

In the United States we might mention the Field and Weisbord groups. Field—in his entire political makeup—is a bourgeois radical who has acquired the economic views of Marxism. To become a revolutionist Field would have had to work for a number of years as a disciplined soldier in a revolutionary proletarian organization; but he began by deciding to create a workers' movement "of his own." Assuming a position to our "left" (where else?), Field shortly entered into fraternal relations with the SAP. As we see, the incident that befell Bauer was not at all accidental. The urge to stand to the left of Marxism leads fatally into the centrist swamp.

Weisbord is indubitably closer to a revolutionary type than Field. But at the same time he represents the purest example of a sectarian. He is utterly incapable of preserving proportions, either in ideas or in actions. Every principle he turns into a sectarian caricature. That is why even correct ideas in his hands become instruments for disorganizing his own ranks.

There is no need to dwell upon similar groups in other countries. They split from us not because we are intolerant or intolerable but because they themselves did not and could not go forward. Since the time of the split they have succeeded only in exposing their incapacity. Their attempts to unite with each other, on a national or an international scale, produced no results in any single case: peculiar to sectarianism is only the power of repulsion and not the power of attraction.

Some crank has computed the number of "splits" we have had and arrived at the sum of about a score. He saw in this devastating evidence of our bad regime. The peculiar thing is that in the SAP itself, which had triumphantly published these computations, there occurred during the few years of its existence
more rifts and splits than in all our sections taken together. Taken by itself, however, this fact is meaningless. It is necessary to take not the bald statistics of splits but the dialectics of development. After all its splits, the SAP remained an extremely heterogeneous organization which will be unable to withstand the first onslaught of great events. This applies even to a larger measure to the “London Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Unity,” which is being torn asunder by irreconcilable contradictions: its tomorrow will consist not of “unity” but only of splits. In the meantime, the organization of the Bolshevik-Leninists, after purging itself of sectarian and centrist tendencies, not only grew numerically, not only strengthened its international ties, but also found the road to fusion with organizations akin to it in spirit (Holland, United States). The attempts to blow up the Dutch party (from the right, through Molenar!) and the American party (from the left, through Bauer!) have only led to the internal consolidation of both these parties. We can predict with assurance that parallel to the disintegration of the London Bureau will proceed an ever more rapid growth of the organizations of the Fourth International.

How the new International will take form, through what stages it will pass, what final shape it will assume—this no one can foretell today. And indeed there is no need to do so: historical events will show us. But it is necessary to begin by proclaiming a program that meets the tasks of our epoch. On the basis of this program it is necessary to mobilize cothinkers, the pioneers of the new International. No other road is possible.

The Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels, directly aimed against all types of utopian-sectarian socialism, forcefully points out that Communists do not oppose themselves to the actual workers’ movements but participate in them as a vanguard. At the same time the Manifesto was the program of a new party, national and international. The sectarian is content with a program, as a recipe for salvation. The centrist guides himself by the famous (essentially meaningless) formula of Edward Bernstein: “the movement is everything; the final goal—nothing.” The Marxist draws his scientific program from the movement taken as a whole, in order then to apply this program to every concrete stage of the movement.

On the one hand, the initial steps of the new International are rendered more difficult by the old organizations and splinters from them; on the other hand, they are facilitated by the colossal experience of the past. The process of crystallization, which is
very difficult and full of torments during the first stages, will assume in the future an impetuous and rapid character. The recent international events are of incommensurate significance for the formation of the revolutionary vanguard. In his own fashion, Mussolini—and this should be recognized—has "aided" the cause of the Fourth International. Great conflicts sweep away all that is halfway and artificial and, on the other hand, give strength to all that is viable. War leaves room only for two tendencies in the ranks of the working class movement: social patriotism, which does not stop at any betrayal, and revolutionary internationalism, which is bold and capable of going to the end. It is precisely for this reason that centrists, fearful of impending events, are waging a rabid struggle against the Fourth International. They are correct in their own fashion: in the wake of great convulsions, the only organizations that will be able to survive and develop are those that have not only cleansed their ranks of sectarianism but have also systematically trained them in the spirit of despising all ideological vacillation and cowardice.
L’Humanite of October 23 prints a letter by Romain Rolland which is intended to refute criticisms of the Soviet Union made by a Swiss preacher. We would not have had the slightest reasons for intervening in an argument between an apologist of Gandhism and a Protestant pacifist, were it not for the fact that Mr. Rolland himself, in passing, touches—in a very improper manner—upon a number of burning questions, both personal and public in character. We cannot and do not demand from Mr. Rolland either a Marxist analysis, political clarity, or revolutionary insight; but one should imagine we would be justified in expecting from him some psychological insight. Unfortunately, as we shall shortly see, not a trace has been left of that.

To justify the terror which is directed by Stalin primarily against his own party, R. Rolland writes that Kirov was murdered “by a fanatic, who was secretly supported by such people as Kamenev and Zinoviev.” Upon what grounds does Rolland make so serious a charge? Those who buzzed it to Rolland were simply lying. It is precisely upon this question, in which politics cuts across psychology, that Romain Rolland should have had no difficulty in judging, if he were not blinded by an excess of zeal.

The author of these lines has not the slightest reason to assume upon himself responsibility for the activity of Zinoviev and Kamenev, which was of no small aid to the bureaucratic degeneration of the party and the soviets. However, it is unthinkable to ascribe to them participation in a crime which is without any political meaning and which at the same time conflicts with the views and aims and the entire political past of Kamenev and Zinoviev.

Even if they had suddenly turned partisans of individual terror—such a hypothesis is fantastic!—they could never have chosen Kirov as a victim. Anyone acquainted with the history of
the party and its personnel is only too well aware that Kirov was a third-rate bureaucratic figure in comparison with Kamenev and Zinoviev: his elimination could have had no effect whatever upon either the regime or its policies. Even during the trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev (one of the most shameless of trials!) the original version of the indictment was not sustained. Beyond an excess of zeal, what right has Mr. Rolland to speak about the participation of Kamenev and Zinoviev in the assassination of Kirov?

Let us remember that it was the intention of the initiators to extend the accusation to the author of these lines as well. There are many who probably still recall the role played by the “Latvian consul,” an agent provocateur of the GPU who attempted to obtain a letter from the terrorists “for transmission to Trotsky.” One of the hirelings of l’Humanite (I think his name is Duclos) even wrote in the heat of the moment that Trotsky’s participation in the assassination of Kirov “was proved.” I have dealt with all the circumstances relating to this case in my pamphlet The Kirov Assassination. Why didn’t Romain Rolland venture to repeat this part of the coarse and brazen Thermidor-ean amalgam? Only because I had the opportunity to make a timely exposure of the provocation and its direct organizers, Stalin and Yagoda. Kamenev and Zinoviev cannot avail themselves of such an opportunity: they are lodged in jail on the basis of a premeditated false charge. Is this role becoming to Rolland?

On the pretext that they were implicated in the Kirov case, the bureaucracy took the lives of scores of people who were devoted heart and soul to the revolution, but disapproved of the self-indulgence and privileges of the ruling caste. Perhaps Mr. Rolland will venture to deny this? We propose that an international commission, unimpeachable in its composition, be established to examine the arrests, trials, executions, exiles, and so on, in connection with, say, the single Kirov case. Again it should be recalled that when we tried the Social Revolutionaries in 1922, for the commission of terrorist acts, we permitted Vandervelde, Kurt Rosenfeld, and other outstanding opponents of Bolshevism to attend the trial. Yet at that time, the position of the revolution was immeasurably more difficult. Will Mr. Rolland accept our proposal this time? It is doubtful, because this proposal will not be—and cannot be—accepted by Stalin.

The measures of terror which were applied during the initial, and, so to speak, “Jacobin,” period of the revolution were called for by the iron necessity of self-defense. We were in a position to
give an open accounting of these measures to the entire international working class. The terror of the present Thermidorean period serves for the defense of the bureaucracy not so much against the class enemies as against the advanced elements of the proletariat itself. Thus, Romain Rolland steps forward as an advocate of Thermidorean terror.

Only recently, the Soviet newspapers loudly proclaimed the discovery of a new plot in which "Trotskyists" combined with White Guards and criminal elements for the purpose of... wrecking Soviet railroads. Not a single serious-minded person in the Soviet Union will believe this new shameless fraud, which throws devastating light upon a number of previous amalgams. However, this will not deter the Stalinist clique from shooting several young Bolsheviks guilty of lese majeste. And what will Mr. Rolland do? Will he perhaps devote himself to the task of convincing incredulous preachers that "Trotskyists" really do wreck Soviet railroads?

In the sphere of general questions of politics, Mr. Rolland makes assertions which are no less categorical and hardly more irreproachable. For the sake of defending the present policy of the Soviets and of the Communist International, R. Rolland, in accordance with the ancient ritual, hies himself back to the experience of Brest-Litovsk. We are all attention! He writes the following, "In the year 1918, in Brest-Litovsk, Trotsky said to Lenin: 'We must die like knights of old.' Lenin replied: 'We are not knights. We want to live, and we intend to remain alive.'" Where did Mr. Rolland get this piece of news? As a matter of fact, Lenin was never in Brest-Litovsk. Did the conversation perhaps take place over a direct wire? But all the documents relating to this period have been printed, and obviously they do not contain this—to put it bluntly—asinine statement, which one of Rolland's informers buzzed into his ear for wider distribution. Still, how is it that an old hand at writing did not have sufficient psychological intuition to understand the caricatured falseness of the dialogue he reproduced?

It would be out of place to enter here into a belated controversy with Rolland over the Brest-Litovsk negotiations. But since Rolland trusts in Stalin almost as much as he formerly trusted in Gandhi, we will take the liberty of referring to a statement Stalin made on February 1, 1918, i.e., during the final hours of the Brest-Litovsk decisions: "A way out of the difficult situation was given us by an intermediate point of view—the position of Trotsky." I am not referring to my own recollections, or to conversations with
interlocutors, no matter how highly placed, but to the official protocols of the sessions of the Central Executive Committee issued by the Government Printing Office in 1929. The above quotation (page 214) will probably seem to Rolland utterly unexpected. But it ought to convince him of how careless it is for anyone to write on subjects he knows nothing about.

Mr. Rolland lectures us—me, in particular—that the Soviet government can conclude agreements, if need be, even with the imperialists. Was such a revelation worth a trip to Moscow? The French workers are forced every day to enter into agreements with the capitalists, so long as the latter continue to exist. A workers’ state cannot renounce the right which every trade union has. But should a trade union leader, upon signing a collective agreement, announce publicly that he recognizes and approves capitalist property, we would call such a leader a traitor. Stalin did not merely conclude a practical agreement, but on top and independent of that he approved the growth of French militarism. Every class-conscious worker knows that the French army exists primarily to safeguard the property of a handful of exploiters, and to support the rule of bourgeois France over sixty million colonial slaves.

Because of the just indignation aroused in the workers’ ranks by Stalin’s declaration, attempts are being made today, among them the one through Rolland, to explain that “practically” everything remains just as before. But for our part, we do not put an iota of trust in them. The voluntary and demonstrative approval of French militarism by Stalin, one should imagine, was not intended to enlighten the French bourgeoisie, who did not at all require any urging, and who met it quite ironically. Stalin’s declaration could have had only a single purpose: by weakening the opposition of the French proletariat to its own imperialism to buy at this price the confidence of the French bourgeoisie in the stability of an alliance with Moscow. This policy, despite all qualifications, is being vigorously followed right now. The shrieks of l’Humanite against Laval do not alter in any way the fact that the Comintern has become the political agency of the League of Nations, in which this very same Laval rules the roost, or his cousin Herriot, or his British partner Baldwin,204 who is no better than Laval.

With very little authority, Romain Rolland decrees that the new policy of the Communist International remains in strict harmony with the teachings of Lenin. In that case, the solidarity of the French Communist Party with the foreign policy of Leon Blum
the ("social fascist" of yesterday, who, at any rate, remained true to himself); the belly-crawling before Edouard Herriot (who has not the slightest inclination to turn traitor to French capital); the support of the League of Nations (this general staff of imperialist intrigues) by the Communist parties; does all this flow from the teachings of Lenin? No. Mr. Rolland had better return to his studies of the teachings of Gandhi.

Unfortunately, Marcel Martinet's very clever, restrained, and apt warning left no impression upon Rolland. Instead of stopping and critically looking around, he slid all the way down into the ranks of the official apologists of the Thermidorean bureaucracy. In vain do these gentlemen deem themselves the "friends" of the October Revolution. The bureaucracy is one thing; the revolution is quite another. People's Commissar Litvinov is a "friend of mine" even to the conservative bourgeois Herriot. But it does not follow from this that the proletarian revolution must consider Herriot as one of its friends.

It is impossible to prepare the coming day of the revolution otherwise than by an irreconcilable struggle against the regime of bureaucratic absolutism which has become the worst brake upon the revolutionary movement. The responsibility for the terroristic moods of the Soviet youth falls entirely upon the bureaucracy, which has clamped a leaden lid upon the vanguard of the working class, and which demands of the youth only blind obedience and glorification of the leaders.

The bureaucracy has concentrated colossal resources in its hands, of which it gives an accounting to nobody. These uncontrolled resources provide it in particular with an opportunity to entertain and shower gifts royally upon any of its useful "friends." Many of them are hardly to be distinguished in their psychological makeup from those French academicians and journalists who are the professional friends of Mussolini. We have no inclination to include Romain Rolland in this category. But why does he himself so carelessly erase the line of demarcation? Why does he undertake commissions which do not become him?
I accept with the greatest readiness Fred Zeller’s suggestion to contribute an article to Revolution on the occasion of the eighteenth anniversary of the October overturn. True, Revolution is not a “big” daily newspaper; it is just striving to become a weekly. High-placed bureaucrats might pull contemptuous faces on this score. But I have had occasion to observe many times how “powerful” organizations with a “powerful” press crumbled to dust under the impact of events, and how, on the other hand, small organizations with a technically weak press were in a short time transformed into historic forces. Let us firmly hope that precisely this fate is in store for your paper and for your organization.

In the year 1917, Russia was passing through the greatest social crisis. One can say with certainty, however, on the basis of all the lessons of history, that had there been no Bolshevik Party the immeasurable revolutionary energy of the masses would have been fruitlessly spent in sporadic explosions, and the great upheavals would have ended in the severest counterrevolutionary dictatorship. The class struggle is the prime mover of history. It needs a correct program, a firm party, a trustworthy and courageous leadership—not heroes of the drawing room and of parliamentary phrases, but revolutionists, ready to go to the very end. This is the major lesson of the October Revolution.

We must remember, however, that at the beginning of 1917 the Bolshevik Party led only an insignificant number of the toilers. Not only in the soldiers’ soviets but also in the workers’ soviets, the Bolshevik fraction generally constituted 1 to 2 percent, at best 5 percent. The leading parties of petty-bourgeois democracy (Mensheviks and the so-called Social Revolutionaries) had the following of at least 95 percent of the workers, soldiers, and peasants participating in the struggle. The leaders of these parties called the Bolsheviks first sectarians and then . . . agents of the German kaiser. But no, the Bolsheviks were not sectarians!
All their attention was directed to the masses, and moreover not to their top layer, but to the deepest, most oppressed millions and tens of millions, whom the parliamentarian babblers usually forgot. Precisely in order to lead the proletarians and the semiproletarians of city and countryside, the Bolsheviks considered it necessary to distinguish themselves sharply from all factions and groupings of the bourgeoisie, beginning with those false “Socialists” who are in reality agents of the bourgeoisie.

Patriotism is the principal part of that ideology by means of which the bourgeoisie poisons the class consciousness of the oppressed and paralyzes their revolutionary will, because patriotism means the subjection of the proletariat to the “nation,” astride which sits the bourgeoisie. The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries were patriots: up until the February overturn, half concealed; after February, openly and brazenly. They said: “Now we have a republic, the freest republic in the world; even our soldiers are organized into soviets; we must defend this republic against German militarism.” The Bolsheviks replied: “No question but that the Russian republic is now the most democratic one; but this superficial political democracy may even tomorrow crumble into dust since it rests on a capitalist foundation. So long as the toiling people, under the leadership of the proletariat, do not expropriate their own landowners and capitalists and do not tear up the robber treaties with the Entente, we cannot consider Russia our fatherland and cannot take its defense upon ourselves.” Our adversaries grew indignant. “If so, you are not simply sectarians, you are agents of the Hohenzollerns! You betray to them the Russian, French, English, and American democracies!” But the power of Bolshevism lay in its ability to scorn the sophistries of cowardly “democrats” who called themselves Socialists but who, in reality, kneeled before capitalist property.

The judges in the dispute were the toiling masses; as time went on their verdict leaned more and more in favor of the Bolsheviks. And no wonder. At the time the soviets rallied around themselves all the proletarian, soldier, and peasant masses who became awakened for the struggle and on whom the fate of the country depended. The “united front” of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries dominated the soviets and actually had power in its hands. The bourgeoisie was completely paralyzed politically since ten million soldiers, exhausted by the war, stood fully armed on the side of the workers and peasants. But what the leaders of the “united front” dreaded most of all was to “scare
off" the bourgeoisie, to "push" it to the camp of reaction. The
united front dared not touch either the imperialist war, or the
banks, or feudal land ownership, or the shops and plants. It
marked time and spouted general phrases while the masses lost
patience. More than that: the Mensheviks and Social Revolution-
aries directly transferred the power to the Cadet party, rejected by
the toilers and despised by them.208

The Cadets represented an imperialist bourgeois party, basing
itself on the top layers of the "middle classes" but remaining true
to the interests of "liberal" property owners on all fundamental
questions. The Cadets can, if you please, be compared with the
French Radicals: the same social base, that is, the "middle
classes"; the same lulling of the people to sleep with empty
phrases; and the same loyal service to the interests of imperial-
ism. Just as with the Radicals, the Cadets had their left and their
right wing: the left—to befuddle the people; the right—to make
"serious" politics. The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries
hoped to get the support of the middle classes by an alliance with
the Cadets, that is, with the exploiters and defrauders of the
middle classes. By this the social patriots signed their own death
warrant.

Binding themselves voluntarily to the chariot of the bourgeo-
sie, the leaders of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries
were trying to persuade the toilers to leave the expropriation of
the property owners to the future, and in the meantime . . . to die
on the front for "democracy"; that is, for the interests of this
same bourgeoisie. "We must not push the Cadets into the camp of
the reaction," the opportunists repeated, parrot-like, at countless
meetings. But the masses could not and did not want to
understand them. They gave all their trust to the united front of
the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries and were ready to
defend it at all times arms in hand against the bourgeoisie. But
meanwhile, having obtained the trust of the people, the parties of
the united front called the bourgeois party to power and hid
behind it. The aroused revolutionary masses never forgive
cowardice and betrayal. First the Petersburg workers, and after
them, the proletariat of the whole country; after the proletariat,
the soldiers; and after the soldiers, the peasants, became
convinced through experience that the Bolsheviks were right.
Thus, within but a few months the handful of "sectarians,"
"adventurers," "conspirators," "agents of Hohenzollern," etc.,
etc., transformed themselves into the leading party of millions of
awakened people. *Loyalty to the revolutionary program, irrecon-
Lessons of October

citable hostility to the bourgeoisie, decisive rupture with social patriots, deep trust in the revolutionary force of the masses—these are the chief lessons of October.

The entire press, including the papers of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries* carried on a vicious campaign, really unheard of in history, against the Bolsheviks. Thousands upon thousands of tons of newsprint were filled with reports that the Bolsheviks were linked to the czarist police, that they received carloads of gold from Germany, that Lenin was hiding in a German airplane, etc., etc. In the first months after February this torrent of abuse overcame the masses. Sailors and soldiers threatened more than once to bayonet Lenin and other leaders of Bolshevism. In July 1917 the slander campaign reached its highest peak. Many sympathizing lefts and semilefts, especially from among the intellectuals, became frightened by the pressure of bourgeois public opinion. They said: “Certainly the Bolsheviks are not agents of Hohenzollern but they are sectarians, they are tactless, they provoke the democratic parties; it is impossible to work with them.” This, for instance, was the tone pervading the big daily of Maxim Gorky, around which gathered all sorts of centrists, semi-Bolsheviks, semi-Mensheviks, theoretically very left, but terribly afraid of a break with the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries. But it is a law that whoever is afraid of a break with the social patriots will inevitably become their agent.

Meanwhile a directly opposite process was taking place among the masses. The more disillusioned they became with the social patriots, who betrayed the interests of the people for the sake of friendship with the Cadets, the more attentively they listened to the speeches of the Bolsheviks, and the more convinced they became of their correctness. To the worker in the shop, the soldier in the trench, the starving peasant, it became clear that the capitalists and their lackeys were slandering the Bolsheviks precisely because the Bolsheviks were firmly devoted to the interests of the oppressed. Yesterday’s indignation of the soldier and sailor against the Bolsheviks became remolded into passionate devotion to them and unselfish readiness to follow them to the very end. And, on the other hand, the hatred of the masses for the Cadet party was inevitably transferred to its allies, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. The social patriots did not save

*To avoid misunderstanding, let us point out that this anti-Marxist party had nothing in common with revolutionary socialism.
the Cadets, but themselves perished. The final break in the mood of the masses, which took place within two or three months (August-September), made the October victory possible. The Bolsheviks took over the soviets and the soviets took power.

Messrs. Skeptics might say: but in the end the October Revolution brought the triumph of bureaucracy. Was it worth making?

A separate article or perhaps two should be devoted to this question. Here let us say briefly: history goes forward not along a straight line but along a devious one; after a gigantic jump forward there follows, as after an artillery shot, a rebound. Nevertheless history goes forward. No doubt, Soviet bureaucracy is an ugly ulcer, threatening both the conquests of the October Revolution and the world proletariat. But the USSR possesses something besides bureaucratic absolutism: nationalized means of production, planned economy, collectivization of agriculture, which, despite the monstrous harm of bureaucracy, lead the country forward economically and culturally while the capitalist countries are moving backwards. The October Revolution can be freed from the vise of bureaucracy only by the development of the international revolution, the victory of which will really assure the building of a socialist society.

Finally—and this is not insignificant—the October Revolution is important also because it gave the international working class a number of priceless lessons. Let the proletarian revolutionists of France firmly learn these lessons and they will become invincible.
The questions posed by Comrade Zeller’s letter are of interest not only for history but also for the present time. It is not unusual to meet them as often in political literature as in private conversation, although in different forms, mostly personal ones. “How and why did you lose power?” “How did Stalin lay his hands on the apparatus?” “What makes for Stalin’s strength?”

The question of the internal laws of revolution and counterrevolution is posed everywhere and always in a purely individual way, as if the matter concerned a game of chess or some sporting contest and not profound conflicts and changes with a social character. In this context many pseudo-Marxists are in no way distinguished from vulgar democrats who use the criteria of parliamentary lobbies when faced with great popular movements.

Whoever understands history even slightly knows that every revolution has provoked a subsequent counterrevolution which, to be sure, has never completely thrown the nation all the way back to its starting point in the sphere of the economy but has always taken from the people a considerable part, sometimes the lion’s share, of its political conquests. And the first victim of the reactionary wave as a general rule is that layer of revolutionaries which stood at the head of the masses in the first period of the revolution, the period of the offensive, the “heroic” period. This general historical observation should lead us to the idea that the matter is not simply one of the skill, the cunning, or the art of two or a few individuals, but of incomparably more profound causes.

Marxists, unlike superficial fatalists (of the type of Leon Blum, Paul Faure, etc.), do not deny the role of the individual, his initiative, his audacity, in the social struggle. But unlike the idealists, Marxists know that consciousness is, in the last analysis, determined by being. The role of the leadership in the revolution is enormous. Without a correct leadership, the
proletariat cannot conquer. But even the best leadership cannot foment revolution when it does not have the objective conditions. Among the greatest merits of a proletarian leadership must be reckoned the capacity to distinguish the moment when one can attack and when it is necessary to withdraw. It was this capacity which constituted the main strength of Lenin.*

The success or failure of the Left Opposition’s struggle against the bureaucracy, to some degree or other, naturally, depended on the qualities of the leaders in the two warring camps. But before speaking of these qualities, we should clearly understand the characters of the warring camps themselves, for the best leader of one camp could be absolutely worthless for the other, and vice versa. The question—it is very current (and very naive)—“Why did Trotsky at the time not use the military apparatus against Stalin?” is the clearest evidence in the world that the questioner cannot or does not wish to reflect on the general historical reasons for the victory of the Soviet bureaucracy over the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. I have written about these reasons more than once in a certain number of books, beginning with my autobiography. I propose to sum up the most important conclusions in a few lines.

It is not the present bureaucracy which ensured the victory of the October Revolution, but the working and peasant masses under Bolshevik leadership. The bureaucracy began to grow only after the definitive victory, swelling its ranks not only with revolutionary workers but also with representatives of other classes (former czarist functionaries, officers, bourgeois intellectuals, etc.). The present bureaucracy, in it overwhelming majority, was, at the time of the October Revolution, in the bourgeois camp (take as examples merely the Soviet ambassadors Potemkin, Maisky, Troyanovsky, Surits, Khinchuk, etc.). Those of the present bureaucracy who in the October days were in the Bolshevik camp in the great majority of cases played no role even slightly important in either the preparation or the conduct of the

*The Stalinists do exactly the opposite: when there was an economic revival and relative political equilibrium, they proclaimed “The conquest of the street,” “Barricades,” “Soviets everywhere” (the “third period”); and now, when France is going through a deep social and political crisis, they throw themselves around the necks of the Radicals, that is, of a bourgeois party that is absolutely rotted away. A long time ago it was said that these gentlemen are in the habit of singing funeral psalms at weddings and wedding hymns at funerals.
revolution, or in the first years following it. This applies above all to Stalin himself. As for the present young bureaucrats, they are chosen and educated by the older ones, most often from among their own children. And it is Stalin who has become the “chief” of this new caste which has grown up after the revolution.

The history of the trade union movement in every country is not only the history of strikes and in general of mass movements; it is also the history of the formation of the trade union bureaucracy. It is sufficiently well known what enormous conservative power this bureaucracy has been able to acquire, and with what infallible sense it chooses its “genial” leaders and forms them according to its needs: Gompers, Green, Legien, Leipart, Citrine, etc.*212 If Jouhaux has succeeded until now in maintaining his positions against attacks from the left, it is not because he is a great strategist—though, no doubt, he is superior to his bureaucratic colleagues (it is not for nothing that he fills the first place among them)—but because there is not a day, not an hour, when his entire apparatus does not struggle obstinately for its existence, does not select collectively the best methods for that struggle, does not think for Jouhaux, and does not inspire him with the necessary decisions. But that in no way means that Jouhaux is invincible. Given a sudden change in the situation—toward revolution or toward fascism—the whole trade union apparatus will lose its self-confidence, its skillful maneuvers will show themselves to be without power, and Jouhaux himself will produce an impression, not remarkable but miserable. We need only recall what despicable nonentities the powerful and arrogant chiefs of the German trade unions showed themselves to be in 1918, when the revolution broke out against their will, as well as in 1932, when Hitler was advancing.

These examples show the sources of the strength and the weakness of the bureaucracy. It emerges from the movement of the masses in the first period, the heroic period. But having risen above the masses, and then having resolved its own “social question” (an assured existence, influence, respect, etc.), the bureaucracy tends increasingly to keep the masses immobile. Why take risks? It has something to lose. The supreme expansion

*Only a pure lackey could speak of Stalin as a Marxist “theoretician.” His book Problems of Leninism is an eclectic compilation, full of schoolboy errors. But the national bureaucracy has conquered the Marxist opposition by its social weight, not at all by “theory.”
of the influence and well-being of the reformist bureaucracy takes place in an epoch of capitalist progress and of relative passivity of the working masses. But when this passivity is broken, on the right or on the left, the magnificence of the bureaucracy comes to an end. Its intelligence and skill are transformed into stupidity and impotence. The nature of the “leadership” corresponds to the nature of the class (or of the caste) it leads and to the objective situation through which this class (or caste) is passing.

The Soviet bureaucracy is immeasurably more powerful than the reformist bureaucracies of all the capitalist countries taken together, since it has in its hands state power and all the advantages and privileges bound up with that. True, the Soviet bureaucracy has grown on the soil of the victorious proletarian revolution. But it would be the greatest naivete to idealize it for that reason. In a poor country—and the USSR is at present still a very poor country, where a private room, sufficient food and clothing are within the reach of only a tiny minority of the population—in such a country millions of bureaucrats, great and small, make every effort to ensure before anything their own well-being! Hence the great egoism and the great conservatism of the bureaucracy, its fright in the face of the discontent of the masses, its hatred of criticism, its angry persistence in stifling all free thought, and finally, its hypocritical and religious kneeling before the “leader” who embodies and defends its unlimited domination and its privileges. All that, taken together, is the content of the struggle against “Trotskyism.”

It is absolutely beyond question and of major importance that the Soviet bureaucracy became more powerful as the blows struck harder against the world working class. The defeats of the revolutionary movements in Europe and Asia gradually undermined the confidence of the Soviet workers in their international ally. Inside the country acute misery still reigned. The boldest and most devoted representatives of the working class had either perished in the civil war or had risen higher and, for the main part, been assimilated into the ranks of the bureaucracy, having lost their revolutionary spirit. Weary, because of the terrible efforts of the revolutionary years, without perspective, poisoned with bitterness because of a series of disappointments, the great mass fell into passivity. Reaction of this kind is to be seen, as we have already said, after every revolution. The immense historical advantage of the October Revolution, taken as a proletarian revolution, is that the exhaustion and the disappointment have benefited not the class enemy, the bourgeoisie and the aristoc-
racy, but the upper layer of the working class itself and the intermediary groups linked with it who have entered the Soviet bureaucracy.

The genuine revolutionary proletarians in the USSR drew their strength not from the apparatus but from the activity of the revolutionary masses. In particular, the Red Army was created not by "men of the apparatus" (in the most critical years the apparatus was still very weak), but by the cadres of heroic workers who, under Bolshevik leadership, gathered around them the young peasants and led them into battle. The decline of the revolutionary movement, the weariness, the defeats in Europe and in Asia, the disappointment of the working masses, were inevitably and directly to weaken the positions of the internationalist-revolutionaries and, on the other hand, were to strengthen the positions of the national and conservative bureaucracy. A new chapter opens in the revolution. The leaders of the preceding period go into opposition while the conservative politicians of the apparatus, who had played a secondary role in the revolution, emerge with the triumphant bureaucracy, in the forefront.

As for the military apparatus, it is a part of the bureaucratic apparatus, in no way distinguished in qualities from it. It is enough to say that in the years of the civil war, the Red Army absorbed tens of thousands of former czarist officers. On March 13, 1919, Lenin said to a meeting in Petrograd: "When Trotsky told me recently that, in the military sphere, the number of our officers was several tens of thousands, then I had a concrete picture of what is meant by the secret of using our enemy: how to have communism built by those who were formerly our enemies; build communism with bricks collected against us by the capitalists! And we have no other bricks!" These cadres of officers and functionaries carried out their work in the first years under the direct pressure and surveillance of the advanced workers. In the fire of the cruel struggle, there could not be even a question of a privileged position for officers: the very word was scrubbed out of the vocabulary. But precisely after the victories had been won and the passage made to a peaceful situation, the military apparatus tried to become the most influential and privileged part of the whole bureaucratic apparatus. The only person who would have relied on the officers for the purpose of seizing power would have been someone who was prepared to go further than the appetites of the officer caste, that is to say, who would have ensured for them a superior position, given them ranks and
decorations, in a word, would have done in one single act what the Stalinist bureaucracy has done gradually over the succeeding ten to twelve years. There is no doubt that it would have been possible to carry out a military coup d'état against the faction of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin, etc., without any difficulty and without even the shedding of any blood; but the result of such a coup d'état would have been to accelerate the rhythm of this very bureaucratisation and Bonapartism against which the Left Opposition had engaged in struggle.

The task of the Bolshevik-Leninists was by its very essence not to rely on the military bureaucracy against that of the party but to rely on the proletarian vanguard and through it on the popular masses, and to master the bureaucracy in its entirety, to purge it of its alien elements, to ensure the vigilant control of the workers over it, and to set its policy back on the rails of revolutionary internationalism. But as the living fountain of the revolutionary strength of the masses was dried up in civil war, famine, and epidemics, and as the bureaucracy grew terribly in numbers and insolence, the revolutionary proletarians became the weaker side. To be sure, the banner of the Bolshevik-Leninists gathered tens of thousands of the best revolutionary fighters, including some military men. The advanced workers were sympathetic to the Opposition, but that sympathy remained passive; the masses no longer believed that the situation could be seriously changed by struggle. Meanwhile the bureaucracy asserted: "The Opposition proposes international revolution and is ready to drag us into a revolutionary war. Enough of shake-ups and misery. We have earned the right to rest. We need no more of 'permanent revolution.' We will build the socialist society at home. Workers and peasants, rely on us, your leaders!" This nationalist and conservative agitation was accompanied—to mention it in passing—by furious slanders, sometimes absolutely reactionary, against the internationalists. It drew the military and state bureaucracies tightly together, and indubitably found an echo in the weary and backward masses. So the Bolshevik vanguard found itself isolated and crushed piecemeal. Therein lies the secret of the victory of the Thermidorean bureaucracy.

Talk about the extraordinary tactical and organizational qualities of Stalin is a myth, deliberately created by the bureaucracy of the USSR and of the Communist International and repeated by left bourgeois intellectuals who, despite their individualism, willingly bend the knee to success. These gentlemen neither understood nor recognized Lenin when, pursued by the international scum, he prepared the revolution. On the other
How Did Stalin Defeat the Opposition?

hand, they “recognized” Stalin when this recognition brought only satisfaction and sometimes direct advantages.

The initiative for the struggle against the Left Opposition belongs properly not to Stalin but to Zinoviev. At first Stalin hesitated and waited. It would be wrong to think that Stalin even had a strategic plan from the outset. He kept testing the ground. There is no doubt that his revolutionary Marxist tutelage weighed on him. In effect, he sought a simpler, more national, “surer” policy. The success which attended him was something unexpected, in the first place by himself. It was the success of the new leading layer, of the revolutionary aristocracy which was trying to liberate itself from the control of the masses and which needed a strong and reliable arbiter in its internal affairs. Stalin, a figure of the second rank in the proletarian revolution, appeared as the unchallenged leader of the Thermidorean bureaucracy, first in its ranks—nothing more.

The Italian fascist or semifascist writer Malaparte has published a book, Coup d’Etat: The Technique of Revolution, in which he develops the idea that “Trotsky's revolutionary tactics” in contrast to Lenin’s strategy could assure victory in a given country under given conditions. It is difficult to imagine any theory that could be more absurd! However, the sages who use hindsight to accuse us of losing power because of indecision, at bottom look at things from Malaparte’s point of view: they think that there are certain special technical “secrets” with whose help revolutionary power can be won or preserved, independently of the effect of great objective factors (victory or defeat for the revolution in the East and the West, the rise or fall of the mass movement in a country, etc.). Power is not a prize which the most “skillful” win. Power is a relationship between individuals, in the last analysis between classes. Governmental leadership, as we have said, is a powerful lever for success. But that does not at all mean that the leadership can guarantee victory under all conditions.

What is decisive in the last analysis are the class struggle and the internal modifications produced inside the struggling masses.

It is impossible, to be sure, to reply with mathematical precision to the question: How would the struggle have developed had Lenin been alive? That Lenin would have been the implacable enemy of the greedy conservative bureaucracy and of Stalin’s policy, which steadily bound to itself all of his own kind, is indisputably demonstrated in a whole series of letters, articles, and proposals by Lenin in the last period of his life, especially in his testament, in which he recommends that Stalin be removed
from the post of general secretary, and finally from his last letter, in which he breaks off "all personal and comradely relations" with Stalin.214 In the period between the two attacks of his illness, Lenin proposed a common faction with me to struggle against the bureaucracy and its general staff, the Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee, where Stalin was in command. For the Twelfth Party Congress, Lenin—to use his own expression—was preparing a "bomb" against Stalin. All this has been told—on the basis of precise and indisputable documents—in my autobiography and in a special article, "On the Suppressed Testament of Lenin." Lenin's preparatory measures show that he thought that the imminent struggle would be very difficult; not because—there is no doubt about it—he feared Stalin personally as an opponent (it would be ridiculous to speak of that) but because he saw clearly behind Stalin's back the tissue of the common interests of the powerful caste of the leading bureaucracy. While Lenin was still alive, Stalin was conducting a sapping operation by means of agents cautiously spreading the rumor that Lenin was an invalid intellectual, out of touch with the situation, etc., in a word, putting into circulation the same legend which has now become the unofficial version of the Communist International to explain the acute hostility between Lenin and Stalin during the last year and a half of Lenin's life. In fact, all the articles and letters that Lenin dictated when he was ill represent perhaps the ripest fruits of his thought. The perspicacity of this "invalid" would have been more than enough for a dozen Stalins.

It can be said with certainty that if Lenin had lived longer, the pressure of bureaucratic omnipotence would have been exerted—at least in the first years—more lightly. But in 1926 Krupskaya said to a group of Left Oppositionists, "If Lenin were alive today he would now be in prison."215 The fears and alarming forebodings of Lenin were still fresh in her memory, and she had absolutely no illusions as to the personal omnipotence of Lenin, understanding, in her own words, the dependence of the best helmsman on the winds and on favorable or contrary currents.

Does that mean that Stalin's victory was inevitable? Does that mean that the struggle of the Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists) was hopeless? Such a way of putting the question is abstract, schematic, and fatalistic. The development of the struggle has shown, without any doubt, that the Bolshevik-Leninists would not have been able to win a complete victory in the USSR—that is to say, conquer power and cauterize the ulcer of bureaucratism—without support from the world revolution. But
that in no way means that their struggle did not have results. Without the Opposition’s bold criticism and without the bureaucracy’s fear of the Opposition, the course of Stalin-Bukharin toward the kulak [wealthy peasant] would have ended up in the revival of capitalism. Under the lash of the Opposition the bureaucracy was forced to make important borrowings from our platform. The Leninists could not save the Soviet regime from the process of degeneration and the difficulties of the personal regime. But they saved it from complete dissolution by barring the road to capitalist restoration. The progressive reforms of the bureaucracy were the by-products of the Opposition’s revolutionary struggle. For us it is far too insufficient. But it is still something.

On the arena of the world workers’ movement, on which the Soviet bureaucracy depends only indirectly, the situation is immensely more unfavorable yet to the USSR. Through the intermediary of the Communist International, Stalinism has become the worst brake on the world revolution. Without Stalin there would have been no Hitler. At the present moment in France, by the policy of prostration whose political name is the “People’s Front,” Stalinism is preparing a new defeat for the proletariat.

But here, too, the Left Opposition’s struggle has not been sterile. Throughout the whole world are growing and multiplying cadres of genuine proletarian revolutionaries, real Bolsheviks, who are joining not the Soviet bureaucracy in order to use its authority and treasury, but the program of Lenin and the banner of the October Revolution. Under the truly monstrous persecutions—also without precedent in history—by the joint forces of imperialism, reformism, and Stalinism, the Bolshevik-Leninists are growing, strengthening themselves, and increasingly gaining the confidence of the advanced workers. An infallible symptom of the crisis which is being produced is the magnificent evolution of the Socialist Youth of the Seine.

The world revolution will go forward under the banner of the Fourth International. Its first successes will not leave standing one stone upon another of the omnipotence of the Stalinist clique, its lies, its slanders, and its hollow reputations. The Soviet republic, like the world proletarian vanguard, will finally liberate itself from the bureaucratic octopus. The historic collapse of Stalinism is predetermined and it will be a merited punishment for its innumerable crimes against the world working class. We want and look forward to no other revenge!
A VENERABLE SMERDYAKOV

November 1935

In the anniversary issue of Izvestia, some Smerdyakov or other devotes himself to reminiscences of the October days in Petrograd. It goes without saying that “October was victorious because the line of Lenin-Stalin was victorious.” Nothing else, of course, was to be expected. In the last five-six years, the historical law of “Stalinism” has finally acquired retroactive force and has subjected past history to reworking. But there is one very interesting little concrete touch in the memoirist’s article, at least for those who know where the Smerdyakov’s boot pinches. Here is what we read: “Under the direct leadership of the military center (Stalin, Sverdlov, DzerzhINSky, Bubnov, Uritsky), the Military Revolutionary Committee energetically prepared the armed uprising.”

This kind of allusion to the “direct leadership of the military center” is occurring for the first time in these reminiscences. The “military center,” as is known, was discovered by chance in old minutes of the Central Committee only in 1923. The trouble, unfortunately, was that none of the organizers of the October Revolution had ever heard of this center. In all the memoirs of the most immediate leaders of the uprising, written in the first years after the revolution until the discovery of the minutes, and in all the documents of the October period, there is no hint of the activity of a special “military center.” In Trotsky’s History of the Russian Revolution it is proved, using completely irrefutable factual data and eyewitness accounts, coming mainly from the camp of what are now Stalinists—proved once and for all—that the so-called “party military center” never existed.

True, it was at all events elected, toward the end of a night session of the CC, at the very moment when the Military Revolutionary Committee, the real leader of the uprising, was set up in the Smolny. By the very next day, everyone had already forgotten the “military center,” including the members of the Central Committee appointed to it. It produced no decisions, since
it never even met once. As was said above, the fact that it had been appointed was discovered only six years later, in an examination of old archives. Incidentally, there were mentioned in them a series of other “centers” which were appointed in passing by the CC in the whirlpool of 1917 and which never existed in fact.

One of the most active participants in the October Revolution, Antonov-Ovseenko, in his numerous and voluminous memoirs, never mentioned a word about the “military center,” far less with the name of Stalin in the first place. In those first years, Antonov-Ovseenko, like Stalin himself, named quite different leaders of the uprising. A striking case of aberration of memory! It took a whole eighteen years for a participant in the October Revolution to bring his memories finally into complete order, i.e., to group them around the personality of Stalin. For—as we have been forgetting to mention—the Smerdyakov we are talking about is none other than the former revolutionary, Antonov-Ovseenko.

These gentlemen may deceive Young Communists and Pioneers. But they will not deceive history; the Stalin apparatus of falsification is insufficient for that. And since that is so, some day, sooner or later, the Young Communists and the Pioneers will also find out the truth. In Europe and in America, the young are already turning toward the truth. A fresh wind is blowing. And no Smerdyakovs will be able to poison it with the gases of their belated memoirs.
TWO STATEMENTS ON
THE CANNON-SHACHTMAN LETTER

A Brief Remark
November 1935

The letter of Comrades Cannon and Shachtman having a private character, like a number of letters from comrades of other tendencies, its publication is a deplorable mistake on the part of the apparatus of the IS. I am saying so in an official letter. In any case, every informed reader must understand that personal characterizations are characteristic of struggle during an impassioned discussion. Every one of us, in letters not meant for publication, makes such exaggerations meant to emphasize our thought better. Cannon and Shachtman knew perfectly well that by their epigrammatic characterizations they could in no way disqualify in my eyes comrades whom I sincerely love and esteem.

It would be truly deplorable if this unpardonable publication could envenom, however little, the life of the party. While awaiting the official letter, you could translate this brief remark for the Political Bureau for any purpose.

L.D. Trotsky

An Obvious Error
November 13, 1935

Dear Comrades:

The letter of Comrades Cannon and Shachtman, according to its content and tone, had a private character destined for an intimate circle of informed comrades. I personally have received from several other American comrades representing other groups personal letters of the same kind, occasionally containing sharp assessments of certain comrades or groups. Every experienced
comrade knows that during any serious and impassioned discussion such letters are quite inevitable. It is always necessary to interpret the sharpest critical assessment in connection with the given conjuncture, and not as final characterizations of men and tendencies.

That granted, the publication of the personal letter of Cannon and Shachtman in the bulletin, which is intended for wide distribution, was an obvious error which I can only explain by haste and a lack of prudence. I do not doubt that the comrades who published the letter have themselves easily recognized the great error they committed and will draw all the necessary conclusions for the future. Without personal correspondence between the leading comrades of the various sections our work would be much more difficult. However, the publication of such private letters would make all frank personal correspondence impossible.

Every reader of the bulletin of the IS will easily understand, I hope, that in their private letters Comrades Cannon and Shachtman had no intention of disqualifying or compromising their temporary adversaries. All the more so since the authors of the letter are very well aware of my warm and fraternal feelings toward these "adversaries." Comrades Cannon and Shachtman wanted only to emphasize in a sharp manner their differences with the given groups and people.

No other interpretation could be placed on the letter in question. I strongly hope that the misplaced publication of this letter will not injure friendly collaboration inside the American party and will not diminish by an iota the fraternal consideration and the warm sympathy of all the other sections toward the brother American party.

Crux [Trotsky]
The work of building the Fourth International is now already being developed on a significantly wider basis than was the work to build the Bolshevik-Leninist faction. Under the impetus of the decay of reformism and Stalinism, the intensification of the class struggle, and the impending danger of war, groups with a variety of origins will be knocking on the door of the Fourth International.

The Fourth International will not allow anyone—of this we have no doubt—to take lightly either our principles or our discipline. But what this discipline will entail cannot be decreed beforehand: it must be hammered out in a common struggle; it must be guided by the experiences—well thought out and critically examined—of the overwhelming majority of the participants. In this sense, it should be acknowledged that the [Belgian] Spartacus group’s adherence to the Fourth International is a positive factor. It opens up serious opportunities for this group to free itself from the pitfalls of sectarianism, and thereby promises to win uncorrupted and devoted workers back into our ranks.

Now, with a new International in formation, the question of factions inside the revolutionary party takes on enormous importance. But it is just this issue that caused such terrible trouble and demoralization in the years of the Comintern’s ascendancy.

In the Comintern, factions were forbidden, and this police ban was alleged to be in keeping with the Bolshevik tradition. It is difficult to imagine a worse slander on the history of Bolshevism. It is true that in March 1921 factions were banned by a special resolution of the Tenth Party Congress. The very fact that this resolution was necessary shows that in the previous period—i.e., during the seventeen years when Bolshevism arose, grew, gained
strength, and came to power—factions were a legitimate part of party life. And this was reflected in practice.

At the Stockholm Party Congress (1906), where the Bolshevik faction was reunited with the Menshevik faction, there were two factions inside the Bolshevik faction involved in an open struggle at the congress itself over a major question, the agrarian program. The majority of the Bolsheviks, under Lenin's leadership, had come out for nationalization of the land. Stalin, who spoke at the congress under the name Ivanovich, belonged to a small group of so-called "partitionists" that advocated the immediate partitioning of the land among the small property-owners, thus restricting the revolution beforehand to a capitalist-farmer perspective.

In 1907, a sharp factional struggle was fought over the question of boycotting the Third State Duma [parliament]. The supporters of the boycott subsequently aligned themselves into two factions which over the next few years carried on a fierce struggle against Lenin's faction, not only within the confines of the "united" party, but inside the Bolshevik faction as well. Bolshevism's intensified struggle against liquidationism later on gave rise to a conciliationist faction inside the Bolshevik faction, to which prominent Bolshevik practical party workers of that time belonged: Rykov, Dubrovinsky, Stalin, and others. The struggle against the conciliationists dragged on until the outbreak of the war.

August 1914 opened a period of regroupment inside the Bolshevik faction on the basis of attitudes toward the war and the Second International. Simultaneously a factional group was formed of people who opposed national self-determination (Bukharin, Pyatakov, and others). The sharp factional struggle inside the Bolshevik faction in the first period after the February Revolution and on the eve of the October Revolution is now well enough known (see for example, L. Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution). After the conquest of power a sharp factional struggle broke out around the question of the Brest-Litovsk peace. A faction of Left Communists was formed with its own press (Bukharin, Yaroslavsky, and others). Subsequently, the Democratic Centralism and the Workers' Opposition factions were formed. Not until the Tenth Party Congress, held under conditions of blockade and famine, growing peasant unrest, and the first stages of NEP—which had unleashed petty-bourgeois tendencies—was consideration given to the possibility of resorting to such an exceptional measure as
the banning of factions. It is possible to regard the decision of the Tenth Congress as a grave necessity. But in light of later events, one thing is absolutely clear: the banning of factions brought the heroic history of Bolshevism to an end and made way for its bureaucratic degeneration.

Beginning in 1923 the epigones extended the banning and stifling of factional struggle from the ruling party in the USSR to the young sections of the Comintern, thus dooming them to degeneration before they had time to grow and develop.

Does this mean, however, that the revolutionary party of the proletariat must or can represent simply the sum total of its factions? In order to better shed light on this question we will take for the sake of comparison the French Socialist Party, which has legalized factions in its statutes, introducing the principle of proportional representation for all party elections. In this sense the French section of the Second International passed itself off for a long time and not without success as the purest expression of "party democracy." And formally it is, or rather it was. But just as the pure democracy of bourgeois society acts as a cover for the actual rule of the upper echelon of property-owners, so the most ideal democracy of the Second International hides the rule of an unofficial but powerful faction: the parliamentary and municipal careerists. This faction, while keeping a firm grip on the apparatus, allows the left-wing faction to make very revolutionary-sounding speeches; but as soon as the genuine Marxist faction, for whom word and deed go hand in hand, begins to expose the hypocrisy of the party's democracy, the apparatus faction quickly takes the course of expulsion.

Because the Bolsheviks joined this reformist party not for adaptation but for a fight, a collision with the ruling faction was determined beforehand. The threat of imminent war and the social-patriotic turn of the Comintern hastened the conflict and right away lent it an exceptional acuteness. If the social patriots expel the revolutionaries instead of vice versa, it is the relationship of forces that is to blame—about this no one has the slightest illusions. Entry into the Socialist Party made it possible to achieve a little, but by no means did it achieve everything. It has allowed our French section to considerably expand its influence. The struggle between internationalism and social patriotism was posed with remarkable clarity. As regards organizational balance sheets, it is still too early to draw them up: the struggle inside the French Socialist Party is still far from over.
There are a few sagacious individuals (frequently they are former opponents of entryism) who say: the Bolshevik-Leninists are behaving in too reckless a manner inside the Socialist Party—for example, in advancing the call for a Fourth International, and so forth. This mistaken political vision is often encountered in politics; success is so alluring that one wishes it could develop in an uninterrupted manner. At times like this it is easy to lose sight of the fact that there may exist in the world an adversary who has eyes and ears. Only quite hopeless simpletons can think that the call for a Fourth International frightened Blum and Company. This is utter nonsense! It was the imminent threat of war and the Comintern's undisguised treachery, tremendously strengthening the position of social patriotism, at least for the time immediately ahead, that compelled Leon Blum and Company to assume the offensive. To think that one "ill-advised" expression or another—and such are inevitable in the heat of struggle—could play a serious role in the question of expulsion means to be too superficial and flippant in evaluating the opponent.

If the leadership clique made a decision in favor of expulsion, in defiance of the traditional myth of democracy, it must have had serious and pressing reasons for doing so. It is not difficult to find a reason: not only Mussolini but Blum as well always has his Wal-Wal for an emergency.\(^{228}\)

We have but to review the most recent experience of the French Socialist Party to see precisely why the party cannot be simply the sum of its factions. A party can tolerate those factions that are not pursuing goals directly opposite its own. When the traditional left wing in the French Socialist Party was innocuously marking time, it was tolerated; more than that, it was encouraged. Blum never referred to the margarine revolutionary Zyromsky as anything other than "my friend." This title, used also with reference to Frossard,\(^{229}\) meant: that person was needed as a cover for the ruling clique, either from the left or from the right. But the Leninists—for whom word and deed are not at variance—were something the democracy of the social-patriotic party could not tolerate.

The revolutionary party presents a definite program and definite tactics. This places definite and very distinct limits on the internal struggle of tendencies and groupings in advance. Now, after the destruction of the Second and Third Internationals, the guidelines take on an especially graphic and distinct character. The very fact of membership in the Fourth Interna-
tional cannot but be contingent upon observance of a certain body of restrictions which reflect all the experiences of previous working class movements. But although the limits on the internal ideological struggle are thus established in advance, the struggle itself, carried on within the limits of general principles, is not at all denied. It is inevitable; and when it is within the prescribed limits, it is fruitful. It is not discussion, of course, that gives the life of the party its fundamental content, but struggle. Where endless discussion feeds endless discussion, there can only be decay and disintegration. But where discussion is rooted in the common struggle, where it puts the struggle under a critical light and prepares for its new stages—there, discussion is an element that is indispensable for development.

The discussion of serious questions is inconceivable without groupings. But under normal conditions they are subsequently dissolved into the party organism, especially because of new experiences, which always provide the best test in cases where there are political disagreements. The conversion of groupings into permanent factions is in itself a disturbing symptom that signifies either that the struggling tendencies are totally irreconcilable or that the party as a whole has reached a deadlock. It is impossible to avert such a situation, of course, by simply banning factions. To wage a war against the symptom does not mean to cure the disease. Only a correct policy and a healthy internal administrative structure and procedure can prevent the conversion of temporary groupings into ossified factions.

The health of the regime depends to a great degree on the leadership of the party and its ability to lend a timely ear to the voice of its critics. A stubborn policy of asserting bureaucratic “prestige” is destructive to the development of the proletarian organization and to the authority of the leadership as well. But goodwill on the part of the leadership alone is not enough. The opposition grouping is also responsible for the character of inner-party relations. In a faction struggle against the reformists, revolutionists frequently resort to extreme measures, although as a general rule in faction fights, the reformists conduct themselves in a much more ruthless and decisive manner. But in this case for both sides it was a matter of preparing to make the break under conditions that would be most advantageous. Those who transfer such methods to work inside a revolutionary organization reveal either political immaturity and the lack of any sense of responsibility; or anarchistic individualism, more often than not
concealed beneath sectarian principles; or, finally, that they are alien to the revolutionary organization.

A sense of proportion in a faction struggle grows with the increased maturity of the organization and the increased authority of its leadership. When Vereecken tries to make it appear that the "sectarians" expelled him because of his loyalty to Marxist principles, we can only shrug our shoulders. In fact, the Vereecken group displayed political immaturity in making a break with an organization that had proven its loyalty to Marxist principles for many years. If Vereecken now has the opportunity to join in the work of building the Fourth International, he owes this opportunity—above all—to the international organization which he broke from by the force of his quick sectarian temper.
To the International Secretariat:

The letter from the group of comrades in Anvers is without any doubt dictated by the best intentions, but it contains a series of obvious misunderstandings.

a. The Anvers comrades accuse us of not insisting on common work between Charleroi and Vereecken. They consider our attitude to be dictated by an “incorrect” feeling toward Vereecken. The Anvers friends shut their eyes, in an astonishing way, to the fact that the Charleroi group is not now connected with the IS and did not sign the Open Letter.

What is the reason for this? The special situation of the Charleroi group within the Belgian [Labor] Party and within its left wing. Whether the political line of Charleroi is correct or not is a separate question; but that political line has its logic. In setting itself the task of influencing the left wing by friendly collaboration with it, the Charleroi group does not want to appear to the left wing as an agent of an organization outside the party. Is such a policy of “accommodation” legitimate? To be sure, it has its dangerous aspects. But they can be more than balanced by positive results, given firm internal cohesiveness. If the Charleroi group considers it impossible, in the present period, to maintain official ties with the IS, and doesn’t sign the Open Letter, how then can one demand that this group enter into official connection with Vereecken? It must be added that neither the Secretariat, nor the organizations that have signed the Open Letter, thought or think of the Charleroi comrades as capitulators or as traitors. Whereas precisely these accusations have been hurled at them by Comrade Vereecken, who has not retracted his false and obviously sectarian accusations to this very day.

b. The Secretariat is ready to do everything to facilitate collaboration in the future; it has proved this by offering
An Answer to Comrades in Anvers

Comrade Vereecken the opportunity to sign the Open Letter and by submitting all the documents to him. It only takes two seconds to break a leg, but for the bone to mend requires several months. We are all well aware of the positive and revolutionary qualities of Comrade Vereecken, his ideological intransigence, his devotion to the cause, his perseverance. But over the years we have learned only too well his negative qualities also: the absence of balance and a sense of proportion, the inclination to excessive exaggeration, indiscipline, and capriciousness—all these traits are characteristic of sectarianism. Democratic centralism imposes obligations on an opposition too: if everyone wanted to do only what pleased him, it would inevitably destroy both democracy and centralism. I do not know where the Anvers comrades have witnessed the ideal democratic centralism which they, following Vereecken, hold up against us; not on this mortal earth, I'm sure. But we believe that there is at present no other organization that discusses so honestly and with such good faith, not only in form but in essence, and decides all contested matters so democratically, as our organization does. Of course, not a few mistakes are committed. But Vereecken commits ten times as many errors against the ABC of democratic centralism as Charleroi. Vereecken’s August article is not only wrong but criminal in its total lack of balance and of sense of proportion. Not one worker who really believes Vereecken’s article will join the Fourth International, and since Vereecken’s group is condemned to vegetate ineffectually outside the Fourth International, his article can only sap his own foundations. That is the fate of sectarianism in general. On the French and Belgian questions (not to mention the others) Vereecken has made so many errors that he was forced to become more prudent. Nevertheless, when the IS threw him a lifeline, his answer was to throw stones at them. That is the reason why I, for one, have been obliged to write an article against sectarianism for our press, taking Vereecken as a model.

c. Speaking of democratic centralism, the Anvers comrades picture things as though the Charleroi group does what the Secretariat “orders.” In reality, Charleroi has determined its entire political line, while not as anarchistically as Vereecken, still, with great independence. I personally have been far from agreeing with all the steps of our Charleroi friends, and I have told them so more than once. But I consider them to be comrades, and not capitulators and traitors. There is the difference. But Vereecken wants to maintain the right to scathe them as capitulators and at the same time . . . demand their collabora-
tion. Naturally, Charleroi is unlikely to accept. To regain our complete confidence, that is, to eliminate the fear of new anarchistic goings-on, Vereecken will have to openly recognize that his position on the French question has been incorrect from beginning to end, and that his accusations against the Secretariat have been refuted by the facts, just like his accusations against the Charleroi group.

Practical conclusion: *The bone broken by Vereecken must be patiently and persistently mended.* For that to happen, it is necessary for Vereecken to remain among the groups of the Fourth International. That naturally does not mean that he gives up the right to criticize. But he has to use that right with balance and proportion (that is the dividing line between Marxist criticism and sectarian criticism). And it would not be amiss if he added . . . a little self-criticism too. Under these conditions, the reconstruction of unity would be assured. By what path? I cannot predict that. Here a great deal depends on the special situation of the Charleroi group. But this special situation will not last forever. The revolutionary party to come can and must be prepared from different sides simultaneously.

Crux [Trotsky]
Comrade Vereecken:

I have already replied to the general questions raised in your letter in the article “Sectarianism, Centrism, and the Fourth International” (largely directed against your article in August and partly in reply to your cothinkers at Anvers). I will also request that a copy of my article on sectarianism be sent to you.

If it is correct that you are in agreement with us on the principled questions and that you broke with us only on a tactical question, which you now consider an episode of the past—this admission is a merciless condemnation of your policy. How can one split and compromise the only Marxist internationalist organization because of an episodic tactical difference?

You yourself refer to the fact that we have not expelled the Dutch section, which was against the “entry,” and have even introduced an “opponent of the entry” into the IS. Exactly! But this argument is also entirely directed against you. It shows that we have had and we have shown neither intolerance nor haste but on the contrary a sincere aspiration to continue to work amicably with comrades temporarily separated from us on a tactical question. Democratic centralism, to which you so imprudently and incorrectly refer, presupposes a discipline of action and does not tolerate sectarian whims.

You demand a discussion on the results of the French experience. Being separated from us, you are, alas, a century behind the times. The successes of our French section are so striking and conclusive, especially in recent months (do not forget that only the leaders have been expelled), that we consider it ridiculous to waste any time in a discussion of last year’s snow.

It is by such a discussion, however, that the Oehler group continues to disrupt our party. The leadership of the American party, the IS, and we have done everything possible to convince the Oehler group of their false position. We have not had any success. Sabotaging the party, remaining in contact with the
people who have betrayed and with the deserters, Bauer and Company, not submitting to discipline, circulating the vilest slanders about our international organization, about our French and Belgian sections, the Oehler group demands for itself . . . democratic centralism, that is to say, the right to sit in judgment over the overwhelming majority. As far as I can judge from here the expulsion of the Oehler group has become absolutely necessary. If only episodic tactical differences are involved, then how explain the monstrous sharpness of the struggle? I explain it thus: agreement with a principle has only a purely formal character; what is involved is the last convulsion of sectarianism against Bolshevik policy.

You speak not only of the Spartacus group but of all the opponents of the “entry.” Whom have you in mind? You must enumerate very precisely all the groups of your cothinkers in all the countries. For my part, I will say that none of these groups have signed the Open Letter for the Fourth International. Most of them are flirting with the centrists (SAP, etc.) Lhuiller has entered the Socialist Party but there he has voted not for the resolutions of the Bolshevik-Leninists but for the resolution of Marceau Pivert. With whom do you solidarize yourself on the international arena? We must know this precisely when rapprochement is spoken of: you are well aware of whom we are in solidarity with.

You will agree that it would show light-mindedness to unify now only in order to split during the war, in illegality, etc. Organizational tactics, turns, and maneuvers—there are still many of them before us, in the event of war as well. It is not at all excluded that precisely during a war the Bolshevik-Leninists of this or that country will find themselves obliged to temporarily enter a reformist party. Must we every time, in illegality, renew the archabstract discussion on “capitulation to the Second International”? We do not want to do this. It is time to grow up. It is in this sense that I wrote that policy during war is the continuation of policy during peace.

I do not at all wish to deny that Spartacus has favorably distinguished itself from the other opponents of the “entry” because: (1) it signed the Open Letter; (2) it aspires to a rapprochement with the Bolshevik-Leninists, instead of systematically slandering them, as the Bauers, the Lhuillers, the Fields, the Weisbords, the Oehlers have done and still do. That is why every one of us cannot but welcome the participation of your group in all the preparatory work for the Fourth International. But as for our faction, the Bolshevik-Leninists, we are here
obliged to be more rigorous. Your article of August showed that you did not understand the depths of the mistake which you committed and that you are even inclined to justify it by repeating the false accusations of the SAP and of the worst sectarian groupings. In this case it is better to postpone unification with our faction until experience gives serious guarantees that future unity will be solid.

Now on the subject of your practical proposals. It would be very desirable, of course, to convene a conference of all the organizations that are for the Fourth International, but it would be hardly possible to limit it to Europe; the participation of the United States, Canada, and to the extent possible, South Africa, would be extremely desirable, if not indispensable. In any case, there can be no disagreements on this question.

Your second proposal—to convene simultaneously a broader conference of all the opponents of national defense, etc.—appears to me under present conditions not only superfluous but even harmful. Moreover, whom do you have in mind? Obviously, the same SAP and its friends. It is astonishing that our critics and opponents from the left show such an inclination toward this harmful centrist clique which is the SAP. Consider who is behind it. The only serious and mass party which at one time belonged to the IAG was the Norwegian Labor Party. But it has long since turned its back on the SAP; its policy is directed toward a rapprochement with the Swedish, Danish, and British labor parties. The small Mot-Dag group is now, as far as is known, in a state of complete disintegration, and moreover, in general, does not have any political value. Doriot has broken off his romance with Walcher. The CC of our Dutch party has decided to break with the SAP and the IAG. There is a crisis in the British Independent Labour Party: the Stalinists have left the party; the Leninists have been very much strengthened; and one can anticipate with certainty that the rupture of the ILP with the Comintern will force it (not without a new crisis) toward the Fourth International. There remains the Swedish party; I have very little information on it but I think that it also will go through the evolution of the other centrist organizations. To attempt to revive the corpse of the IAG by an international conference and a completely sterile discussion between four walls with the old incorrigible centrists—now, that has no meaning. We have had enough of these futile “discussions for self-amusement.” We must go to the masses with the slogan of the Fourth International.

Or perhaps you want to draw into this broad “conference” the
Bordigists, the Hennaut group, etc? This is even less useful. If these people have up until now not understood where they should go, they must be left to their own fate.

Fraternal greetings,

Trotsky
ONCE AGAIN THE ILP

November 1935

Question: What do you mean specifically when you say, at the conclusion of your article ["The ILP and the Fourth International"], that the ILP must still “work out a Marxist program”?

Answer: My whole article was a documentation of the instances in which ILP policy still fails to be Marxist, to be revolutionary: its failure to break sharply with pacifism and with Stalinism, to turn its face fully to the British masses, and to reach a clear position on international organization. These defects are one and the same. Take, for example, pacifism. Despite the revolutionary phraseology of *What the ILP Stands For*, it is still possible in the ILP for Maxton, McGovern, and Campbell Stephen to issue an authoritative statement urging the workers not to bear arms when war comes. This is a bankrupt policy; this is only defeatism against the workers, not revolutionary defeatism against capitalism. Moreover, war is an *international* product of capitalism and can be fought only internationally. Which are the workers’ organizations in other countries that the revolutionists in the ILP must unite with? Not the Comintern, as your pacifist leaders had fondly imagined, for the Comintern is committed to social patriotism. Not with the International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Unity (IAG, the London Bureau), for of the ten groups forming this bureau some have expired, others are pacifist or even social patriotic, and only the Dutch party (RSAP) is in agreement with the ILP, on the fight against sanctions and for independent workers’ action only. This party has long since declared for the Fourth International and this week (about November 21, 1935) declared also for a break with the bureau. It is, then, the Dutch party and the other parties openly fighting for the Fourth International with whom the ILP must of necessity solidarize itself if it is to join in the international revolutionary fight against war.
In the *New Leader* I read that the Lancashire, London, and Scottish divisions of the ILP have already declared themselves to be in opposition to the pacifist statements of the inner executive and the similar utterances of McGovern in the House of Commons. But this is not enough. Their fight can succeed only if it is *positive*—not simply "against pacifism," but *for* revolutionary defeatism. This can only mean that the main fight will be *for the Fourth International*.

Q: Was the ILP correct in running as many candidates as possible in the recent general elections, even at the risk of splitting the vote?

A: Yes. It would have been foolish for the ILP to have sacrificed its political program in the interests of so-called unity, to allow the Labour Party to monopolize the platform, as the Communist Party did. We do not know our strength unless we test it. There is always a risk of splitting, and of losing deposits, but such risks must be taken. Otherwise we boycott *ourselves*.

Q: Was the ILP correct in refusing critical support to Labour Party candidates who advocated military sanctions?

A: No. Economic sanctions, if real, lead to military sanctions, to war. The ILP itself has been saying this. It should have given critical support to all Labour Party candidates, that is, where the ILP itself was not contesting. In the *New Leader* I read that your London division agreed to support only *anti*-sanctionist Labour Party candidates. This too is incorrect. The Labour Party should have been critically supported not because it was for or against sanctions but because it represented the working class masses. The basic error which was made by some ILPers who withdrew critical support was to assume that the war danger necessitated a change in our assessment of reformism. But as Clausewitz said, and Lenin often repeated, *war is the continuation of politics by other means*. If this is true, it applies not only to capitalist parties but to Social Democratic parties. The war crisis does not alter the fact that the Labour Party is a workers' party, which the governmental party is not. Nor does it alter the fact that the Labour Party leadership cannot fulfill its promises, that it will betray the confidence which the masses place in it. In peacetime the workers will, if they trust in Social Democracy, die of hunger; in war, for the same reason, they will die from bullets.
Revolutionists never give critical support to reformism on the assumption that reformism, in power, could satisfy the fundamental needs of the workers. It is possible, of course, that a Labour government could introduce a few mild temporary reforms. It is also possible that the League [of Nations] could postpone a military conflict about secondary issues—just as a cartel can eliminate secondary economic crises only to reproduce them on a larger scale. So the League can eliminate small episodic conflicts only to generalize them into world war.

Thus, both economic and military crises will only return with an added explosive force so long as capitalism remains. And we know that Social Democracy cannot abolish capitalism.

No, in war as in peace, the ILP must say to the workers: “The Labour Party will deceive you and betray you, but you do not believe us. Very well, we will go through your experiences with you, but in no case do we identify ourselves with the Labour Party program.”

Morrison, Clynes, etc., represent certain prejudices of the workers. When the ILP seeks to boycott Clynes it helps not only Baldwin but Clynes himself. If successful in its tactic, the ILP prevents the election of Clynes, of the Labour government, and so prevents their exposure before the masses. The workers will say: “If only we had had Clynes and Morrison in power, things would have been better.”

It is true, of course, that the mental content of Clynes and Baldwin is much the same, except, perhaps, that Baldwin is a little more “progressive” and more courageous. But the class content of support for Clynes is very different.

It is argued that the Labour Party already stands exposed by its past deeds in power and its present reactionary platform. For example, by its decision at Brighton. For us—yes! But not for the masses, the eight millions who voted Labour. It is a great danger for revolutionists to attach too much importance to conference decisions. We use such evidence in our propaganda—but it cannot be presented beyond the power of our own press. One cannot shout louder than the strength of one’s own throat.

Let us suppose that the ILP had been successful in a boycott tactic, had won a million workers to follow it, and that it was the absence of this million votes which lost the election for the Labour Party. What would happen when the war came? The masses would in their disillusionment turn to the Labour Party, not to us. If soviets were formed during the war the soldiers would elect Labour Party people to them, not us. Workers would still say
that we handicapped Labour. But if we gave critical support and by that means helped the Labour Party to power, at the same time telling the workers that the Labour Party would function as a capitalist government and would direct a capitalist war—then, when war came, workers would see that we predicted rightly, at the same time that we marched with them. We would be elected to the soviets and the soviets would not betray.

As a general principle, a revolutionary party has the right to boycott parliament only when it has the capacity to overthrow it, that is, when it can replace parliamentary action by general strike and insurrection, by direct struggle for power. In Britain the masses still have no confidence in the ILP. The ILP is therefore too weak to break the parliamentary machine and must continue to use it. As for a partial boycott, such as the ILP sought to conduct, it was unreal. At this stage of British politics it would be interpreted by the working class as a certain contempt for them; this is particularly true in Britain where parliamentary traditions are still so strong.

Moreover, the London division's policy of giving critical support only to antisanctionists would imply a fundamental distinction between the social patriots like Morrison and Ponsonby or—with your permission—even Cripps. Actually, their differences are merely propagandistic. Cripps is actually only a second-rank supporter of the bourgeoisie. He has said, in effect: "Pay no attention to my ideas; our differences are only small." This is the attitude of a dilettante, not a revolutionist. A thousand times better an open enemy like Morrison. Lansbury himself is a sincere but extravagant and irresponsible old man; he should be in a museum, not in Parliament. The other pacifists are more duplicit, more shifty: like Norman Angell, who demands more sanctions now, they will easily turn into social patriots as war develops. Then they could say to the workers: "You know us. We were antisanctionists. Even the ILP supported our struggle. Therefore, you can have confidence in us now when we say that this war is a just war."

No, the ILP should have applied the same policy of critical support to the whole of the Labour Party, only varying our arguments to meet the slightly varied propaganda of pacifist and social patriot. Otherwise illusions are provoked that pacifism has more power to resist than has social patriotism. This is not true; their differences are not fundamental. Even among the Tories there are differences on sanctions and war policies. The distinction between Amery and Lansbury is simply that Amery is
more of a realist. Both are antisanctionists; but for the working class, Lansbury with his illusions and sincerity is more dangerous.

Most dangerous of all, however, is the Stalinist policy. The parties of the Communist International try to appeal especially to the more revolutionary workers by denouncing the League (a denunciation that is an apology), by asking for "workers' sanctions," and then nevertheless saying: "We must use the League when it is for sanctions." They seek to hitch the revolutionary workers to the shafts so that they can draw the cart of the League. Just as the General Council in 1926 accepted the general strike but behind the curtains concluded a deal with the clergy and pacifist radicals, and in this way used bourgeois opinion and influence to "discipline" the workers and sabotage their strike, so the Stalinists seek to discipline the workers by confining the boycott within the limits of the League of Nations.

The truth is that if the workers begin their own sanctions against Italy, their action inevitably strikes at their own capitalists, and the League would be compelled to drop all sanctions. It proposes them now just because the workers' voices are muted in every country. Workers' action can begin only by absolute opposition to the national bourgeoisie and its international combinations. Support of the League and support of workers' actions are fire and water; they cannot be united.

Because of this, the ILP should have more sharply differentiated itself from the CP during the elections than it did. It should have critically supported the Labour Party against Pollitt and Gallacher. It should have declared openly that the CP has all the deficiencies of the Labour Party without any of its advantages. It should, above all, have shown in practice what true critical support means. By accompanying support with the sharpest and broadest criticism, by patiently explaining that such support is only for the purpose of exposing the treachery of the Labour Party leadership, the ILP would have completely exposed, also, the spurious "critical" support of the Stalinists themselves, a support which was actually wholehearted and uncritical, and based on an agreement in principle with the Labour Party leadership.

Q: Should the ILP seek entry into the Labour Party?

A: At the moment the question is not posed this way. What the ILP must do, if it is to become a revolutionary party, is to turn its
back on the CP and its face toward the mass organizations. It must put 99 percent of its energies into building fractions in the trade union movement. At the moment I understand that much of the fraction work can be done openly by ILPers in the capacity of trade union and cooperative members. But the ILP should never rest content; it must build its influence in the mass organizations with the utmost speed and energy. For the time may come when, in order to reach the masses, it must enter the Labour Party, and it must have tracks laid for the occasion. Only the experience that comes from such fraction work can inform the ILP if and when it must enter the Labour Party. But for all its activity an absolutely clear program is the first condition. A small axe can fell a large tree only if it is sharp enough.

Q: Will the Labour Party split?

A: The ILP should not assume that it will automatically grow at the expense of the Labour Party, that the Labour Party left-wingers will be split off by the bureaucracy and come to the ILP. These are possibilities. But it is equally possible that the left wing, which will develop as the crisis deepens—and particularly now, within the trade unions, after the failure of the Labour Party to win the elections—will be successful in its fight to stay within the Labour Party. Even the departure of the Socialist League to join the ILP would not end these possibilities, for the Socialist League is very petty bourgeois in character and is not likely to organize the militancy within the Labour Party. In any case, the history of the British general strike of 1926 teaches us that a strong militant movement can develop in a strongly bureaucratized trade union organization, creating a very important minority movement, without being forced out of the trade unions.

Instead, what happens is that the labor fakers swing left in order to retain control. If the ILP is not there at the critical moment with a revolutionary leadership, the workers will need to find their leadership elsewhere. They might still turn to Citrine, for Citrine might even be willing to shout for soviets, for the moment, rather than lose his hold. As Scheidemann and Ebert shouted for soviets, and betrayed them, so will Citrine. Leon Blum, under the revolutionary pressure of the French masses, runs headlines in his Populaire: “Sanctions—but the workers must have control,” etc. It is this treacherous “heading in order to behead” which the ILP must prevent in Britain.
Q: Is Stalinism the chief danger?

A: Of all the radical phrasemongers, the ones who offer the greatest danger in this respect are the Stalinists. The members of the CPGB [Communist Party of Great Britain] are now on their bellies before the Labour Party—but this makes it all the easier for them to crawl inside. They will make every concession demanded of them, but once within they will still be able to pose as the left wing because the workers still retain some illusions about the revolutionary nature of the Comintern—illusions which the ILP in the past has helped to maintain. They will utilize this illusion to corrupt the militants with their own social-patriotic policy. They will sow seed from which only weeds can sprout. Only a clear and courageous policy on the part of the ILP can prevent this disaster.

Q: Would you recommend the same perspective for the ILP Guild of Youth as for the adult party?247

A: Even more. Since the ILP youth seem to be few and scattered, while the Labour [League of] Youth is the mass youth organization, I would say: “Do not only build fractions—seek to enter.” For here the danger of Stalinist devastation is extreme. The youth are all-important. Unlike the older generation they have little actual experience of war; it will be easier for the Stalinists and the other pseudorevolutionary patriots to confuse the youth on the war issues than to confuse those who survived the last war. On the other hand, the willingness of the Stalinists to drive these same youth into another actual war will make the young workers properly suspicious. They will listen more easily to us—if we are there to speak to them. No time must be lost. Out of the new generation comes the new International, the only hope for the world revolution. The British section will recruit its first cadres from the thirty thousand young workers in the Labour League of Youth. Their more advanced comrades in the ILP youth must not allow themselves to be isolated from them, especially now at the very moment when war is a real danger.

Q: Should the ILP terminate its united front with the CP?

A: Absolutely and categorically—yes! The ILP must learn to turn its back on the CP and its face toward the working masses. The permanent “unity committees” in which the ILP has sat with
the CP were nonsense in any case. The ILP and the CPGB were propaganda organizations, not mass organizations; united fronts between them were meaningless if each of them had the right to advance its own program. These programs must have been different or there would have been no justification for separate parties, and with different programs there is nothing to unite around. United fronts for certain specific actions could have been of some use, of course, but the only important united front for the ILP is with the Labour Party, the trade unions, the cooperatives. At the moment, the ILP is too weak to secure these; it must first conquer the right for a united front by winning the support of the masses. At this stage, united fronts with the CP will only compromise the ILP. Rupture with the CP is the first step toward a mass base for the ILP and the achievement of a mass base is the first step toward a proper united front, that is, a united front with the mass organizations.

Q: Should the ILP forbid groupings?

A: It can scarcely do that without forbidding its leadership—which is also a group, a centrist group, protected by the party machinery—or without denying the very factional principle by which it must build its influence in the mass organizations.

Factions existed in the Bolshevik Party as temporary groupings of opinion during its whole life—except for a brief period in 1921, when they were forbidden by unanimous vote of the leadership as an extreme measure during an acute crisis.

Q: How far can factions develop with safety to the party?

A: That depends on the social composition of the party, upon the political situation, and upon the quality of the leadership. Generally it is best to let petty-bourgeois tendencies express themselves fully so that they may expose themselves. If there are no such tendencies, if the membership is fairly homogeneous, there will be only temporary groupings—unless the leadership is incorrect. And this will be shown best in practice. So, when a difference occurs, a discussion should take place, a vote be taken, and a majority line adopted. There must be no discrimination against the minority; any personal animosity will compromise not them but the leadership. Real leadership will be loyal and friendly to the disciplined minority.

It is true, of course, that discussion always provokes feelings
which remain for some time. Political life is full of difficulties—personalities clash—they widen their dissensions—they get in each other's hair. These differences must be overcome by common experience, by *education of the rank and file*, by the leadership *proving* it is right. Organizational measures should be resorted to only in extreme cases. Discipline is built by education, not only by statutes. It was the flexible life within it which allowed the Bolshevik Party to build its discipline. Even after the conquest of power, Bukharin and other members of the party voted against the government in the Central Executive Committee on important questions, such as the German peace, and in so doing lined themselves up with the Social Revolutionaries, who soon attempted armed insurrection against the Soviet state. But Bukharin was not expelled. Lenin said, in effect: "We will tolerate a certain lack of discipline. We will demonstrate to them that we are right. Tomorrow they will learn that our policy is correct, and they will not break discipline so quickly." By this I do not advise the dissenting comrades to imitate the arrogance of Bukharin. Rather do I recommend that the leadership learn from the patience and tact of Lenin. Though, when it was necessary, he could wield the razor as well as the brush.

The authority of the national leadership is the necessary condition of revolutionary discipline. It can be immensely increased when it represents an international agreement of principles, of common action. Therein lies one of the sources of strength of the new International.

Q: What do you think of the ILP colonial policy?

A: So far, it seems to be mainly on paper. Fenner Brockway has written some very good articles on the Mohmand struggles and on Ethiopia. But there should be many more—and beyond words, there should be action. The ILP should long ago have created some kind of colonial bureau to coordinate those organizations of colonial workers who are striving to overthrow British imperialism. Of course, only the real revolutionists in the ILP will bother to work for such policies. It is the test of their revolutionary understanding.

Q: What should be the basic concept of illegal work?

A: Illegal work is work in the mass organizations—for the ILP it is systematic entry and work in the trade unions, cooperatives,
etc. In peacetime and in war, it is the same. You will perhaps say: “They will not let us in. They will expel us.” You do not shout “I am a revolutionist” when working in a trade union with reactionary leadership. You educate your cadres who carry on the fight under your direction. You keep educating new forces to replace those expelled, and so you build up a mass opposition. Illegal work must keep you among the working masses. You do not retire into a cellar, as some comrades imagine. The trade unions are the schools for illegal work. The trade union leadership is the unofficial police of the state. The protective covering for the revolutionist is the trade union. Transition into war conditions is almost imperceptible.

Q: What specifically do you think the ILP should do in order to build a new International?

A: The ILP, if it intends to become a genuine revolutionary party, must face honestly the question of the new International. The Second International is bankrupt, the ILP has already said. It now recognizes the betrayal of the Third International. It should also realize that the International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Parties is a myth. It should draw the only possible conclusion and add its name to the *Open Letter for the Fourth International*.

Q: You mention that the International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Parties offers no basis for the struggle against war. What is the policy of this bureau? What is its future?

A: The bureau has no common policy; its parties are going in all directions. The SAP of Germany now marches steadily rightwards toward Social Democracy and Stalinism. Today I have news that the congress of the RSAP, one of the largest parties in the bureau, has voted by an overwhelming majority to sever its old close cooperation with the SAP and also to break off completely with the bureau and to associate with the parties working to build the Fourth International. It even passed a vote of censure on the Central Committee for having maintained a connection with the SAP as long as it did.

The Spanish Workers’ and Peasants’ Bloc is, in a certain sense, similar to the ILP. Its leadership is not internationalist in perspective but its membership includes an important section who are for the Fourth International. The USP of Rumania is
also developing toward a revolutionary internationalist position. Recently it expelled the tiny Stalinist faction within it, and it is already being accused of "Trotskyism." I hope that in the near future they will recognize the necessity of joining in the great work of building the Fourth International.

As for the other members of the bureau, either they are nonentities or they have no real relation to the bureau. The Italian SP (Maximalist) is not a party, only a microscopic group living for the most part in exile. The Austrian Red Front only two years ago had a thousand members in illegality. Today it is nonexistent, dissolved. Why? Because it had no program—no banner! The Polish Independent Labor Party is only a topic for humor, a caricature organization of no political importance, while the Bulgarian LSG is never heard of. Like the Norwegian Mot-Dag—another "member" of the bureau—it is only a small left-wing group of intellectuals which is in the process of decomposition. Here in Norway, the one workers' party is the NAP. It belonged to the bureau for two years, but does so no more and is in no way desirous of building a new International. Just now I have received word that the NAP decided (on the very same day that the Dutch party withdrew from the bureau) to sever even formal connections—for opposite political reasons. Only two parties of consequence remain to be considered—the ILP and the Swedish SP. Already the latter grows cold to the bureau as the SP turns to the right like the NAP. It is altogether likely that it will follow.

The bureau suffers the fate of all centrist organizations in times of acute class struggle; it is destroyed by the release of the centrifugal forces within itself. We predicted that the IAG would lose both to the right and to the left. It is happening before our eyes, and even more quickly than we had expected. History could not arrange a better demonstration of the correctness of our analysis of centrum. If the ILP does not soon make up its mind it will find itself sitting in lonely possession of the bureau.

Q: Was not Doriot also a member of the "Seven Lefts" [London Bureau]?

A: Certainly. He may never, for his own reasons, have adhered formally, but he was chosen with Schwab and Gorkin to form the bureau's World Committee for Peace Work. The committee, of course, never functioned. Later, when Doriot came to terms with Laval, he slipped out of the committee as quickly as possible.
Before, the IAG had met in St-Denis, under his protection. Later, when they called him on the phone it was always busy—connected with the government. Doriot is quite openly a traitor. It is interesting that at the last IAG conference Doriot was the loudest in condemning the Trotskyists for their slogan of the new International, and the SAP quoted him with enthusiastic approval.

Q: May not the bureau recoup its losses from other forces?

A: The course of events is not that way. Zyromsky, in France, has been the great hope of the IAG. He was, together with Pivert, a year in the Bataille Socialiste group. Since that time, Bataille Socialiste has ceased to exist. The reason? Like the Austrian Red Front, it had no clear program, no banner. Pivert has moved further left and Zyromsky has had to solidarize himself with the right, with Blum himself. Zyromsky now plays the perfidious role of Stalinist social patriot within the SFIO.

Pivert has now built up another left group, but this too will not last six months. It is composed of one element afraid of the patriots and another afraid of the Bolshevik-Leninists. The group calls itself “Revolutionary Left.” It is a little left, but it is not yet revolutionary.

Q: What do you think of the Lovestoneite argument, which we hear in the ILP, that the CPSU must still be a good party because it exists in a workers’ state?

A: That is not a Marxian argument, that is metaphysics. If a workers’ state automatically produced a good government there would be no need for a Communist Party within it. The fact is that the CP as the government of the workers’ state is not a “thing in itself” but is subjected to the play of different historical forces. It can deviate, degenerate, become a danger to the existence of the workers’ state. That is precisely what has happened in Russia.
How to Reach the Farmer?

Although the economic position of the European peasant is very different from that of the Canadian farmer, certain important features remain the same. For instance, although I have made no special study of Canadian politics, I am willing to assert that the so-called farmer parties of the prairies—now in retreat before Social Credit—have this in common with peasant parties everywhere: they do not and cannot represent the farmer if they are not connected with genuine revolutionary proletarian organizations. Examine their leadership and caucuses and tell me if they are not dominated by the petty bourgeois, the wealthier farmers, the lawyers, teachers, and storekeepers. Examine their financial connections and see if they do not lead directly to merchant capital.

Farmers a Composite Class

It is always this way; so-called “independent farmer parties” are or become anti-farmer. Farmers cannot maintain an independent party, because they are not a homogeneous class. Like capitalism as a whole, they are a composite of different classes; they are the protoplasm from which all classes derive. If the exploited poor farmers are not connected with the workers’ parties they inevitably become connected with the bourgeois parties, by a hierarchy at whose top sits finance capital.

It was this basic truth which the Narodniks could not see, and which necessitated the long struggle of the Bolsheviks against them. It was and is the essence of Bolshevism to introduce the class struggle into the peasantry. The crime of Stalinism was to reintroduce the Narodnik illusion that the peasantry was a homogeneous mass, which could be politically unified. That illusion is especially dangerous in the more advanced countries,
where there are more wealthy farmers directly connected with town finance.

Reach the Farmer Through the Worker

How can we win the farmhand and poor farmer to the support of the industrial worker? At the start, do not look for an auditorium full of peasants. One must begin by explaining the problems of the farmer to the workers. The revolutionary party must first itself analyze the existing farmer parties and expose the connections between their directive strata and their exploiters. It must not only understand and sympathize with the farmers' troubles; it must point out to the lower layers the centrifugal forces which forever shattered all efforts at a unified and independent farmers' organization (i.e., independent from the working class but therefore dependent on the bourgeoisie).

It is through its work in the mass proletarian organizations that the revolutionary reaches the farmer. In Canada especially, I am told, much of the population is in small towns where workers and farmers live side by side. Here the contact actually takes place; here is the opportunity to spread Bolshevik ideas, which can unite the exploited lower strata of the farms with the main historic fight of the proletariat. Through the workers we find the way to the farmer.

Work with Women and the Youth

“Revolutionary” organizations which have no special place for women and the youth are not revolutionary. In life, the main burden falls on women. Both women and youth are the most exploited by the capitalists and the most misprized by reformists. There is a tendency to regard the youth as less important—perhaps because they do not vote! It is this attitude to them as well as to the colonial workers which is the test of the Bolshevik. It should be remembered that the youth are asked to do most of the fighting in the capitalists' wars. We must educate our best youth comrades side by side with ourselves, especially in Bolshevik theory.

Above all, the women! As the Social Democrats are the aristocracy of the working class, working women, whether in home or factory, are the lowest paid, the most driven, the most exploited—they are the pariahs. And we—we are the party of the most exploited. So we are therefore the party of women and the youth.
Illegal and Mass Work

The centrist comes to the revolution with the idea that mass work is prosaic but "underground" work romantic. The two tasks must by synthesized—in fact, they are the same. Illegal work is the work of remaining among the masses, not of retiring into a cellar. The passing over from fraction work in revolutionary trade unions to illegal work under war conditions is imperceptible. The trade union bureaucracy becomes the police spy system—that is all.

Why Are There Still Honest Workers in the Comintern after Germany?

Great historical defeats do not have their full meaning made clear to the worker immediately. Only in revolutionary periods do our ideas find an immediate reflection in the broad masses. Thinking and analyzing are not taught to the masses by capitalism. Not having that capacity, they must learn from events, by slogans adequate to them and hammered in. It is the fault of the sectarian that he does not understand this. He becomes disgusted with the workers' movement given by history and wants his own little workers' movement. Great defeats, especially when they are caused by the bankruptcy of their own leadership, do not make the workers more revolutionary but demoralize their organization for a long time. That is why, although the Left Opposition in Russia predicted the Chinese defeat that Stalinism caused, yet the defeat hurt the Left Opposition and strengthened Stalin's bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

That is why there are still honest workers in the Comintern. That is why we must explain the German defeat, patiently explain. How could we expect that we, the left wing of the world proletariat, who have suffered one defeat after another, could have become in such a period stronger and more powerful? We can and we will grow with the new awakening of the world proletariat, and the Fourth International will provide the leadership.
Dear Friend W:

I was very happy to receive some sign of life from you after such a long silence. That you remain unbowed and ready to fight despite all the shocks and difficult tests you have had to undergo came as no surprise to me, but it greatly cheered me nonetheless in these times when so many lose heart, adapt to reformism, or stand on the sidelines under cover of a whole spectrum of ultraradical critiques.

Comrades from the CP or the Zinoviev faction who are inclined toward us, not a few of them politically talented individuals, do not, unfortunately, find the right path and the right words so easily. This theme is taken up at least in part in the article “Those Who Have Not Gotten Hold of Themselves” in the most recent issue of Unser Wort. The leadership of the European Communists (including the Zinovievists) were thrust all at once into the “masses”—thanks to the war and the October Revolution. They then settled down to indolence and accustomed themselves to “commanding” the masses with short, pithy phrases. They thought that their power resided in themselves and in their phrases. In actuality, their power resided in the confidence of the awakening masses in the October Revolution and the Comintern—despite their false formulas. Hence many elements from this layer are like the young wastrel who has squandered his inheritance and is looking for some magic formula that will fill his pockets again. The determined preparatory and educational work of the revolutionary pioneer doesn’t appeal to them. Instead they are always looking not just for our errors (of which there are, naturally, many) but for the error which prevents the masses from rallying to them again en masse. They know from the history books that Bolshevism experienced not only periods of flood, but periods of ebb too (1906-12, 1914-17), but they have never understood this politically. This
is the reason for their constant vacillating, their tendency to give equal weight to what is secondary and what is essential in our program and their propensity to listen to the SAP’s philistine gossip—and in fact not just to its gossip, but to its real opportunistic critique as well.

A fresh example: Erde, who was supposed to assume responsibility for international aid to the internationalist parties, had a falling out with the IS over secondary—although in practice important—considerations. I got the impression that the IS did not really handle everything as it should have been handled. Nevertheless (or rather, all the more), I viewed Erde’s break with the IS as absolutely wrong. I wrote him a letter to this effect. The answer arrived a short time ago. Erde sets forth a whole number of criticisms of the Bolshevik-Leninists, among which the important ones are mixed in with the unimportant and no general perspective emerges. The whole document is, however, characterized by a hostile tone, directed not against me personally, but against our international organization and various individual comrades. There are two passages in this letter that I find revealing: one has to do with the question of sanctions, the other with the SAP.

Erde writes: “Since the working class is doing nothing, can do nothing, and for the most part desires to do nothing, the measures taken by the bourgeoisie must serve as the basis for a campaign. Any kind of negative position serves fascism.”

On this basis, Erde rejects the position on sanctions taken by our Italian comrades. What position does Comrade Erde himself take toward the Stalinists and reformists? Since the proletariat is weak at present, it must . . . look to the bourgeoisie for support. The weakness of the proletariat is in fact a result of allowing the bourgeoisie to do as it likes. And, if this passivity toward one’s own imperialist government is raised to the level of a principle, this serves not to strengthen the proletariat but only to undermine the future of its vanguard.

Erde writes further: “How is it possible to make such a foolish decision as the Dutch section’s resolve to have nothing more to do with the emigres who are members of the SAP? These SAP comrades are our closest friends.”

I don’t think the Dutch section’s decision is foolish; I think it is beneficial. The American party also decided a short time ago to break off all friendly relations with the SAP and the IAG. The SAP is at present nothing more than the organized agency for all the shortcomings and ambiguities of the leaderships and ex-
leaderships of the old organizations—for an underhanded, slanderous, philistine attack on the Fourth International.

If Erde takes the above-mentioned positions on these two questions—which are, moreover, closely related (sanctions and the SAP, i.e., right opportunism)—what sense is there in wasting time discussing the practical errors of the IS or the real or imagined errors committed by Unser Wort? We are standing on different sides of the barricades.

I don’t know where Comrade Harte stands on sanctions and “our closest friends,” although at first he marched in step with Erde. It is unlikely that he agrees with Erde. But, as I can tell from his letters, he too is among the impatient ones, who just yesterday “commanded” the masses and have not yet rid themselves of this habit, which they can find no application for in our ranks. Not just because we have no great masses to command, but because the “small mass” that we are gathering around us with increasing success does not want to be “commanded” after the Zinoviev-Stalin experience. That our young comrades can use good advice is not to be disputed. That is why I always placed special emphasis on attracting the best elements of the older generation. But now some of them want to replace long-term educational work with the crack of the overseer’s whip. This will not do. For even the youngest among us have a feeling of independence, acquired at great cost. And this feeling is what makes it possible for them to resist the old organizations, with their united front, their People’s Front and all their other grand gestures that impress the philistines so much.

You write that one comrade thinks I myself have already reached the conclusion that the counterrevolution has completely triumphed in the Soviet Union, but that I do not consider it opportune to say so publicly. Even if it was unintentional, this comrade could not do me any greater insult. Saying what is has always been our highest principle. Implying that I have two opinions, one for myself (or for myself and my closest friends) and the other for the outside world—that is really too much.

On the question of the historical analogy with Thermidor, I recently undertook to correct myself publicly.259 There it was a question of nothing more than an analogy, which is always one-sided, never complete. I really can’t add anything to what I’ve said before as far as the essence of the matter is concerned. Regarding the Soviet Union and the war, Comrade Braun will give you a short formulation of my position, reduced to the barest essentials. Can we work with comrades who are of another
opinion on this decisive question? This question cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. The Treint group in France declares that they agree with us on all questions except that of the social character of the Soviet Union, but for this reason they will not sign the Open Letter. If however, some individual or group joins the Fourth International despite differences on the Soviet Union—that means that either they feel quite sure of themselves or else they underestimate the importance of this question. In both cases it would be wrong to reject such comrades. We should accept them in order to discuss further with them, on the basis of events. I don’t think a more precise answer to this question can be given.

As for the question of the united front, I think that there is a tendency to create great terminological confusion over this, which makes it difficult to pose the question clearly. The concept “united front” is closely linked with the well-known maxim: *march separately, but strike together*. In order to strike together, it is necessary to form a united front. It is thus not a question of a permanent institution, but of a temporary battle formation. In “quiet” times, the application of a united front would prove the exception. In a revolutionary period, the united front can have an extended character and even take on an organizational form (e.g., the form of revolutionary soviets). In any case, under all circumstances, it is a question of closing ranks in order to strike—something that presupposes mass organizations.

Let’s take, for example, the late “united front” between the ILP and the British CP. This was a permanent alliance between propaganda groups. That is not a united front but an open admission that one of the two groups (or perhaps both) has no claim to an independent political existence. They *march* together even before they have succeeded in gathering the forces to *strike*. One should march alone if one really has something to say to the working class.

I am not sure whether these remarks made in passing apply to the discussion you mentioned or whether they are thus useful for clarifying the question. But you will be able to judge that better than I. In any case, we must be patient with all those groupings that approach us even if they approach with airs of superiority which are not totally justified. We should yield nothing in the realm of principle, but we should not play prestige politics. We should not allow ourselves to be influenced by unpleasant memories and we should not lose our heads. This, I believe, should be our rule. Even with the SAP people we exercised the
greatest patience for several years. That in this instance reserving judgment proved to be no more than a reprieve is their own fault. We must show goodwill toward every other group and every individual, since we are the stronger. We have a tradition behind us and no doubts whatever about our future.

Stay well, dear friend, and don’t let life’s misfortunes get you down.

L. Trotsky
ON THE POSTCARD AMALGAM

December 15, 1935

To the International Secretariat of the ICL

Dear Comrades:

1. Information from an absolutely reliable source indicates that the GPU is continuing to develop the amalgam with Fred Zeller's postcard internationally. Thus, the Central Committee of the Norwegian CP has received orders from Moscow to keep T. and his friends under surveillance, because they are preparing—you understand—a terrorist attempt against (naturally) Stalin. Furthermore, the CC was declared in advance to be responsible for any disastrous consequences that might come of its possible negligence. The purpose is clear. Moscow wants to receive through this miserable CC information that can enable the GPU to gather material for its work of provocation. The CC seemed quite flabbergasted. It can be assumed that similar instructions were given by the GPU to all the Central Committees of the so-called Communist International.

2. Fred Zeller explained the foolish postcard to me in a letter just as I had explained it myself. It was only an enthusiastic prank. One would have to be an absolute idiot to believe that by means of a friendly and humorous postcard (in the style of the Latin Quarter) to a young Stalinist, Fred Zeller sought to incite him to penetrate the Kremlin in order to assassinate Stalin.

Nevertheless, I find the reaction of our comrades and friends against the disgraceful acts of the hirelings of the GPU (Duclos and Company) to be absolutely insufficient. Zeller's own assessment ("the complete failure of Stalinist slander") is too optimistic. The material means of the GPU are enormous. And stupidity is an abundant resource. We must respond vigorously and above all systematically.

3. It is necessary to create a special (nonpartisan) committee, making use of the information brought to light by the Yugoslavs.
[Tarov and Ciliga]. Cannot Souvarine be interested in this affair? Perhaps also Rosmer, and even Magdeleine Paz. (But not Raymond Molinier, who has his “ideas” on this question too, just as confused and unrealistic as ever. In practice, he has already sabotaged several campaigns against the amalgams). Zeller could appeal to each of them.

The aim of the committee: to develop an international campaign on behalf of the revolutionary political prisoners, beginning with Zinoviev and Kamenev, the two Yugoslavs, etc. Some time ago I received a draft of an appeal concerning Zinoviev and Kamenev, but without explanations. The text didn’t seem to me to be appropriate for its purposes (it had a long digression on Plekhanov, etc.). But an appeal is not the answer. What is needed is a committee that can develop a systematic campaign.

4. I make the following suggestion to this committee: By registered mail, Romain Rolland was sent my reply to his insinuations in l’Humanite. Has he responded to it? Of course not. I can thus accuse him of publishing criminal slanders against Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others, and cite him before an ethics commission. Is such a course possible? I believe it is. Perhaps Marcel Martinet could be consulted about it, if he is not too ill. (Perhaps Louzon as well.) In any case, a public accusation against Romain Rolland as a slanderer of defenseless prisoners to me seems quite effective.

5. To return to the subject of the celebrated postcard. Is it true that the addressee was under GPU surveillance (and for what reason?), and that his mail was stolen by means of a skeleton key? (That is the familiar version around here.)

6. In Zeller’s article (“Reply to Slanderers,” in Revolution, no. 17), the following sentence occurs: “If L’Avant-garde [the paper of the French Stalinist youth] persists in its campaign, I may be obliged to enlarge on this point.” Nothing must be left to speculation. It is necessary to persist even if L’Avant-garde doesn’t: F. Zeller is obliged to reveal everything.

7. For my part, I could present the committee with a document briefly summarizing my pamphlet on the Kirov affair (the responsibility of Stalin and Yagoda for Kirov’s assassination) and on the further development of the amalgams.

I call your attention to the fact that at least a week before I heard about this humorous postcard I wrote a pamphlet, at Fred Zeller’s urging, about why Stalin was victorious. I published the article—as I invariably do—with a date (November 12, 1935), in
the most recent number of the Russian *Biulleten*, and ended it with the affirmation that Stalinism as a system must collapse under the pressure of the international revolutionary movement: "We want and look forward to no other revenge." I believe that this article should be published by *Revolution* with an introductory note from the editors on the circumstances under which it was written.  

8. There are some comrades who believe that it is more important to repeat endlessly the same arguments for workers' militias than to bother about the Stalinist amalgam. This is wrong. You will not make any progress toward a militia without discrediting Stalinism, which is today the best assistant to fascism. Metallurgists say that phosphorus is the syphilis of iron. We must understand and proclaim that Stalinism is the syphilis of the workers' movement.
REQUEST FOR A MONTH’S LEAVE OF ABSENCE

December 27, 1935

It is absolutely necessary that I should get at least four weeks’ leave and should not be approached with any letters from the sections. . . . Otherwise it will be impossible for me to recover my capacity for work. These disgusting trivia not only rob me of my ability to cope with more serious affairs, but give me insomnia, fever, etc. . . . I request you to be quite ruthless about this. Then I may perhaps be at your disposal again, say, by February 1.
Comrade Vereecken:

You have not replied to my last letter. However, I asked you a very specific question: What non-entrist groups do you support? What are your international connections? We have the right to ask you this: you know our international affiliations perfectly well, while we do not know yours. Moreover, it is a matter of common work according to your own suggestion.

As far as I can judge from here, the “POB chapter” of our Belgian section is approaching its conclusion. We certainly hope that our group will exit much stronger than it entered. From the instant of the expulsions—which seem to be brought closer again by Godefroid’s perfidious treason—the question of the new party must be posed. It must be prepared for. The ground must be cleared by a lucid explanation. That was the purpose of my last letter. I await your reply with the greatest interest.

With my best greetings,

L. Trotsky
DEVELOPMENTS IN THE USSR

December 31, 1935

To all sections of the ICL and all sympathizing organizations:

In the recent period, comrades from various countries have complained of a lack of general articles concerning the USSR. We will take energetic steps to remedy this in the next period. Comrade Markin [Leon Sedov] has been charged with establishing a special press service to deal with these questions. He has already prepared a first article on the Stakhanovite movement. The article is based on very important documentation and, in my opinion, gives a totally correct picture of the character and the role of this movement, which is glorified by the Stalinists not only uncritically, but also in a totally dishonest fashion. I would like to call the attention of all comrades to this article.

Crux [Trotsky]
THE CLASS NATURE OF THE SOVIET STATE

January 1, 1936

Dear Comrades:

You ask whether the present Soviet system can give way to a "third" form of society, which would be neither capitalist nor socialist. Urbahns believes that this is in fact "state capitalism," identifying the Soviet system with a regimented fascist capitalism. In doing this he completely overlooks a very subtle difference: fascism hems in the highly developed productive forces within the framework of the national state, in which it checks their further development. The Soviet system, even in its present form, imparts a tempo to the development of the productive forces never before attained. Urbahns thus does not know how to distinguish between what is historically progressive and what is archreactionary.

I see that you have nothing in common with Urbahns's formulation. But you think that the Soviet bureaucracy, in its further development, might be able to adapt the forms of property to its own interests to such a point that it would become in reality a ruling class. You do not specify these new forms of property. You content yourself with the general statement that living evolution is inexhaustible in its new forms and formations.

In this general form, I find it as difficult to adopt as to reject the "third" possibility, because too many factors must be abstracted for that—in the first instance those that are decisive for our revolutionary activity.

Now, property forms are social forms par excellence. You cite examples—moreover, ones taken from the precapitalist epoch—where certain forms of property had no great significance. These examples only prove that it is necessary to distinguish the real from the supposed forms of property, i.e., from juridical fictions (which also have a real function, but on a higher plane). The bourgeoisie has reduced property forms to their baldest expres-
sion. The proletarian revolution nationalized capitalist property. The question therefore arises: cannot this nationalization itself degenerate into a fiction, with real property, under one form or another, returning to the new ruling class emerging from the bureaucracy?

Nationalized property stands or falls with the planned economy. Thus, it is not a fiction, but a powerful reality. Nationalization, however, signifies that the productive forces are organized and directed not only according to a plan, but also in the interests of all. The bureaucracy hurts the new system in both respects. On the one hand, it reduces the efficiency of the planned economy, and on the other it consumes an enormous portion of its surplus.

If we speak of a "third" system, we must answer the question whether it is a matter of the rights newly acquired by the bureaucracy to an ever larger part of the national income—which would be equivalent to the right of parasitism—or if what is involved is the virtual liquidation of the planned economy. Only the second hypothesis would constitute a new social base.

We must clearly understand that the abolition of the planned economy, and by the same token also the nationalization of the productive forces, will inevitably and automatically lead to paralysis and disintegration of the latter. We would then no longer have before us a progressive system, but one in decomposition, which would inevitably lead to fascist capitalism. It is conceivable that a development so rich in possible formations would create something original. But in the essence of the matter there would be hardly any change.

Let us suppose that the planned economy remains basically intact, that the productive forces continue in their rise; then there will remain—in your hypothesis—nothing but the fact that the bureaucracy has succeeded in stabilizing, fortifying, and eternalizing its parasitism, juridically, ideologically, and politically (and why not religiously?). This perspective assumes that the great mass of the population patiently accepts the new yoke despite the rising level of the economy and culture and endures it without offering any resistance, and forever. That is not at all probable. At a certain stage, economic progress opens great sources of power to the bureaucracy. But this very progress is more and more working to the disadvantage of its autocracy and its parasitism.

What perspective opens before us? Very probably a new revolution. This will not be a social revolution, but a political
revolution. In its evolution the bourgeoisie too has known of "great" revolutions, i.e., social revolutions, and purely political revolutions which took place on the basis of already established property. The theoretical prognoses of Marx and Lenin did not foresee, in any case, the possibility of political revolutions on the basis of property nationalized by the proletariat. But they did not foresee the Bonapartist degeneration of the proletarian dictatorship, either. Both these things belong to those stages, transitory forms, etc., in the formation of which history is so rich. The general laws of the evolution of capitalism to socialism, as they are established by Marxism, do not lose their force by virtue of these "episodes" (very disagreeable "episodes").

These are a few considerations on the subject of the interesting problem you have posed to me—which I send you in all haste.

With warmest greetings,
Yours,
L. Trotsky
FOREIGN COMMUNISTS IN DANGER

January 2, 1936

In the resolution of the last plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU (December 23, 1935) about the verification of party documents, membership cards, etc., we find a very peculiar indication that insufficient vigilance on the part of the party bodies in question made it possible for foreign intelligence agencies to smuggle their agents into the Communist Party under the mask of political emigrants and foreign Communists.

This paragraph of the resolution demands the closest attention and the greatest mistrust. It is of course not excluded that spies might assume the mask of Stalinists and, in the thoroughly bureaucratized inner-party life, do so with success. But one must wonder why the Central Committee has considered it necessary to make a big point of this in the resolution. Real questions of espionage are normally not dealt with in the open. A secret memorandum about this question would be completely sufficient for party bodies. But the fact that it is considered useful to report the infiltration of foreign spies to the public so demonstratively proves that this maneuver is intended to solve a completely different and much more important problem.

In the last few years hundreds of foreign Communists were insidiously coaxed into the Soviet Union, arrested, and put into concentration camps or solitary confinement, or deported. Dozens of them were executed. They tried to link up the assassination of an important group of foreign Oppositionists with the Kirov affair. Now they are trying to give a more general and longer lasting pretext for the extermination of critical-minded foreigners. It is very likely that the creators of the amalgam (in the first instance the pair Stalin and Yagoda) are very concerned about the revelations of the Yugoslavian comrade Ciliga, since his release. And they are right. Therefore they try to furnish the foreign agents of the GPU (including Messrs. Stalinist editors) with a ready-made formula for deceiving public opinion. Since the
whole world could not be implicated in Kirov's assassination, suspicion can be thrown on the others by calling them spies.

It will not help. The workers will demand the institution of an impartial *international commission*, to investigate all charges, persecutions, and assassinations of foreign Communists. This slogan has now acquired enormous importance for purging the workers' movement of the poison of the Stalinist amalgam.
NOTES OF A JOURNALIST

January 10, 1936

Uruguay and the USSR

Uruguay has broken off diplomatic relations with the USSR. This step was indubitably taken under the pressure of Brazil and other Latin American countries, possibly the United States as well, as a type of "warning." In other words, the rupture of diplomatic relations is an act of imperialist provocation. It has no other meaning. So far as financial assistance of the Communist International to the Latin American revolutionists is concerned, diplomatic organs are not at all needed for this purpose: there are dozens of other ways and means. We are not speaking here of the fact that the intervention of the Comintern into revolutionary movements has invariably led and leads to their shipwreck, so that the bourgeois governments, in all conscience, should not complain of the leaders of that institution but on the contrary bestow upon them the highest decoration—of course, not the "Lenin medal," but, say, the "Stalin medal."

But this aspect of the case does not interest us now. The conduct of the Soviet press does. It would be difficult to imagine a more repulsive spectacle! Instead of directing the thunder of its completely justified indignation against the all-powerful inspirers of Uruguayan reaction, the Soviet press is absorbed in insipid and idiotic mockery of Uruguay's small territory, its numerically small population and its weakness. In the brazen and thoroughly reactionary verses of Demyan Bedny, we find retailed his inability to find Uruguay on the maps without the aid of glasses, and his recalling, in this connection, how the Uruguayan consul complained helplessly about the seizure of his automobile by the Bolsheviks during the October Revolution. In so doing, this poet laureate retails the consul's speech with all sorts of "national" accents, entirely in the spirit of the Black Hundred witticisms of the czarist official organs Novoye Vremya and Kieulyanin (it is rumored, incidentally, that Demyan Bedny began his literary career precisely on the Kieulyanin). It is true that during the
days of the October Revolution the workers and Red Guards seized the automobiles of Messrs. Diplomats; it was necessary to disarm the class enemy since all the diplomats sided with the counterrevolution. Suffice it to recall that Kerensky fled from Petrograd under cover of an American flag. But after the victory, when all sorts of complaints were investigated, the diplomats of the small and weak countries met with considerably greater attention and kindliness on the part of the Soviet government than did those of the big brigands. And, in any case, had anyone in those days attempted to indulge in the mockery of a "national" accent, he would have been thrown into the nearest garbage can.

It is otherwise today. Stalin and Litvinov prance on their hind legs before Mussolini and Laval. How abject was the tone in which Moscow conversed with Hitler immediately after the latter's assumption of power! But, in return, they permit themselves to wreak their entire all-supreme splendor upon the head of "tiny," "insignificant," "not-to-be-noticed-on-the-map" Uruguay. As if involved here was a question of the size of the country, the numerical strength of the population, and not the question of state policy! In "trifles" of this sort the reactionary spirit of the ruling bureaucracy expresses itself more obviously, perhaps, than it does in its general policies.

Let us recall another episode. On the day of the arrival of the English minister Eden in Moscow, the party newspaper in Mogilev printed an article on the subject of the hypocrisy of British politics. Pravda flew into indignation: "Would anyone require a greater proof of political obtuseness?" To write about the hypocrisy of British diplomacy is . . . to reveal obtuseness; but it is entirely permissible to engage in obscurantist and chauvinist pornography in relation to the people of Uruguay—yes, the people, for—let it be known to the sycophants of Pravda—the language, the territory, and the numerical strength of the population of a country pertain to the people and not to the government.

P.S.—As if this were not incredible enough, Molotov referred in his report to the Central Executive Committee to the shameful work of Demyan Bedny as the expressed governmental position on the rupture of diplomatic relations with Uruguay. On this chauvinist pornography is thus placed the official stamp of the Stalinist government. To backslide like this is to backslide all the way.
Torgler and Maria Reese

In December 1935, the press of the Comintern made public the expulsion of Torgler from the [German Communist] party for his "unworthy conduct at the [Reichstag fire] trial." It is obvious that the Comintern, like many other diseased organisms, is distinguished by an extreme lag in reflexes. Two years have already elapsed since the Dimitrov-Torgler trial. During this time the Comintern has succeeded in expelling thousands of Communists who questioned the correctness of the social-patriotic turn, or the Marxian quality of the "People's Front." In Torgler's case, they took their time: evidently, some hope was cherished that use might still be made of this cowardly petty bourgeois. Dimitrov was transformed into a semidivinity, while Torgler was passed over in polite silence. A genuine revolutionary organization would have briefly taken note of Dimitrov's courageous conduct as something that is taken for granted, and would have immediately expelled Torgler. However, the Comintern has long since lost the normal revolutionary reflexes.

As a matter of fact, Torgler was expelled not for his already half-forgotten conduct at the trial, but for his completely going over to the camp of Nazism. According to the dispatch in Pravda, Torgler has not only been freed from the concentration camp but is at work together with Maria Reese "on some sort of book." If that is the case, then there can be no doubts whatever on the matter, because Maria Reese has long since sold herself to the Ministry of Nazi Propaganda.

Moscow Pravda (December 27, 1935) underscores the fact that Reese went "from Trotsky to Hitler." For once in a blue moon, there is an iota of truth in this assertion, namely, that Maria Reese, who played a big role in the Stalinist party before selling herself to Goebbels, did actually attempt to worm her way into the organization of the Bolshevik-Leninists. Very soon, however, it became apparent that this individual belongs to that type, now reigning in the apparatus of the Comintern, which looks upon the workers' movement as a source of influence and income. It was precisely because of this that she was unable to maintain herself in our midst—not for years, as she did in the midst of the Stalinists, but for more than a few months, in reality a few weeks.

But what about Torgler? He was no accidental figure. He was the chairman of the Reichstag fraction of the CP! And he, in any
case, went to Hitler directly from Stalin, without first feeling out the Bolshevik-Leninists. On this particular “adventure” Pravda keeps mum. Yet the ranks of the Stalinist bureaucracy in all countries are filled with similar Torglers and Reeses. They are ready for any and all turns—provided two conditions are guaranteed: first, that their own skins be in no way endangered thereby; second, that they be paid for the turns in stable currency. Everything else is of no importance to them. It is not difficult to foresee that in the ominous events impending in Europe the apparatus of the Comintern will be the sower of renegacy.

“Socialist Culture”?

At the Kremlin conference of the Stakhanovists the director of the Gorky automotive plant, one Dyakonov, spoke cautiously and discreetly of the possibility of completing the five year plan in four years. Ordzhonikidze heckled him every time he made a statement, not only with questions, but urging him on with jeers and inappropriate witticisms. It is not difficult to picture to oneself the position in which the modest reporter was placed by these majestic wisecracks in the luxurious hall of the Kremlin palace. Dyakonov even permitted himself to remark, “Comrade Sergo, I would like to answer your questions, but you don’t give me the time.” However, Ordzhonikidze was not to be deterred. According to the newspaper account he interrupted Dyakonov’s very brief report no less than fourteen times, in addition to which he spoke throughout to the director of the factory, i.e., one of his inferiors, using the familiar form of address. Is it that they are merely old chums? No. Dyakonov replies to his superior, always in a respectful tone, always addressing him not as “thou” but as “you.” . . .

At the conference a great deal was said on the subject of a cultural attitude toward labor and toward people. But Ordzhonikidze—and he was not the only one—deported himself after the manner of the true-bred Russian industrial feudalist of the good old days, who jovially mocks his inferiors in the familiar “Hey, you there!” style. It is not difficult to imagine how Lenin would have reacted to such grandee manners! He was organically incapable of tolerating brazenness and vulgarity, all the more so in relation to a subordinate, younger comrade who can be easily rattled on the platform.

Incidentally, Ordzhonikidze deigned to mock Dyakonov quite benignly; but his tone clearly conveyed that he was very well able
to deport himself otherwise. One cannot but recall in this connection an incident that occurred in 1923, when Ordzhonikidze, in the role of first dignitary of the Trans-Caucasian district, slapped a younger comrade in the face because the latter had dared to contradict him. Lenin on his sickbed gathered all the facts relating to this abomination and proposed that the Central Committee immediately remove Ordzhonikidze from all responsible posts and expel him from the party for two years. It was precisely this proposal that sealed the alliance between Ordzhonikidze and Stalin. But today, in the struggle for socialist "culture," Ordzhonikidze does not have to restrain himself. . . .

It ought to be said that Kaganovich does all he can not to be outstripped by Ordzhonikidze. Not for nothing are they both—"beloved people's commissars." Kaganovich also addressed the railway machinists who spoke at the conference familiarly, entirely in the manner of a general addressing his orderly in the good old days. Kaganovich does it, if anything, more repulsively than Ordzhonikidze.

And Pravda, the central organ of the Communist (!?! ) Party, prints these exemplars of grandee vulgarity so that all may learn and emulate.

**Byzantinism**

On November 17, in the Kremlin, during the Stakhanovist conference, Voroshilov spoke of pilots "who master completely, in a real way, in a Stalinist way, the technique of aviation" (Pravda, November 20, 1935). Thus we suddenly learn that Stalin, in his perfection, is a master of aviation technique.

The said Voroshilov stated during the same speech: "Stalin, who has studied the question of arming the army in its full scope . . . has said more than once that tanks, airplanes, cannons—all these are not soap, not matches, not pastry, these are means of defense, and therefore be so kind as to carry on the work as it should be carried on." We learn that it is permissible to carry on the work of making matches and soap not "as it should be," but in any way at all. Such talk is commonly known as "excessive zeal"!

It is quite comprehensible that Stalin should occupy himself with a close study of arming the army. But take Mikoyan, for example. Mikoyan, drawing profounder conclusions than Voroshilov, related at the same conference the following instructive anecdote. The Soviet plants produce for export
“excellent candies, Cologne water, bologna,” etc., whereas the same stuffs of absolutely rotten quality are supplied for domestic consumption (we have just heard from Voroshilov that this is entirely permissible with reference to matches, soap, and pastry). Stalin, it turns out, gave Mikoyan a piece of advice: fool the workers by telling them that the goods are allegedly manufactured for export, and then place them in circulation on the domestic market. One is at a loss what to marvel at in the dignitary’s anecdote: the contempt toward the Soviet consumer, or Stalin’s resourcefulness, or Mikoyan’s excessive zeal.

But the said Mikoyan went much further. It turns out that when Mikoyan issued “an order to reestablish all the best grades of soap,” Stalin was not satisfied with this and he in turn issued an order (to Mikoyan!) to bring samples of toilet soap to a session of the Political Bureau. As a result, the faithful Mikoyan relates, “we received a special decision of the Central Committee . . . on the assortment and formulas of soap.” Thus Stalin turns out to be not only an aviator but a skilled soap-maker.

This is the spirit, with a greater or lesser admixture of Mikoyanism, in which all speeches at the conference were delivered. The entire atmosphere is permeated through and through with the spirit of intolerable Byzantinism. No, gentlemen, the country cannot and will not long breathe in such an atmosphere! . . .

A Chance Admission

Sarkisov, secretary of the Donets Basin, in his report on the Stakhanovist movement at a session of the CEC, provided two remarkable master strokes. According to him, the Stakhanovists themselves ought to write in the newspapers about Stakhanovism; “it comes out more clearly and simply, and another worker, reading this learns that there actually exists such a man.”

Molotov: “Correct.”

In these chance words there is revealed an annihilating truth: the readers one and all do not believe the official press; the workers do not doubt that the bureaucrats manufacture not only mythical statistics but also individuals. It is necessary to seek special means in order to compel workers to believe that “there actually exists such a man.” Such, we might remark, is one of the tasks of these solemn conferences of Stakhanovists in the Kremlin, these publications of photographs, etc.

The same Sarkisov adduced the following example of the rise in
the productivity of labor in the coal mines: "A single driver is capable of taking care of two horses." In addition to raising the productivity of labor, said he, there is an added benefit, in that "the horses can rest." The driver, in any case, does not have to take a rest: the sweaty horse rests for him.

And Who Are the Judges?

Dimitri Sverchkov participated, as a Menshevik, in the Petrograd Soviet in the year 1905. As a right-wing Menshevik he was the courier for Avksentiev, minister of the interior under Kerensky. He took refuge from the October Revolution in White Guard Kuban, and thundered against the Bolsheviks in the local press there. After the Caucasus were cleaned up by the Red Army, Sverchkov safely joined the Bolsheviks. In 1922 he wrote a book, At the Dawn of the Revolution, in which, from his personal recollections, he reconstructed the period of the 1905 Soviet. This snappily written volume went through several editions. But in view of the fact that this book retails facts and not the latest fictions, it does not fill the bill today. On December 12, 1935, Pravda carried a wild notice about this old book, which allegedly "glorifies Trotsky." In the meantime the said Dimitri Sverchkov has made a career for himself: today he is a member of the Supreme Court of the USSR. The hapless author immediately recognized the appraisal of his book to be "correct," via a letter to the editors of Pravda. To be sure! In 1922 Sverchkov's memory was temporarily impaired due to terrific personal experiences, but in 1935 he was completely restored to balance. In a newspaper article written on the occasion of the anniversary of the first soviet, Sverchkov supplies "recollections" of precisely the opposite nature to those he provided thirteen years ago in his book!

Such is the stuff Messrs. Judges are made of. Some of them, it may be, will in time have to take their seats on the witness chair as defendants... most probably to answer charges of sycophancy, perjury, and other manifestations of human baseness...
ON THE SOVIET SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

January 11, 1936

A new purge is being concluded in the so-called Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This time it bears the modest label of a "checkup on party credentials." The difference between this purge and all those that preceded it lies in the fact that it is being effected without even the nominal participation of the party itself; no general meetings, no personal confessions, no public denunciations, no corroborating testimony. The checking machinery operates entirely behind the scenes: for, you see, this is merely a matter of "credentials." In reality approximately 10 percent of the party has been expelled as a result of this modest technical checkup. The checkup of party candidates has not been completed as yet. But already, many more than 200,000 have been ejected from the ranks of the party. Let us recall, incidentally, that this was almost the numerical strength of the entire Bolshevik Party during the period when it led the proletariat to the conquest of power.

The January 2 issue of Pravda breaks down the figures of the expelled into the following main categories: "From Trotskyists, Zinovievists, opportunists, double-dealers, alien elements, swindlers, adventurers, down to spies of the foreign agencies." The list you will observe, reproduces the general formula of all Thermidorean amalgams. It would be utterly naive to become "indignant" over the coupling of Trotskyists with swindlers and spies. Every regime at loggerheads with the people persecutes, on the one hand, revolutionists, and on the other, criminals. From time immemorial these two categories lived side by side in the prisons of the czar, as they live today in the prisons of the bourgeoisie of the entire world. Kerensky in his own time swore again and again that the Bolsheviks were in collusion with Black Hundred gangs and German spies. Stalin remains entirely true to tradition. Instead of growing "indignant" over the statistical amalgam, let us analyze it more closely.
First of all we note the striking fact that from among the more than 200,000 expelled, the “Trotskyists” are officially assigned the first place. Does this imply that they are so large a group numerically? Or is it that the bureaucracy, after liquidating “the remnants and splinters” of Trotskyists no less than ten times, still continues to consider them as its most dangerous enemy? Both. We shall shortly prove on the basis of official statistics that the number of the expelled Bolshevik-Leninists during the last purge alone (the latter part of 1935) amounted to no fewer than 10,000, and, in effect, a great many more. The bestiality of the repressions is ample indication of the extent to which the bureaucracy fears this “category.”

The Trotskyists and Zinovievists are commonly lumped together in a single category by the official accounts. The Zinovievists always represented a purely Leningrad grouping; in other parts of the country they consisted of only scattered individuals, and, aside from their instability, they never had an independent political character. Thus we obtain six categories of the expelled: (1) Bolshevik-Leninists; (2) Zinovievists; (3) “opportunists” (recorded here more for symmetry and camouflage: the individual reports do not mention them at all as a rule); (4) double-dealers and alien elements (former White Guards, etc.); (5) swindlers and adventurists; (6) foreign spies. With slight variations these categories are repeated in the district reports, correspondence, leading articles, etc.

Before passing to the analysis of the numerical strength of the Bolshevik-Leninists, we wish to point out that not one single listing of the categories of the expelled, or any of the commentaries we have examined, contains any mention either of Mensheviks or of Social Revolutionaries. Both these parties are politically nonexistent. Their reactionary policy in 1917, as Comrade Tarov has recently so correctly pointed out, has barred them from all approach to the new generations in the city and countryside. And as the Yugoslav comrade Ciliga, yesterday’s captive of Stalin, has stressed on several occasions, the only serious opposition in the country is that of the Bolshevik-Leninists. In other words, the opposition to Bonapartism in the Soviet Union flows not from the principles of petty-bourgeois democracy but from the conquests of the October Revolution, and marches under its banner. Let us keep this fact firmly in mind, for it is of colossal importance for the future.

After all the preceding purges and campaigns of physical extermination it seems almost incredible that among the various
categories of the expelled—not hundreds, not thousands, but a minimum of 200,000—the Bolshevik-Leninists should be listed in the first place. How many of them were there? The Soviet press refrains cautiously from citing any totals on this score. Only in individual articles and remarks dealing with provinces and districts do we run across direct or indirect (most often indirect) mention of the number of the expelled “Trotskyists.” This is the data we propose to dwell upon.

Khataevich, secretary of the Dnepro-Petrovsk province, reports in his article that during the checking of the documents in his satrapy, 2,646 people were expelled from the party—8 percent of the entire organization. During the checkup, it appears that “we succeeded in uncovering not only isolated individuals but entire counterrevolutionary Trotskyist-Zinovievist groups skulking in the ranks of the party.” Khataevich does not supply their number. But he does cite other figures: “1,500 White Guards, kulaks, members of Petlyura, Makhno, and other bands; 300 frauds and swindlers who wormed their way into the party with forged documents” (Pravda, December 26, 1935). These two groups together comprise 1,800. In addition, the article also refers obscurely to “foreign spies who penetrated into the party”; but here the reference can only be to individuals, not more than a score at the most. Subtracting the above-mentioned categories, there remains to the share of Trotskyists and Zinovievists, as well as oppositionists of all types, not less than 1,600. Or is Khataevich perhaps hiding some other categories of the expelled? Which ones? Why? But even if only a half or a third of the above number falls to the share of the “Trotskyists,” even then we get a very imposing number (500 to 1,000). Naturally, this number is still purely hypothetical in character.

In the same issue of Pravda, in a small item, we find that in the Asov-Black Sea region, 4,324 people were expelled, 7 percent of the total number checked. The checkup revealed that “in several city organizations there existed counterrevolutionary Trotskyist-Zinovievist groups (the ‘Krasny Aksai’ plant, the regional agricultural department, the fruit and grape trust).” This brief item does not state what proportion of the expelled these groups composed, but it does admit that even after the checkup “unexposed enemies” continue to crop up in the regional organizations.

In the West Siberian region, 3,576 members of the party were expelled (11 percent) and 1,935 candidates (12.8 percent). Secretary Eikhe writes in Pravda: “Among the expelled, the largest number are kulaks and White Guards from Kolchak’s
armies—these constitute almost a third. Then come the Trotskyists and Zinovievists . . .” (December 23, 1935). According to this statement, the Bolshevik-Leninists take the second place numerically. All the expelled, with the exception of the White Guards, fall into not more than four categories. If the expelled were divided equally among these categories, each would number more than 900. Yet Eikhe himself states that the Trotskyists and Zinovievists comprise the largest groups numerically, after the White Guards. Therefore, there cannot be less than 1,000 expelled Bolshevik-Leninists in the West Siberian region alone, or approximately 20 percent of all those expelled. Says Eikhe, “From the total number of Trotskyists and Zinovievists expelled from the party about one-half worked in the educational institutions. . . . The Trotskyist-Zinovievist garbage (!) took particular pains to pervade the ideological sector, seeking to utilize it for propaganda.” The reference here is obviously to new party members, from the student working class youth. We may grant that Siberia is an exception as regards the high percentage of Bolshevik-Leninists: the youth is obviously being subjected to the influence of the exiles (the same phenomenon, we might add, was to be observed under czarism as well.)

In the Kharkov district, out of 50,000 members, more than 4,000 were expelled. Secretary Zaitsev breaks down into categories only 2,356 cases of expulsion, checked by the highest bodies. Among these are: 907 kulaks and White Guards; 594 moral degenerates and breakers of discipline; 120 frauds and swindlers; 42 bourgeois nationalists; and, finally, 120 Trotskyists. This time we are given quite a definite figure, and, moreover, without any mention of Zinovievists. If we take into consideration the fact that in Kharkov, the satrapy of S. Kosior, Petrovsky, and Company, the physical extermination of the Opposition has been going on since 1923, with a bestial ruthlessness so thorough that its fame has spread throughout the entire Soviet Union, then even the modest number of 120, comprising more than 5 percent of the expelled (2,356), seems truly astounding.287

It is all too clear that the bureaucracy has not and cannot have the slightest motives for exaggerating the influence of the Bolshevik-Leninists. That is why we must look upon the figures that have seeped into the press as the minimum. Moreover, since 1924 the Stalinist clique has preferred to expel Oppositionists as “moral degenerates” and even as “White Guards.” There can be no doubt that precisely the most influential and active Bolshevik-Leninists were expelled under these very categories: it is all the
easier to make short shrift of them in the concentration camps or en route to exile.

If we take the West Siberia coefficient, then we would arrive at a number of not less than 40,000 expelled “Trotskyists” and Zinovievists for the entire Soviet Union. We have already stated why this number must be considered as too large. But even if we take the deliberately minimized Kharkov percentage of the expelled “Trotskyists,” i.e., over 5 percent, then, out of the 200,000 expelled, we would get more than 10,000. If, finally, we take the average between the West Siberian and Kharkov figures, then we get 25,000. In all probability the latter number would be closer to the truth.

The enormous political significance of the above data is clear enough to anyone. One question remains: Why does the bureaucracy, on the one hand, keep the total secret, while, on the other, it makes public partial data which is sufficiently clear for general orientation? The answer is very simple: the bureaucracy crawls out of its skin to avoid giving publicity to the Bolshevik-Leninists, while at the same time it is compelled to broadcast a warning: Beware! “They” are many! “They” are growing! In any case, there is no longer any talk about “remnants” and “handfuls still to be crushed.”

The Bolshevik-Leninists were and remain the most irreconcilable enemies of the bureaucracy, which seeks to perpetuate its position as a ruling caste. Small wonder that the Stalinist clique assigns the first place in its amalgam lists to the “Trotskyists.” They have earned the honor by their entire struggle. The very nature of the most recent purge testifies in the best and clearest possible way to the growth of their influence. The bureaucracy can no longer make short shrift of its enemies by means of the terrorized party, or even publicly before its eyes. The public purge has been replaced by a star chamber, i.e., it is transferred entirely into the hands of the GPU. Of course, the expelled, too, are placed in the same hands—for physical extermination. This method is so well adapted to the interests of the bureaucracy that Stalin has immediately projected a new purge: from February 1 to May 1 of the current year. Old party cards (these, it appears, have become “tattered”) must be exchanged for new ones, and the instructions of the CC contain a rigid proviso that during the replacement of party cards the secretaries, i.e., the organs of the GPU, must once again check the entire party personnel and issue new cards only to those who have earned “confidence.” Perhaps six months later we shall learn how many new Bolshevik-Leninists will thereby be promoted from the party to the concentration camps.
The above-cited data may perhaps appear utterly unexpected to many. We have purposively done all our computations before the reader's eyes so as to exclude the possibility of any suspicions of subjectivism or bias on our part. The whole gist of the matter lies in the fact that under the influence of the Stalinist press and its agents (like Louis Fisher and similar gentlemen) not only our enemies but also many of our friends in the West have imperceptibly become accustomed to the idea that if any Bolshevik-Leninists still exist in the USSR, then they are almost all in hard labor camps. No! That is not the case at all! The Marxist program and the great revolutionary tradition cannot be rooted out by means of police measures. To be sure, in the USSR the Bolsheviks find it harder to work today than in any other country in the world (of greatest interest in this respect is the fresh testimony of the Yugoslav comrade Ciliga). Nevertheless, the functioning of the revolutionary mind is not suspended for a single day. If not as a doctrine, then as a mood, as a tradition, as a banner, our tendency has a mass character in the USSR, and today it is obviously drawing to itself new and fresh forces. Among the ten to twenty thousand "Trotskyists" expelled during the last months of 1935, the representatives of the older generation, the participants in the movement of the years 1923-28, comprise tens, perhaps hundreds, but not more. The basic mass—all are the new recruits. Moreover, we must not forget that the above data applies only to the party. But there also exists the Communist Youth League, with its millions of youth! It is precisely among them that unrest assumes a particularly aggravated character. It is frightfully difficult for young revolutionists to learn Leninism in the USSR. But without any doubt their level is incomparably higher than the level of the Stalinist "party." The great tradition lives on. In secret places lies hidden the old Oppositionist literature. On the shelves stand the books of Marx, Engels, and Lenin (they dare not proscribe them as yet). The Soviet papers are compelled to publish news of events in the entire world. The international literature under the banner of the Fourth International is already a very rich one today. Our ideas and slogans penetrate into the Soviet Union through a thousand channels—in part, through our Russian Biulleten. Thus the precious primacy of revolutionary thought is being made secure.

Under the lash of the bureaucracy, and not without direct provocation on the part of the Yagodas, Medveds, and others, isolated elements of the youth take the path of individual terror, i.e., the path of despair and hopelessness. The Bonapartist
avidly seize upon terrorist acts in order to justify their bloody repressions of the Opposition: this method is as ancient as the ancient baseness of privileged despots. But the main section of the revolutionary youth does not tear loose from its class to take to the road of individualistic adventures. The program of the Fourth International, even though it does not promise instantaneous miracles, does point to the only correct and unconditionally certain way. The growth of the Fourth International on the world arena strengthens and inspires our friends and followers in the USSR. We can state with certainty that despite the thirteen years of hounding, slander, and pogroms, unsurpassed either in vileness or cruelty; despite capitulations and betrayals, more dangerous than the persecutions; even today the Fourth International already has its strongest, numerically largest, and most tempered section in the USSR.

No, we have not the slightest grounds for falling into apathy. Progress is neither smooth nor straight. The struggle of the oppressed demands great sacrifices. But the future is ours. The latest bureaucratic purge in the USSR is proof even to the blind: the future is ours!

P.S.—Insistent mention of “spies of foreign agencies” expelled from the party during the purge deserves particular attention. Such cases are of course entirely possible. But by their very nature, they can only be rare exceptions. An ordinary secret circular letter would have sufficed to take care of forwarding the information. But why do the newspapers keep harping about spies? The Stalinist press could never have presumed to be so bold without special instructions from above. But what is the purpose of the issued order? It can be correctly divined.

During the years of Stalinist autocratic rule in the USSR not a few foreign Communist-Oppositionists have been shot. A far greater number are languishing in solitary confinement, concentration camps, and exile. Ever more news about this is penetrating abroad. Of exceptional value are the reports of A. Ciliga, who recently tore free from the Stalinist chains. The bureaucracy must in some way parry these revelations, by arming its foreign lackeys with at least some semblance of an explanation. There would be nothing astonishing were the agents of the Comintern to proclaim all the foreign Communists shot and arrested in the USSR as “spies of foreign agencies.” These villainies, however, will not pass scot-free. The working masses will hear the truth. The organizations of the Fourth International will be at their posts.
January 13, 1936

Dear Friend:

The question of our attitude toward governmental measures ostensibly aimed against fascism is highly important.

Since bourgeois democracy is historically bankrupt, it is no longer in a position to defend itself on its own ground against its enemies on the right and the left. That is, in order to “maintain” itself, the democratic regime must progressively liquidate itself through emergency laws and administrative arbitrariness. This self-liquidation of democracy in the struggle against right and left brings to the fore the Bonapartism of degeneration, which needs both the left and the right danger for its uncertain existence in order to play them off against one another and to progressively raise itself above society and its parliamentarism. The Colijn regime has seemed to me for a long time to be a potentially Bonapartist regime.

In this highly critical period, the main enemy of Bonapartism remains, of course, the revolutionary wing of the proletariat. Thus, we can say with absolute assurance that as the class struggle deepens all emergency laws, extraordinary powers, etc., will be used against the proletariat.

After the French Stalinists and Socialists voted for the administrative disbanding of paramilitary organizations, that old scoundrel Marcel Cachin wrote in l’Humanite approximately as follows: “A great victory. . . . Naturally, we know that in capitalist society all laws can be used against the proletariat. But we will strive to prevent this, etc.” The lie here is the word “can.” What should have been said was: “We know that as the social crisis deepens, all these measures will be used against the proletariat with tenfold intensity.” There is a simple conclusion to be drawn from this: We cannot help build up the Bonapartism of degeneration with our own hands and supply it with the chains it will inevitably use to bind the proletarian vanguard.

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This is not to say that for the immediate future Colijn will not want to free his right elbow from the excessive presumptuousness of the fascists. The social revolution in Holland does not seem to be an immediate threat. Big capital hopes to allay the threatening dangers by using the strong, concentrated (i.e., Bonapartist, or semi-Bonapartist) state. But to keep the real enemy, the revolutionary proletariat, within bounds, Colijn will never completely eliminate or even sidetrack fascism. At most he will simply keep it in check. That is why the slogan for the disbanding and disarming of the fascist gangs by the state (and voting for similar measures) is reactionary through and through (the German Social Democrats cry: "The state must act!"). This would mean making a whip out of the proletariat's hide, one which the Bonapartist arbiters might use to softly caress the fascist rear ends here and there. But it is our inescapable responsibility and duty to protect the hide of the working class, not to hand over the whip to fascism.

There is another aspect of the same situation which seems even more important. Bourgeois democracy is a sham by its very essence. The more it flowers, the less it can be utilized by the proletariat (see the history of England and the United States). But the dialectic of history commands that bourgeois democracy can become a powerful reality for the proletariat at the very time when it is falling apart. Fascism is the outward sign of this degeneration.

The struggle against fascism, the defense of the positions the working class has won within the framework of degenerating democracy can become a powerful reality since it gives the working class the opportunity to prepare itself for the sharpest struggles and partially to arm itself. The last two years in France, since February 6, 1934, have given the workers' organizations an excellent opportunity (and perhaps one that will not so soon be repeated) to mobilize the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie on the side of the revolution, to create a workers' militia, etc. This precious opportunity is supplied by the decay of democracy, by its clear inability to maintain "order" by the old means, and by the equally clear danger which threatens the working masses. Anyone who does not take advantage of this situation, who calls on the "state," i.e., the class enemy, to "act," in effect sells the proletariat's hide to the Bonapartist reaction.

Therefore, we must vote against all measures that strengthen the capitalist-Bonapartist state, even those measures which may for the moment cause temporary unpleasantness for the fascists. Naturally, the Social Democrats and the Stalinists will say that
we are defending the fascists against Father Colijn, who, after all, is better than the evil Mussert. We can say with assurance that we are more farsighted than the others and that future developments will completely confirm our perceptions and our demands.

We can, however, formulate certain amendments which, when they are rejected, will make it clear to every worker that what is at stake is not the fascists' rear ends but the proletariat's hide. For example: (1) Workers' pickets are not to be affected by this law under any circumstances, even when they are obliged to take action against strikebreakers, fascists, and other lumpen elements; (2) the trade unions and the political organizations of the working class reserve the right to construct and arm their self-defense organizations in the face of the fascist danger. The state is committed to aid these organizations with weapons, ammunition, and financial support on demand.

In parliament, these motions sound rather strange and Messrs. Statesmen (and the Stalinist posturers) will regard them as "shocking." But the average worker, not only in the NAS, but in the reformist trade unions as well, will find them quite justified. Naturally, I offer these amendments only as an example. One could, perhaps, find better, more exact formulations. Will Messrs. Social Democrats and Stalinists deny their support or even vote against them? Even if they vote for them, the motions will fail nevertheless, and then it will be absolutely clear why we vote against the government motion as a whole—and we must do this without any second thoughts whatsoever for the reasons given above (even if the Colijn parliamentarianism rules these amendments out of order on the grounds that they apply only to propaganda technique and not to the essence of the matter).

We have to take strong measures against the abstract "antifascist" mode of thinking that finds entry even into our own ranks at times. "Antifascism" is nothing, an empty concept used to cover up Stalinist skulduggery. In the name of "antifascism" they instituted class collaboration with the Radicals. Many of our comrades wanted to give the "People's Front," i.e., class collaboration, positive support in the same way that we are ready to support the united front, i.e., the separation of the proletariat from the other classes. Starting from the thoroughly false slogan "People's Front to power," in the name of "antifascism" they go still further and declare that they are inclined to support Bonapartism—for voting for Colijn's "antifascist" bill would mean nothing less than direct support for Bonapartism.
STALIN’S REVOLUTIONARY PRISONERS

January 15, 1936

The letters and documents recently published by Comrades Tarov and Ciliga have served to greatly stimulate interest in the repressions of the Soviet bureaucracy against the revolutionary fighters. Eighteen years after the October Revolution, at a time when, in accordance with the official doctrine, socialism has conquered “finally and irrevocably” in the USSR, revolutionists who are unwaveringly devoted to the cause of communism but who do not recognize the dogma of the infallibility of the Stalinist clique are clapped into jail for years; incarcerated in concentration camps; compelled to do forced labor; subjected, if they attempt to resist, to physical torture; shot in the event of real or fictitious attempts to escape; or deliberately driven to suicide. When hundreds of prisoners, in protest against the intolerable harassment, resort to the terrible means of a hunger strike, they are subjected to forced feeding, only in order to be placed later under even worse conditions. When individual revolutionists, finding no other means of protest, cut their veins, the GPU agents, i.e., the agents of Stalin, “save” the suicides only in order then to demonstrate with redoubled bestiality that there is no real salvation for them.

Into this horrible picture, Comrade Ciliga’s account introduces an element that is especially tragic. He was one of the former leaders of the Yugoslav section of the Comintern. Under any other conditions the differences of opinion between the leaders of this party would have been settled by means of discussion, by a convention, and, in extreme cases, by a split. But not in the Comintern. That section of the national Central Committee which at any given moment executes the instructions of the Moscow clique, transmits a request to the latter to rid it of the opposition. Stalin orders the Oppositionists to Moscow, where, after a brief attempt to “convince” them, they are placed under
arrest, clapped into solitary confinement, and subjected to other forms of physical extirpation. Among the hundreds who were killed as being "implicated" in the Kirov case—i.e., in most instances being in no way involved in this case—a number of Bulgarian and other foreign Oppositionists were shot. The right of asylum for revolutionary refugees is thus conditioned upon their binding themselves to renounce all right to think independently. A call to Moscow "for a conference" implies time and again a treacherous trap. If the "criminal" is beyond grasp, then his wife, daughter, or son are seized. In these cases, the agents of Stalin utilize methods worthy of the best qualified American gangsters.

The so-called Communist parties not only cover up these unprecedented villainies of Messrs. Marshals and Super-Marshals against the revolutionists—villainies in which the leaders of the various sections of the Comintern take direct part—but the press of the Comintern seeks on top of this to turn the edge of the accusation against the victims themselves. Involved here, you see, are not mere Oppositionists, not Bolsheviks who rebel against Stalin's arbitrariness or the patriotic degeneration of the Comintern. No; involved, if you please, are "terrorists," conspirators against the sacred person of the Leader or one of his marshals, and finally, agents of foreign espionage, the hirelings of Hitler or the Mikado. Zinoviev and Kamenev have been caught red-handed in a horrible crime: they criticized (within four walls!) the adventuristic tempos of collectivization that led to the senseless destruction of millions of people. A genuinely proletarian court, investigating the case, would have indubitably clapped in jail the adventurists-collectivizers. But the court of Stalin and Yagoda sentenced Zinoviev and Kamenev to ten years imprisonment on the charge of—a terrorist act in which they were not and could not in any way be implicated!

Not more than two years ago the Social Democratic, labor and trade union press eagerly seized upon revelations not only of the actual but also of the fictitious crimes of the Soviet bureaucracy, in order thus to compromise the October Revolution as a whole. At the present moment a complete about-face has occurred along this line, in Europe at any rate. The policy of the social-patriotic "united front" has become transformed into a conspiracy of mutual concealment. Even in those countries where no united front exists because of the insignificance of the Communist parties, the reformist organizations prefer not to quarrel with the Kremlin upper crust who, today, after they had inscribed upon
their banner the defense of the League of Nations and of the
democratic fatherland, are immeasurably closer to them than the
revolutionary internationalists who are being persecuted. The
"defense of the USSR" serves of course as a pious justification for
passing in silence over the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

In this connection, we ought to mention also a special category
of the professional "friends" of the Kremlin: intellectuals in
search of a gilt-edged ideal, writers who have taken stock of the
superiorities of the State Publishing House, lawyers who are
hungry for publicity, and, finally, ordinary amateurs who are
attracted by free trips and anniversary banquets. These people,
parasites in most cases, then eagerly broadcast throughout both
hemispheres the inventions and insinuations that the agents of
the GPU buzz into the ears of their "friends" during heroic
suppers given in honor of the October Revolution. Suffice it to
refer only to the unworthy role assumed by so outstanding a
writer as Romain Rolland!

The fraternization between the heads of the degenerated
Comintern and the heads of the Second International evokes,
however, a salutary reaction as well. An ever greater number of
advanced workers are beginning to open their eyes. Such
"socialist morals" as constant crawling on the belly before the
"leaders," Byzantine flattery, the creation of castes of "red"
colonels, generals, and marshals, the reactionary cult of the
petty-bourgeois family, down to the resurrection of the Christmas
tree—all these compel thinking workers in all countries to
surmise to what profound extent the ruling stratum of the Soviet
Union has managed to degenerate. On this soil of awakened
critical consciousness are falling today the accounts of the
bestialities perpetrated by the bureaucracy upon those revolution-
ists who are a threat to its sacred privileges, and who stubbornly
refuse to accept the gospel of Dimitrov, Litvinov, and the League
of Nations.

The number of such "criminals" is constantly increasing. In
the course of the latest purge of the ruling party of the USSR (the
latter part of 1935) there were expelled, insofar as one can gather
from the official data from ten to twenty thousand "Trotskyists"
alone. All the expelled in this category are, as a general rule,
immediately arrested and subjected to conditions that used to
prevail in the czarist hard-labor camps. These facts must be made
known to the working class of the entire world!

To be sure, even at present there are still to be found in the
West not a few activists in the workers' movement who sincerely
ask themselves the following question: But will not exposures of this sort bring harm to the Soviet Union? Is there not the danger that together with the bathwater the baby, too, may be thrown out of the tub? These fears, however, have no basis in reality.

Can the exposures of the Stalinist bestialities perpetrated upon revolutionists damage the Soviet Union in the eyes of the bourgeois world? Just the contrary is the case, for the entire bourgeoisie, including the White Guard emigres, sees the best pledge of the “normalization” of the Soviet regime in Stalin’s offensive of extermination against the Bolshevik-Leninists and other revolutionists. The serious and responsible capitalist press of the entire world is unanimous in applauding the struggle against the “Trotskyists.” Small wonder! For Litvinov, side by side with the representatives of world reaction, sits in the Geneva Commission for the struggle against “terrorism.”

Involved here, of course, is not the question of the struggle against governmental terror against revolutionary workers, but the question of the struggle against individual avengers, aiming at crowned and uncrowned tyrants. Marxists, as is well known, have irreconcilably rejected and continue to reject the method of individual terror. But this has never prevented us from always siding with William Tell and not with the Austrian despot Gessler. Soviet diplomacy, on the other hand, is now discussing jointly with the Gesslers how best to exterminate the Tells. By his participation in the international stalking of terrorists, Stalin supplements in the best manner possible his own terroristic stalking of the Bolsheviks. It is self-evident that in the eyes of the League of Nations, in the eyes of the American government, even in the eyes of Hitler, our exposures will only strengthen Stalin’s already quite extensive credit.

As regards the reformist labor bureaucracy in bourgeois countries, there is no reason to have any fears either. The reformist bureaucrats are quite well informed about the facts of the Stalinist repressions, but during the last two years they have deliberately and maliciously passed over them in silence. In the eyes of Leon Blum, Otto Bauer, Sir Walter Citrine, Vandervelde, and Company, our exposures will not, in any case, lower their esteem for the Soviet bureaucracy; involved here is a friendship that is calculated, and this friendship is directed first of all against the left, the revolutionary wing.

There still remain the masses of workers. In their majority, the workers are sincerely and honestly devoted to the Soviet Union, although they do not always know how to express this devotion
in action. The masses find it all the more difficult to find a correct road on this question because bureaucratic apparatuses are raised over them, duping them incessantly and skillfully. Thus, the matter is reduced to the following simple question: Are we for our part duty-bound to tell them the truth? For a Marxist, to pose this question is to answer it. The revolution has no need of blind friends, or allies whose eyes are bandaged.

The workers are not children. They are capable of appraising at one and the same time both the colossal conquests of the October Revolution and the onerous historical heritage that has coagulated on its body in the shape of a frightful bureaucratic ulcer. A revolutionist who is afraid to tell the masses what he knows himself is absolutely worthless! We leave double bookkeeping to the patriotic parliamentarians, parlor idealists, and priests. Will the "Friends of the Soviet Union" and other philistines perhaps say that we are motivated by "factional" and even "personal" malice? Of course they'll say it. But we have not yet become accustomed—thank goodness—to look upon philistines and their public opinion otherwise than with contempt. By embellishing the present it is impossible to prepare the future. Loyalty to the October Revolution demands mercilessly exposing, and, if need be, cauterizing its sores. Lies serve as the instrument of the possessing classes. Today, lies have become the instrument of the Soviet bureaucracy as well. The oppressed need the truth. The workers must know the whole truth about the Soviet Union, so that impending events do not catch them off guard.

Through the medium of all honest publications, it is necessary to broadcast as far and wide as possible the news of the vile repressions to which irreproachable proletarian revolutionists are subjected in the Soviet Union. Our chief and immediate task therefore is: to alleviate the fate of tens of thousands of the victims of bureaucratic vindictiveness. It is necessary to come to their assistance by all the possible means that flow from the situation and from our burning desire to save the heroic fighters. Fulfilling this task, we will thereby assist the toilers of the Soviet Union and of the entire world to take a new step forward on their road to emancipation.
Dear Comrade:

I would be very glad of course to establish personal connection with your group. In order to be able to render our contact fruitful and efficient, it is necessary for me to have more detailed information about your group. Therefore I take advantage of your offer to send me information, etc., to ask some questions. It stands to reason that you will answer me in a very cautious manner in order to avoid any harm to your activity. Henceforth you might sign your letters with "Edgar," for instance. Regarding myself, I shall use all your information with the utmost prudence.

1. Does the group succeed in maintaining inner discipline?
2. Has it some influence upon other sections and affiliated organizations such as, for example, the trade unions, the co-ops, etc.?
3. Has the group new members? What is the number of the members of the whole group?
4. Has the group lost some members as the result of opportunist adaptation to the [Labour] Party apparatus?
5. Do you receive regularly the New Militant and New International? How many copies?
6. Have you some personal contact with the Bolshevik-Leninist faction within the ILP? Do you get Controversy of the ILP and the bulletins of the Bolshevik-Leninist faction?
7. What is your opinion about the work of the Bolshevik-Leninists in the ILP and about the results they obtained? Do you believe that there are larger possibilities within the Labour Party? Or more concretely: Do you believe it more favorable for them to leave the ILP in order to enter the Labour Party?
8. Will you publish the printed paper inside or outside the Labour Party? Certainly not as a faction paper? Perhaps in the name of a local group of the official party?
9. What is the standpoint of your group as regards the *Open Letter* of the Fourth International?

*L.T. to De.*

The answers to my questions need not be "official"; that means that not the whole group must examine and approve them. I shall regard the correspondence as *private* correspondence. Maybe two or three different comrades might give me their opinion about my questions with the purpose of procuring a complete, i.e., many-sided view of the situation. I should be pleased, of course, to get all kinds of information, documents, etc., about your activity.

Fraternally yours,

L. Trotsky

The tenth question: Have you contact and influence within the *youth* movement?

P.S.—Can we write in German or French? It would be far easier for us. You can continue in English, of course.
Dear Comrades:

Today I decided to cable you as follows: "Personally in favor of entry. Leo." Previously, I too dealt with this question not as a principled one. When two say the same thing, it is, nevertheless, not the same. When a tested and stable organization enters a centrist party, it may be a correct or an incorrect tactical step, i.e., it can bring great gains or it can bring none. (The latter is, in any case, under the present circumstances, unlikely.) But it is not a capitulation. The split in the Socialist Party is of the greatest importance as an objective symptom for the tendencies of its development. I am also in agreement with you that one should not give the centrist leadership any time to allow for the possibility of consolidation; this means: act quickly.

Naturally, certain European groups will seek to interpret the eventual entry as a departure from the Fourth International. But to these we should not attach the least importance. The problem is not to appear a little stronger, but to become much stronger.

I hope you will do everything possible to complete this step in common with the Muste-Weber group. Then your activities within the Socialist Party will be of greater significance for the successful outcome of the contemplated step.

I want to emphasize that my cable as well as this letter represents my personal opinion. You are now discussing the question. Time presses. With the cable and with this letter I wish to take part in this discussion before the IS is in a position to formulate its collective opinion.

With friendly greetings,

Yours,

L.T.
Dear Comrade Muste:

Enclosed is a copy of my letter to Cannon and Shachtman. As you know from my earlier statements, I have been very prudent in assessing this question. The split in the Socialist Party convinces me that no more time must be lost.

The psychological obstacles connected with giving up organizational independence must be courageously overcome. The step must be taken in a united and decisive fashion. It will have positive results. How long it will take and how broad it will be—that is difficult to predict, especially from here. In any case, the Workers Party will become incomparably more mature politically by this experience. This important step is dictated by the entire situation, and in a few months it will seem perfectly natural.

L.T.

Letter to Jack Weber
January 24, 1936

Dear Comrade Weber:

Enclosed are copies of my letters to Cannon and Shachtman and to Muste. I have nothing to add to what is said in those letters.

I can only advise you and your close friends to put aside all personal considerations and think of the entry as a necessary, though hardly “agreeable,” step.

L.T.
The local Stalinist paper *Arbeideren*, central organ of the Stalinist CP, has just published a dispatch that Trotsky is waging a war against the Soviet Union in an alliance with Hearst, the American newspaper magnate, a world-famous thug, and an ally of Hitler. According to this dispatch, I published a series of articles in the Hearst press under my own name. One day before *Arbeideren* published this sensation, I received a cable from New York, from my friends there, dealing with the fraud perpetrated by Hearst. I sent immediately the following cable to Cannon in New York:

"Publication of Tarov article by Hearst common press gangsterism. But impudence of Hearst no excuse for crimes of Stalin clique. Gave statement to Associated Press. Trotsky"

At the same time I gave a statement to the AP.

It is most highly interesting that the small *Arbeideren* was immediately apprised by cable from New York about my alleged articles, i.e., the fraud perpetrated by Hearst. It is self-evident that the other papers of the Comintern were even more amply instructed on this matter, so that they could do their best or worst. This shows that involved here is not only Hearst’s press trust, but another and much more important “trust.”

To make my thought clear to you, I will cite another instance: On June 20, 1931, a Polish newspaper *Kuryer Codzienny* gave a prominent display to a leading article allegedly signed by me. This article was a forgery concocted from a few small quotations from an article of mine combined with several of the crudest inventions and supplements by the forger.

Moscow *Pravda* immediately published an enormous facsimile reproduction of this article under the heading “A New Assistant of Pilsudski.” At the same time this article was printed somewhere in New York City by an archreactionary newspaper. Thereupon I sent a brief note to *Pravda* demanding that it retract its own report in order not to dupe the Russian workers and
peasants [see “A Letter to Pravda,” in Writings 30-31]. In any case, in Biulleten Oppozitsii, of which I am the editor, and in many other papers, I not only disproved this matter but also proved that Kuryer Codzienny obtained the forgery through an agent of the GPU upon orders from Moscow, in order thus to obtain sensational material for a slander campaign [see “Scoundrels and Their Assistants” in Writings 30-31].

Matters are not much different today. The revelations of Tarov and Ciliga are highly embarrassing to the Stalinists, for they involve not theoretical or political discussions but hard and irrefutable facts. These facts come all the less propitiously to the Stalinists because in the course of recent months, according to the data in the Moscow press, not less than 10,000 (in reality many more) Bolshevik-Leninists have been expelled from the party—i.e., naturally, placed under arrest and sent to concentration camps, exile, etc.

Are we perhaps dealing here with enemies of the Soviet Union? You may rest assured that in the hour of greatest danger, when 99 percent of the so-called “Friends of the Soviet Union” and perhaps a goodly half of the Soviet bureaucracy will betray the October Revolution, these men who were arrested will be its truest defenders. Their “crime” lay precisely in their desire to save the October Revolution from infamy and degeneration; namely, they were against the social inequality that is growing sky high, against the intolerable pressure on the workers, against the introduction of ranks into the Red Army, headed by marshals, etc.

To parry these unpleasant revelations Moscow must find some means of diversion, for they are not in a position to operate with facts and political arguments. They tried to implicate me in the Kirov affair. They failed because the terrorist acts of Nikolaev directed by the GPU took a very serious turn. The bullet was fired before Yagoda and Medved could place under arrest the organization they themselves controlled [see several articles on the Kirov assassination in Writings 34-35]. Then they tried the matter of the Zeller postcard. Again, without much success. From now on they intend to let it be known: whoever speaks about the abominable crimes of the Moscow bureaucracy is a brother-in-arms of Hitler. It is understood that world reaction will try to put to use every revelation. Even when the mild Maxton casts a sharp word against the Labour Party in Parliament, the Diehards [Tories] applaud ironically. Are these grounds for Maxton to keep quiet?
In order for reaction to be unable to make use of the crimes of the Stalin clique, the crimes must cease and not the revelations.

I do not know whether Hearst lifted certain of my articles directly from the Russian *Biulleten* or whether his “assistant” (who may well be an “assistant” of the GPU at the same time) has concocted some sort of a series of articles for him. The gist of the matter is hardly altered thereby. I will try to prosecute Hearst for fraud or literary theft. But this will not alter matters. Hearst’s rascality is not a mitigating circumstance for the crimes of the Moscow Bonapartists.

Since *Arbeideren* also makes mention of you personally in its newest exposure, I am supplying you with this information, which is completely at your disposal. You can make any use of it you may deem necessary.

At the same time I am sending a copy of this note with the same aim to the foreign editor of *Arbeiderbladet*. 
1. The main argument of Comrade X: A crisis in the Workers Party would be very harmful for us. It should therefore be averted at all costs, etc.

The crisis, however, is already here and not since yesterday. It was a lingering crisis which has now once more passed over into a highly acute state. It is therefore necessary to combat not the abstraction of the crisis, which could only lead to a sterile conciliationism without any practical result, but rather to find the correct political way out and then to help the party, with all forces, to adopt this way out as unitedly as possible.

2. The nub of the crisis consists of the attitude toward the Socialist Party. This question determined all the old and new groupings after the unification conference of the party. There was no lack at all of well-meant compromise resolutions. But they didn't help matters much. The question remained open and along with it also the crisis. The expulsion of the Oehlerites signified that the question of entry was considered a purely tactical and not a principled question, that is, that one's hands are kept free for the future.

The charges against Cannon-Shachtman, that they concealed their "malignant" plans, that they denied their intentions of entering into the Socialist Party, etc., I cannot take seriously even for a single minute. Cannon-Shachtman had doubts on this question, as did many of us with regard to France, then Belgium, and finally Poland. These doubts are quite natural, for it is not a question of abstract principle but of the correct evaluation of the concrete circumstances. But since the other groups—at first the Oehlerites, then also the Muste-Weber group—put up a stiff resistance against the possibility of entry—even if from different motivations—and demanded a commitment from Cannon-Shachtman against entry, the latter attempted, on the one hand, not to commit themselves in advance, but on the other hand, not
to exacerbate relations unnecessarily inside their own party. That explains their evasive and waiting attitude. Every politician can recall similar situations out of his past. To see a crime in that is incorrect.

3. The split inside the SP seemed to Cannon-Shachtman to be key to the decision. It is necessary to strike while the iron is hot. Now, when everything has reached a state of flux and the Stalinists are working at high pressure, it is after all a bit belated to propose an inside fraction. In the course of the last year the present defenders of fraction-formation made it impossible to form the fraction in practice. That's also how it was in France. Naville and Lhuiller worked with all their might against the formation of a fraction inside the SFIO. But when entry was proposed, they promptly came forward in favor of creating a "broad" fraction.

It can be said: What do we care about the development in the SP? We go our own way. But this is precisely the way of the Oehlerites, which leads from nothing to nothing. But if we are of the opinion that the situation in the SP offers significant possibilities, we should promptly make a courageous turn, without losing time, enter the party, constitute ourselves as a faction, prevent the destructive work of the Stalinists, and thus take an important step forward.

4. To point to this—namely, that the Workers Party is already an independent party and thus a pillar of the Fourth International—belongs, in my mind, not to Marxian but to purely decorative politics. The Muste group called itself a party even before the fusion, but it wasn't one. The WPUS is not yet a party. Its policy must flow from its essence and not its name. It must undertake not those steps which justify its name juridically, but those which can make it a real party.

Also, from the standpoint of the Fourth International there is no other consideration. We do not carry on prestige politics. All that benefits our sections will also benefit the Fourth International. We must have patience, and always project further the goal of our actions.

In any case, after the French and in part also after the Belgian experience, nobody will be able to conceive of the entry as a capitulation, and if a SAPist makes wisecracks about it we will not begrudge him this pleasure.

5. "The Socialist Party of America is small, has a bad social composition, etc. . . ." Nor do I have the slightest illusions on that score. For that matter, we won over not tens of thousands,
not even thousands, but only hundreds in France, in a large Socialist Party. How we will make out in Belgium, in that powerful POB, nobody seems to know at the moment. But everything must be evaluated relatively. Had our French section not entered at the right time, it would have degenerated completely by now. That the step was correct is demonstrated by the fact that we won back the split-off group of Naville. Nor is the splitting-off of Molinier a counterproof: in the course of a couple of weeks, La Commune, under our political pressure, had to make a complete about-face (despite the organizational mistake committed). It seems to have renounced its philistine platitudes ("parity of formations" and "three points" instead of a program), and to want to return once more to the Fourth International. If we act intelligently, we will win back the healthy core of this group with its new supporters.

6. The Socialist Party of the United States is not accidentally weak. The political gathering together of the proletarian vanguard proceeds at a frightfully slow pace in America. Engels had to fight with everybody in his time over this question. It should not be forgotten, however, that those fundamental causes which make difficult the crystallization of a socialist—to say nothing of a revolutionary—vanguard in America, operate not only against the SP but also against us; and that in spite of the altered economic conditions the great psychological inertia, which has been developed into a tradition by the trade unions, cannot be overcome in a trice. Everything is relative. In the American milieu, the unhampered rapprochement of the Socialist and Communist parties would signify the greatest impediment to us for a whole period. To refuse to see this would really be blindness.

7. In large parties, the force of cohesion is much stronger than in small ones; one does not break so lightly with a mass party. That explains in part why, in France, we retained relatively so few new elements in the expulsions. Just because the American SP is not a real mass party our influence may prove to be much more decisive. One can estimate the practical possibilities as modestly as one wishes, but nobody will contest that the Workers Party together with the Spartacus Youth League can—let us say—double their numbers. Even only a 50 percent gain would not be without significance in this situation. In any case, this must be considered assured in advance. At all events, after the French and Belgian experiences, nobody will now dare to contend that our organization will be absorbed by the centrist milieu. In
America, because of the relationship of forces, this is rather even much less possible than in the European countries named. We are thus not courting any political danger in this step. A gain, however, is certain.

8. The greatest gain, however, would consist in this, that this step would finally be exhausted. That it cannot be exhausted by discussions and mile-long resolutions has been demonstrated adequately in the last year. I proceed naturally from this—and nobody will dare to doubt it—that none of the factions intends to betray the principles of Marxism. The centrist milieu will bring them closer together, as was the case in France. Together, they will have to fight out an important, direct, and sharp battle. The results will come. Even if they don’t win over a single person (an entirely fantastic hypothesis) the Workers Party will be more mature and more cohesive. After a long-lasting crisis an end will finally be reached.

9. Let us assume that the Muste-Weber group gains the upper hand in this question and the Cannon-Shachtman group submits; that would only mean the continuation of the present situation in the Workers Party. Cannon-Shachtman would assert that we are not moving ahead because we didn’t join the SP. Muste-Weber would reply that we are not moving ahead because the workers know that Cannon-Shachtman may lead us into the SP. This situation would lead almost inevitably to the further envenoming of internal relationships and to a split.

10. It may be said that I am painting the future too black. I don’t believe it; I only see it realistically. The high winds are now blowing against us. The danger of fascism and war, the bureaucratically exploited economic successes of the Soviet Union, the opportunistic turn of the Comintern, the growth of the centrist-pacifist unity pressure—all that is working temporarily against us.

A political radicalization in America will, in the next months and perhaps also in the next few years, benefit primarily the Communists and the Socialists, especially if they form a firmly cohesive united front. The Workers Party in such a case would remain on the side, almost entirely as a purely propagandistic organization, with all the consequences of the internal quarrel over missed opportunities. A speedy entry would prevent the demoralization of the Socialist left wing by the Stalinists, expose the incorrigible centrist leaders, promote clarification in the workers’ vanguard, and precisely thereby strengthen our positions for the future.
11. "But can we really enter the SP?" "Can we really do something there?" Here we must leave the responsibility to Cannon-Shachtman. They reply in the affirmative to both questions, which are not easy to judge from afar. On the other hand, not even Muste and Weber deny the possibility of entry and influence. Only the other road seems to them to be more advantageous. The other road, however, is tested and has proved to be a permanent crisis. On this point what is necessary has already been said above. By the experiment of entry—I do not fear to use the term "experiment"—we will hardly lose a single member; whether or not we win something more or less, the future will show.
LETTER TO A.J. MUSTE

February 8, 1936

Dear Comrade:

I shall try to explain briefly my use of the cable and my point of view regarding the visit of Comrades Spector and White. First, I have received letters and documents in the past from both sides, not only for my personal information but also with the purpose of giving me the opportunity to express my opinion. I used the cable because of the desirability of speed. I emphasized that I was giving expression to my personal opinion [see “For Entry in the U.S.”].

2. I considered the previous controversial letter of Cannon and Shachtman as one of the inevitable measures in an acute factional struggle [see “A Brief Remark”]. I considered the publication of the letter as a regrettable mistake. I have received analogous letters from comrades adhering to the other factions.

3. I consider the visit of Comrades Spector and White also as one of the inevitable means in an acute factional struggle. I assert that their expositions were absolutely loyal and that they did not in any way presume to represent the party. They discussed with me fraternally only in the name of their caucus.

4. As a result of the discussions, we each stand by our own positions. I should, however, be glad if our conversations could contribute to the elimination of the worst practical consequences of the present acute discussion.

Fraternally,

L. Trotsky
STATEMENT TO ASSOCIATED PRESS

February 8, 1936

During recent months and weeks I have received extremely important news, from authentic sources, relative to the terrible regime against political prisoners, whose fidelity toward the Soviet Union is beyond doubt and whose only "crime" is that of criticizing the ruling bureaucracy.

Friends have requested me by cable to let them know the truth of this matter through the Associated Press.

A short time ago, for example, Doctor Anton Ciliga, former leader of the Yugoslavian Communist Party, arrived from the Soviet Union, where he spent more than five years in prison and exile as punishment for his critical attitude toward the leadership of the Comintern.

In order to force his expulsion from the country, Ciliga began a hunger strike. He was then fed forcibly and prevented from committing suicide. Thousands of expelled members of the ruling party are in similar circumstances because they protested against the conditions of growing inequality, introduction of army-officer titles, dissipation, and autocracy.

Zinoviev and Kamenev, close collaborators of Lenin, are now imprisoned for a terrorist crime with which they had nothing whatsoever to do. Kamenev, the former chairman of the Political Bureau, is kept in a cell together with twelve others. Last year an additional five years were added to his original five years imprisonment for his alleged participation in plotting a terrorist assassination of Stalin.

Accurate and absolutely objective information by Ciliga, Tarov, and others proves increasing antagonism between the bureaucracy and the developing population. The bureaucracy is compelled to have recourse to the sharpest repressions, in the interests not of the Soviet state, but of its own self-preservation.

It is indisputable that enemies of the Soviet Union and of its friendly relations with the United States make use of such information for their own purposes. But the way to avoid such misuse is not to conceal the facts of the bureaucratic crimes, but to put an end to the crimes themselves.
Dear Comrades:

I have gratefully received all the letters and documents. Only an illness has prevented me from answering them promptly. I will now make up for my remissness.

You have called upon me to collaborate in the journal which you are planning. Alas, I do not know on what programmatic basis and under what political banner you contemplate publishing the journal. Moreover, your letters and documents allow me to fear that the differences which led you to split from our organization have not lessened since then but have increased. I should be very glad if this impression of mine should prove incorrect. I consider it as simply necessary to express my opinion quite clearly to you.

1. You broke with us a couple of years ago because you considered the trend towards the ILP as "opportunistic." Your standpoint was for an independent organization. Since then, however, you have joined the Labour Party, which has given rise to a new split in your ranks.

The question whether one should enter the ILP or the Labour Party was and remains for us not a question of principle, but a question of practical opportunity. By your own conduct you have shown the unsoundness of the basis which led you to split from us. I do not see from your letters or your documents that you have understood the big mistake you made in breaking with the only international Marxist organization.

2. It is quite unclear what ideas and methods are advanced by your activity inside the Labour Party. Our group in the ILP fights quite openly for the ideas and methods of Bolshevism and the Fourth International. I will not exaggerate their results or deny that there have been certain tactical errors. But the Marxist Group is the only group which openly defends the Fourth
Some Advice to a British Group

International in England. And for us the future of the world proletariat is bound up with the Fourth International.

As against this, your group appears only as the left wing of the Labour Party, i.e., as a vague centrist trend. You have recruited hardly any new elements. It would indeed be hard to do this without a program, without a political banner. The fact that many comrades from your group occupy positions in the Labour Party or the trade unions is without revolutionary significance, because these comrades represent no definite program, but have been elected only on the basis of their individual activity. All historical experience teaches that this is the shortest way to get absorbed into the reformist bureaucracy.

3. To the question which I put, you have replied that you are certainly in principle for the Fourth International but that you consider it impossible to make propaganda for it inside the Labour Party. This standpoint is hard to understand, let alone to approve. The Labour Party and Trades Union Congress bureaucracy is nothing else than the political police of capital within the working class. When revolutionaries do only what the police let them, then they are not revolutionaries.

Obviously, in carrying on the fight with the thoroughly corrupted blackguards who lead the Labour Party, one must act with prudence and foresight. That concerns only the technique of revolutionary work, not its content. How one carries on propaganda for the Fourth International inside the Labour Party is a question for yourselves. If one renounces the carrying on of this propaganda, then one surrenders directly to the Second International.

4. To my question as to whether it had been shown by experience to be more advantageous for the Bolshevik-Leninists to work in the ILP or in the Labour Party, you have replied that, in spite of your view on the possibilities in the ILP being exhausted, a move by the Marxist Group toward the Labour Party is not desirable—and why? Not perhaps because one cannot work in the Labour Party but because the Marxist Group is . . . too low (base, vile) for the Labour Party. There you go rather too far. You think that the Labour Party, led by artful careerists, traitors, and chauvinists, is too good for the Bolshevik-Leninists and that your group had, so to speak, the mission of protecting the Labour Party from the intrusions of the Marxist Group.

If the situation were like that, what would be the purpose of my collaborating in your forthcoming journal?
5. As proof of the "vileness" of the Marxist Group you quote its conduct in the election campaign. When Mr. Attlee, Clynes, and Company say "We cannot receive these people for they have boycotted us," I am not surprised. That you, however, should place this purely tactical question above all other questions reveals a state of mind that seems to me to be extremely dangerous. The boycott slogan was a tactical mistake, which, however, emerged from revolutionary premises; your exaggeration of this mistake is also a mistake, but it comes from opportunist premises.

6. The adherents of the Fourth International belong—whether formally or not—to an international organization whose members are spread all over the world, who work closely together, mutually criticizing and controlling each other. That gives them certainty that when they make mistakes they are also able to correct these mistakes. What guarantees, however, are possessed by your group, which has no program, belongs to no international organization, and has a policy consisting of adaptation to the "left" wing of the bureaucracy?

Now to the key conclusions. My entire activity is bound up with those organizations which take their stand on the basis of the Open Letter for the Fourth International. I can therefore collaborate in your paper—and will do this with pleasure—only if it makes the Open Letter for the Fourth International its program. This step must not, however, be of a platonic character, but must have organizational consequences of a national or international kind. That is to say, your group must again take up the international connections which you broke off two years ago. You must also enter into close connection with the Marxist Group to carry on revolutionary work in the future in close understanding. I am sure that an understanding on a firm programmatic basis can only produce the best results, and I am ready to work with you for it with all my might.
Dear Comrade Cannon:

I am not yet in possession of the decisions of the last conference. I hope, however, that everything went off well. In any case, I have received a telegram from Comrades Muste, Spector, and Abern in which they announce their loyal support of the decision adopted.308

The most important thing now (should entry into the SP be realized) is to carry out our work both solidly and effectively.

In America today you have no such burning questions as in France. The exposure of the centrist leaders will be difficult, to a certain degree, for what is involved is after all not the employment of such arguments as are weighty only for our own comrades but pass off without effect upon the Socialist rank and file. Besides, in France, also, far too much energy was expended upon the frequently purely phraseological "exposure" of the leaders, and too little for a more deep-going work at the base, especially among the youth. This error, in my opinion, you should seek to avoid in America.

An important component part of our work is to win the younger, thoughtful elements—who are able to develop—for our program, for our past, and thereby also for our future. This can occur only by means of well-organized propaganda. Our comrades can perhaps arrange a series of courses for the youth, but also for the adults: on the October Revolution and the Soviet Union, on the Chinese revolution, on the developments in Germany and Austria, on the Spanish revolution, on the program of the Comintern, and so on, and so forth. This "quiet" work would immediately present before the best Socialist elements the immense superiority of our cadres and thereby also make them more attentive to and approachable by our open, current criticism.

Naturally, I am not contrasting this propagandistic work, in
any case, to mass work. Quite the contrary. To draw the local organizations of the SP into local struggles and to evoke the necessary differentiation in their midst on the basis of these struggles remains the foremost task of our faction. The more deep-going propaganda must, however, create points of support among amicably inclined elements in every Socialist organization and therewith first make possible their being drawn into mass actions. Otherwise, in the event of a rupture with the centrist apparatus, only those elements who have more or less theoretically grasped the content of our struggle will be with us.

So far as the criticism of the centrist leadership is concerned, it is very important to pay attention to this: that this criticism should not lose itself in side issues which can only irritate the Socialist following, but should be concentrated upon well chosen and important questions. There is a certain danger that our comrades will react in meetings with mockery and contempt to the centrist superficialities and platitudes. From the very beginning this may create an unfavorable atmosphere for us. For the simple member who does not have the necessary political training, it is difficult to raise himself to the level of our criticism, and therefore irony (even the most deserved) can have a disturbing, suspicion-arousing, and exasperating effect upon the rank and file. This gives the centrist leaders the opportunity to mobilize these sentiments against us. Therefore, the greatest patience, a calm, friendly tone, are indispensable. Naturally, the tone can and will change when you already have the necessary points of support and when big political questions come up on the agenda.

All this is of course not quite so easy, for the thing cannot be played as if from a music score. But since we have good cadres with serious experience, you can, I believe, suggest a definite method of work to all our comrades.

All these considerations are of course much too abstract and surely three-quarters superfluous, for, close at hand, you see the things there much more concretely than we do here.* I only wanted, in any event, to communicate to you these suggestions, which come out of the French and partially also out of the Belgian experiences.

*That is why I make these suggestions only in a private letter; they seem to me to be entirely inadequate for a letter to the leadership. Besides, I spoke briefly on this score with Comrades Spector and Paine.
Information about what happens in America will be very important for our International. It would naturally be *highly imprudent* to send off official reports, etc. But a *young* comrade, let us say Comrade Roberts, could send the necessary communications (impressions, plans, etc.) in the form of *private letters*, without thereby formally committing the leadership of our faction. But it is very important that we here be kept steadily informed about your new experiences.

With heartiest greetings,
Your fraternally,
L. Trotsky
What Does the Experience with Mongolia Teach?

In Stalin's interview with Roy Howard, the most important thing from a practical standpoint is the warning that the military intervention of the USSR is inevitable in the event of an attack by Japan on the Mongolian People's Republic. Is this warning correct in the main? In our opinion, yes. It is correct not only because in question here is the defense of a weak state against a predatory imperialist beast—for if this alone were the guiding consideration, the USSR would be constantly at war with all the imperialist countries of the world. The Soviet Union is too weak for such a task, and in this weakness, we might immediately add, lies the only justification for the “pacifism” of its government.

But the question of Mongolia is a question of the most immediate strategical position of Japan in the war against the USSR. In this domain the limits of retreat must be resolutely fixed.

A few years ago the Soviet Union surrendered to Japan the Chinese Eastern Railroad, a position also of extreme strategic importance. At the time this action was acclaimed by the Communist International as a voluntary expression of pacifism. As a matter of fact, it was an act of compulsion due to weakness. The Comintern had ruined the Chinese revolution of 1925-27 by its policy of the “National Front.” This untied the hands of the imperialists. By surrendering an extremely important strategical line, the Soviet government thereby facilitated Japan's seizures in Northern China and present assaults against Mongolia. It should now be clear even to the blind that abstract pacifism was not involved in the surrender of the railroad (if that were really the case, it would have been merely an act of stupidity and betrayal), but rather an unfavorable relationship of forces: the Chinese revolution had been annihilated, while the Red Army and the Red Navy were not ready for the struggle.
Now the situation has so obviously improved, in a military sense, that the Soviet government considers it possible to resort to a categorical veto on the question of Mongolia. We can only welcome the strengthening of the position of the USSR in the Far East, as well as the more critical attitude on the part of the Soviet government toward the ability of Japan, torn by contradictions, to wage a major, protracted war. It should be pointed out that the Soviet bureaucracy, while it is very bold toward its own toilers, easily falls into a panic when faced with imperialist opponents: the petty bourgeois is unceremonious when dealing with the proletarian, but stands ever in awe of the big bourgeois.

The official formula of the foreign policy of the USSR, widely advertised by the Comintern, reads as follows: "We do not seek an inch of foreign soil; neither will we surrender an inch of our own." Yet, in the question of Mongolia, the defense of "our own soil" is not involved at all: Mongolia is an independent state. The defense of the revolution, as this small example shows, is not reducible to the defense of the frontiers. The true method of defense consists in weakening the positions of imperialism and in strengthening the positions of the proletariat and of the colonial peoples in the entire world. An unfavorable relationship of forces may compel, in the interests of saving the main base of the revolution, the surrender of many "inches" of soil to the enemy, as was the case in the epoch of Brest-Litovsk, and partly also in the case of the Chinese Eastern Railroad. And, on the other hand, a more favorable relationship of forces places on the workers' state the duty to come to the assistance of the revolutionary movement in other countries, not only morally but also, if need be, with the assistance of armed force: *wars of emancipation are an integral part of revolutions of emancipation.*

Thus, the experience with Mongolia shatters to pieces the ideology of conservative pacifism, which bases itself upon historical frontiers as though they were the Ten Commandments. The frontiers of the USSR are only the temporary front-line trenches of the class struggle. They lack even a national justification. The Ukrainian people—to take only one of many examples—is cut in two by the state boundary. Should favorable conditions arrive, the Red Army would be duty-bound to come to the aid of the Western Ukraine, which is under the heel of the Polish executioners. It is not difficult to imagine the gigantic impulse that would be given to the revolutionary movement in Poland and in the whole of Europe by the unification of a workers' and peasants' Ukraine. All state frontiers are only
fetters upon the productive forces. The task of the proletariat is not to preserve the status quo, i.e., to perpetuate the frontiers, but on the contrary to work for their revolutionary elimination with the aim of creating the Socialist United States of Europe and of the entire world. But to make such an international policy possible, if not at present then in the future, it is imperative for the Soviet Union to free itself from the rule of the conservative bureaucracy, with its religion of “socialism in one country.”

Wherein Lies the Cause of War?

In reply to Howard’s question as to what causes underlie the threat of war, Stalin said, in accordance with tradition: “Capitalism.” As proof he cited the last war, which “arose from the desire to divide the world.” But remarkably enough, no sooner does Stalin pass from the past to the present, from dim theoretical recollections to real politics, than capitalism immediately disappears, and in its place are to be found individual evil-minded cliques that are incapable of grasping the benefits of peace. To the question of whether war is inevitable, Stalin replies: “In my opinion the positions of the friends of peace are being strengthened. The friends of peace can work openly (!), they base themselves upon the force of public opinion, and they have at their disposal such instruments as, for example (!!!), the League of Nations. This is an asset for the friends of peace. . . . As for the enemies of peace, they are compelled to work secretly. This is a liability for the enemies of peace. Incidentally, it is not excluded that precisely because of this (?) they may decide upon a military adventure as an act of despair.”

Thus, we find that humanity is divided not into classes, nor into imperialist states warring with each other, but into “friends” and “enemies” of peace, i.e., into saints and sinners. The cause for war (at any rate, for future if not past wars) is not capitalism, which breeds irreconcilable contradictions, but the ill will of the “enemies of peace,” who “work secretly,” while the French, British, Belgian, and other slave owners do their work in broad daylight. But precisely because the enemies of peace, like all evil spirits, work secretly, they may, in a fit of despair, plunge into an adventure. Who needs this philosophic mush? At best it can be of service only to some old ladies’ pacifist society.

As we have had the occasion to state before, the agreement between the Soviets and France gives infinitely more guarantees to France than to the Soviets. In the negotiations with Paris,
Moscow evinced a lack of firmness, or, to put it more bluntly, Laval fooled Stalin. The events in connection with the Rhineland\textsuperscript{313} are an indisputable confirmation that with a more realistic appraisal of the situation, Moscow could have wrung from France much more serious guarantees, insofar as pacts in general can be considered “guarantees” in the present epoch of sharp turns in the situation, continuous crises, break-ups, and regroupments. But as we have already said, the Soviet bureaucracy shows much greater firmness in the struggle against the advanced workers than in negotiations with bourgeois diplomats.

But no matter how he might evaluate the Franco-Soviet pact, not a single serious-minded proletarian revolutionist ever denied or denies the right of the Soviet state to seek an auxiliary support for its inviolability through a temporary agreement with French or some other imperialism. For this purpose, however, there is not the slightest need to call black white and to rebaptize bloody brigands as “friends of peace.” As an example to be emulated, one might take, let us say, the new ally, the French bourgeoisie: in concluding the agreement with the Soviets the French bourgeoisie presents this action very soberly without becoming lyrical, without lavishing any compliments, and even maintaining a constant undertone of warning against the Soviet government. However bitter it may be, it is necessary to speak the truth. Laval, Sarraut,\textsuperscript{314} and their associates have shown a great deal more firmness and dignity in defending the interests of the bourgeois state than did Stalin and Litvinov in the service of the workers’ state.

Surely, it is difficult to conceive a more vicious stupidity than that which divides the world brigands into friends and enemies of peace! One could still speak, in a certain sense, about the friends and enemies of the status quo: but these are two entirely different things. The status quo is not the organization of “peace,” but the organization of the infamous oppression exercised by a minority over the overwhelming majority of mankind. The status quo is being maintained by means of constant warfare within the sacred boundaries and beyond their precincts (England—in India and Egypt; France—in Syria; de la Rocque—in France). The difference between the two camps, which are, besides, very unstable, consists in the fact that some of the brigands think it more advisable even today to maintain the existing boundaries of oppression and enslavement with arms in hand, whereas others would prefer to blow up these boundaries sooner. This correlation of appetites and plans is itself continually changing. Italy favors a status quo in Europe but not in Africa; yet every assault upon
the boundaries in Africa is immediately reflected in Europe. Hitler decided to send troops into the Rhineland only because Mussolini had succeeded in slaughtering several thousand Ethiopians. Where should we enroll Italy: among the friends or the enemies of peace? And yet, France cherishes friendship with Italy infinitely more than friendship with the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, England is courting the friendship of Germany.

The “friends of peace” work in the open (who would have thought it!) and have at their disposal “such instruments as, for example, the League of Nations.” What other “instruments” have the friends of peace, outside the League of Nations? Obviously, they have the Comintern and the Amsterdam-Pleyel Committee. Stalin failed to mention these auxiliary “instruments” partly because he himself does not attach any great importance to them, and partly because he did not want to frighten his interlocutor unnecessarily. But Stalin does completely transform the League of Nations, which has been fully discredited in the eyes of all mankind, into a bulwark of peace, the prop and hope of nations.

In order to utilize the imperialist antagonisms between France and Germany there was not and is not the slightest need for idealizing the bourgeois ally or the particular combination of imperialists that temporarily screens itself behind the League of Nations. The crime does not lie in this or another practical deal concluded with imperialists but in the fact that both the Soviet government and the Comintern are dishonestly embellishing their episodic allies and the League; are duping the workers with slogans of disarmament and “collective security”; and thereby are actively transformed into the political agency of imperialism in relation to the working masses.

The program of the Bolshevik Party drafted by Lenin in 1919 replied to all these questions with remarkable clarity and simplicity. But who thinks about this document in the Kremlin? Today, Stalin and Company find embarrassing even the eclectic program of the Comintern compiled by Bukharin in 1928. For this reason we think it useful to quote from the program of the Bolshevik Party on the question of the League of Nations and the friends of peace. Here is what it states:

“The growing pressure on the part of the proletariat and especially the victories gained by the latter in various countries tend to increase the resistance of the exploiters and engender on their part the creation of new forms of the international unification of the capitalists (League of Nations, etc.), which, while organizing on a world scale the systematic exploitation of
all the peoples on earth, aim their immediate efforts toward the direct suppression of the revolutionary movements of the proletariat in all countries.

“All this inevitably leads to the correlation of civil war within the individual states with the revolutionary wars both of the proletarian countries defending themselves as well as of the oppressed peoples struggling against the yoke of the imperialist powers.

“Under these conditions the slogans of pacifism, of international disarmament under capitalism, of arbitration courts, and so on, are not only a reactionary utopia but also a downright swindle of the toilers aimed to disarm the proletariat and to distract the workers away from the task of disarming the exploiters.”

It is precisely this criminal work that both Stalin and the Comintern are fulfilling: they are sowing reactionary utopias, swindling the toilers, disarming the proletariat.

The “Comic Misunderstanding” about the World Revolution

Nobody compelled Stalin to satisfy Howard’s thirst for knowledge on the question of the world revolution. If Stalin gave the interview as the unofficial head of the government (and this is indicated by his statement with regard to Mongolia), then he could have simply referred his interlocutor to Dimitrov on questions about the world revolution. But no, Stalin went into explanations. At first sight it appears entirely incomprehensible why he should have thereby compromised himself so cruelly by his cynical and, sad to say, not at all clever disquisitions about the world revolution. But he is driven onto this slippery road by an insurmountable need: he must break with the past.

What about the plans and intentions relating to the revolution? asks the visitor.

“We never (!) had such plans and intentions.”

But, what about . . .

“This is all the result of a misunderstanding.”

Howard: “A tragic misunderstanding?”

Stalin: “No, a comic, or, perhaps, a tragicomic one.”

It is embarrassing even to read and transcribe these lines, they are so inappropriate and indecent. For whom is this . . . wisdom intended? Even the pacifist ladies will reject it.

Asks Stalin: “What danger can the neighboring states see in
the ideas of the Soviet people, if these states are really firmly placed in the saddle?" Very well, permit us to ask, what about those who are not placed firmly in the saddle? Yet that is how matters stand in reality. Precisely because its position is precarious, the bourgeoisie fears Soviet ideas, not Stalin's ideas but those ideas that led to the creation of the Soviet state. To soothe the bourgeoisie, Stalin adduces a supplementary argument: "The export of revolution is nonsense. Every country, should it so desire, will itself achieve its own revolution, and if it does not desire it, there will be no revolution. Now, for example, our country desired to make a revolution and made it. . . ." And more of the same, in the same smug, pedantic tone. From the theory of socialism in one country Stalin has completely and decisively passed over to the theory of revolution in one country. If a "country" so desires, it will make it; should it not desire it—it won't make it. Now, "we," for example, desired it. . . . But before desiring it, "we" imported the ideas of Marxism from other countries and made use of foreign revolutionary experience. In the course of decades, "we" had our emigre organization in other countries which directed the revolutionary struggle in Russia. In order to give a methodical and active character to the exchange of experience between countries and their mutual revolutionary support, "we" organized the Communist International in the year 1919. "We" more than once proclaimed as the duty of the proletariat of a victorious country to come to the assistance of the rising peoples—with advice, material means, and, if possible, with armed force. All these ideas (incidentally, they bear the names of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, Liebknecht) are written down in the most important programmatic documents of the Bolshevik Party and of the Comintern. Stalin has proclaimed that all this is a misunderstanding! A tragic one? No, a comic one. Not for nothing has Stalin recently announced that it has become "merry" to live in the Soviet Union: now even the Communist International has become transformed from a serious entity into a comedian. And how could it be otherwise, if the international character of the revolution is mere and sheer "nonsense"?

Stalin would have made a much more convincing impression upon his interlocutor, if instead of impotently slandering the past ("we never had such plans and intentions"), he had on the contrary openly counterposed his own policy to the antiquated "plans and intentions" which have been relegated to the museum. Stalin might have read Howard the very same
quotation from the program which we gave above, and then made approximately the following brief speech: "In the eyes of Lenin the League of Nations was an organization for the bloody suppression of the toilers. But we see in it—an instrument of peace. Lenin spoke of the inevitability of revolutionary wars. But we consider the export of revolution—nonsense. Lenin branded the alliance between the proletariat and the national bourgeoisie as a betrayal. But we are doing all in our power to drive the French proletariat onto this road. Lenin lashed the slogan of disarmament under capitalism as an infamous swindle of the toilers. But we build our entire policy upon this slogan. Your comical misunderstanding”—that is how Stalin could have concluded—"consists in the fact that you take us for the continuators of Bolshevism, whereas we are its gravediggers."

Such an explanation would have dispelled the last shreds of suspicion of the world bourgeoisie and would have definitely established Stalin's reputation as a statesman. Unfortunately, he does not dare as yet to resort to such frank language. The past binds him, the traditions hamper him, the phantom of the Opposition frightens him. We come to the assistance of Stalin. In accordance with our rule, in the present case, too, we openly say what is.
THE POINT OF NO RETURN

Stalin’s Order to Demyan Bedny

Published April 1936

The reactionary litterateur Aldanov, who writes historical novels which treat the emancipatory movement of mankind from the standpoint of an alarmed philistine, has occupied himself of late with writing historical notations to the October Revolution. In one of his feuilletons, basing himself on a ludicrous analysis of the budget of Pravda for the year 1917, he attempts to prove that the Bolsheviks did “just the same” receive German money. To be sure, in the process, the multi-million subsidy is reduced to a very modest sum; but, in return, the moral and mental equipment of the historian himself rises to its heights.

In a subsequent feuilleton Aldanov recounts how Trotsky, in June 1918, informed the German diplomat Count Mirbach, that we Bolsheviks “are already dead, but there is as yet nobody around able to bury us.” Mirbach himself, as is well known, was killed shortly after June by the left SRs. This story, retailing the words of one Botmer, who in turn quotes the dead diplomat, is so absurd in itself that it is hardly worthy of notice. In June 1918—and, therefore, just in the period between the time the rapacious Brest-Litovsk peace was signed and the day he left for the front in Kazan—Trotsky gave secret information—and to whom? to a diplomat of Hohenzollern!—to the effect that Bolshevism was “already dead.” This is a case of slander passing into raving.

But there is always a consumer for anything vile. And one was found in this case also. The January 30 issue of Pravda carries several yards of Demyan Bedny’s jingles in which the account of Botmer-Aldanov is taken to be an incontrovertible truth, and as the final proof of Trotsky’s “permanent treachery.” Today, Pravda is the personal organ of Stalin. Demyan Bedny fulfills a personal order. Today, Pravda does not venture as yet to carry
verses relating how Lenin and Trotsky received money from the German general staff, but the moral evolution of the Bonapartist bureaucracy is nevertheless proceeding in this direction. To Aldanov, at any rate, the receipt of the Hohenzollern subsidy by the Bolsheviks and Trotsky's conversation with a Hohenzollern diplomat constitute an entity. In Pravda, together with its "poet," the single whole does not emerge as yet. But, never mind! The order was fulfilled. The meaning of the order is expressed in the following quatrain:

Too bad, indeed, that in Berlin  
They, before us, this news did learn!  
The route, for such leaders, is a march  
To hell, from where there's no return.

This "poetical" conclusion is of course based not upon a fictitious conversation years ago but upon the actual events in our own time. The Fourth International is a dire threat to these gentlemen. The growth of the Leninist ("Trotskyist") Opposition in the USSR frightens the usurpers. That is why they find it necessary to seek inspiration from Aldanov-Botmer.

Yet, once upon a time, this same Bedny also wrote about Trotsky in a somewhat different tone, and, moreover, in the very heat of the civil war, at a time when men and ideas found themselves subjected to a serious test. Apropos of a rumor alleging that General Denikin, the chief of the White Army, was making preparations to have himself crowned, Demyan Bedny published in Izvestia, some sixteen months after the alleged declarations of Trotsky to Mirbach, the following verses:

Strike no hero's poses, king!  
Our deuce will do the covering.  
Our aim is sure, we are no chumps,  
For ours is the deuce of trumps.  
Lenin-Trotsky, there's our deuce,  
Try to match it, if you choose!  
Why, Denikin, the sudden blues?  
There is no covering our deuce.

Aldanov, incidentally, also quotes this ditty; but in contrast to the conversation with Mirbach, it does not happen to be an invention but an absolutely genuine product of Demyan's creative efforts. It was printed in Izvestia, October 19, 1919.
Repulsive as it is to probe into this mess, we hope that the reader will bear with us: a few rhymed lines can convey much better the atmosphere of 1919 and the then prevailing mood in the party than all the latest luxuriant growths of falsifications and calumny. "Lenin-Trotsky, there's our deuce." How is that? How could a man who gave out treacherous statements to the august ambassador of the kaiser turn up on the same "deuce" with Lenin? And where is Stalin? Is it possible that Demyan Bedny, who lived in the Kremlin, who met all the top leaders in the party, who, it is even told, used to sup in the dining room of the Council of People's Commissars—is it possible that Demyan Bedny remained unaware of the fact that the "deuce" was—Lenin-Stalin? Or it may be that Demyan Bedny was unacquainted with Stalin? No. Bedny worked with Stalin in the legal Bolshevik publications back in 1911, and perhaps even earlier. He was well acquainted with Stalin, with Stalin's past, his specific weight, his intellectual resources. Demyan knew very well what he was writing. And if he did not know, how did Izvestia, the official government organ, happen to print verses in which Trotsky's name creeps in by mistake instead of Stalin's? Or, was it merely done, perhaps, for the sake of a rhyme? And, finally, why and how did the party keep quiet about these sacrilegious verses? We ought to add that in those days no one ordered laudatory verses from Demyan Bedny—we had occasion for different things at that time, and besides, the people were different—the verses simply expressed what was in the air.

History is not a heap of old rags that can be placed into a machine and converted into clean paper. A Russian proverb says: "What is written down with a pen cannot be hacked away with an axe." The history of those years was written not merely with a pen—at any rate, not only with the pen of Demyan Bedny. If in 1919 Bedny, picked up by the great wave, on his own initiative executed the literary order of the masses, then in 1936 he fulfills only the order of Stalin. This customer pursues aims which are not at all literary but purely practical. Demyan Bedny, as we already know, was ordered to provide the formula for the necessity of sending Trotsky to a place "from where there's no return."

Stalin is obviously making preparations to entrust the fulfillment of this task to the "poets" from the school of Yagoda, the general commissar.

And that is how we record it!
ONCE AGAIN
ON THE SOVIET SECTION

Published April 1936

In a public report on December 30, 1935, Khrushchev, the leader of the Moscow organization, the most important and the largest in the party, boasted that the checkup of party documents had resulted in success. The enemies of the party were exposed: "Trotskyists, Zinovievists, spies, kulaks, White Guard officers." The order in which the categories of the expelled are listed is very remarkable, indeed! In Moscow, the kulaks and White Guard officers occupy the last place: they were taken care of long ago by the previous purges in the capital. There is no need to dwell upon "spies" as a special category. Thus, the chief targets of the purge in Moscow were the Trotskyists and the Zinovievists. But, no more and no less than 9,975 members of the party alone were expelled in the city alone, apart from the district itself!

In Leningrad, 7,274 people were expelled. Zhdanov, the Leningrad leader of the party, announced that "the counter-revolutionary Zinovievists occupy a notable place (!) among the expelled." In Leningrad, as is well known, the Left Opposition has traditionally assumed a Zinovievist coloration, which must have become accentuated after Zinoviev was clapped in jail. If among a number of more than 7,000 the Zinovievists occupy a "notable place," then it is quite clear that we are not dealing with a few scores or hundreds. Precisely for this reason the reporter was careful to evade mentioning the figure.

In addition to the "Trotskyists" and "Zinovievists," Zhdanov made an obscure reference to "opportunists of all sorts." In all probability this label covers those party members who have shown resistance to the bureaucratic excesses of the Stakhanov movement. There need be no doubts that the opposition groupings in the working class have been revived precisely by the new pressure upon the workers, accompanied with new and monstrous privileges for the bureaucracy and the "best people." It
is noteworthy, in any case, that neither Khrushchev nor Zhdanov had a single word to say in reference to either the Mensheviks or the Social Revolutionaries.

We wrote, on a previous occasion, that during the last months of 1935 not less than 10,000 and most probably close to 20,000 Bolshevik-Leninists were expelled from the party (exclusive of party candidates and Young Communists). On the basis of the reports of Khrushchev and Zhdanov that have been published since then, we conclude that not less than 10,000 "Trotskyists" and "Zinovievists" were expelled in the two capital cities alone.

We failed to run across a single reference to the "Democratic Centralist Group" or to the "Workers' Opposition," either in the general listing of the categories of the expelled, or among the individual reports, articles, and notes. It is quite probable, of course, that isolated expulsions of the representatives of these groupings took place, but they were so few numerically that they were included among the general category of "others." This fact is of major political importance. With the preservation of the socialized means of production and with the collectivization of the overwhelming majority of the peasantry, the economic and cultural successes of the Soviet Union prove all too clearly that the social foundations established by the October Revolution have not been destroyed, despite the threatening bourgeois degeneration of the ruling stratum, and that these foundations can create the necessary preconditions for a future socialist society.

To place the USSR on the same plane with capitalist states is to throw out the baby with the bathwater. The advanced workers want to throw out the bathwater of the bureaucracy but at the same time they wish to safeguard and bring up the baby. That is why, even years ago, when times were much more difficult, the oppositionist movement in the working class refused to follow the Mensheviks. That is why today it has obviously turned its back upon the Workers' Opposition, the Democratic Centralists and all others who approach the old Menshevik positions from the "left." In this fact we have an incontrovertible verification of our program, for it has been subjected to testing not only in theory but also in practice. The struggle against the bureaucratic caste and the regime of privileges, the struggle for the socialist future of the country, the struggle for the world revolution, takes place in the USSR under the banner of the Bolshevik-Leninists, and only under their banner.
AN HONEST BOOK

March 21, 1936


Here is a book that comes just at the right time! What an invaluable source of historical information and revolutionary education! In truth our old friend Rosmer could not have found better use for his capacities and his knowledge, and the Librairie du Travail could not have published a book more urgently required at the present time.

The first thing that ought to be said is that it is an honest book. The Communist International is flooding the literary market with productions in which ignorance mingles with dishonesty. The productions of the school of Leon Blum and his consorts are more "subtly," more "decently" false in appearance, but none the less so for that. These people have something to hide. They justify their past deceptions or prepare new ones for the future. With Rosmer there are no secret thoughts or hidden designs: he expounds that which was. Between his ideas and the facts there is no contradiction and he is naturally interested in expressing the whole truth. An extraordinarily scrupulous personal conscience—which is not, alas, a quality frequently found among writers—causes him to verify the facts, the dates, the quotations at first hand. Feuilletonist improvisation is foreign to him. He penetrates into his material like an explorer.

But that is precisely why his book has a gripping interest. The historical sketch of the French labor movement after the Commune; the preparation of the imperialist war; the conduct of the various proletarian organizations before the war and at the moment it broke out; the epidemic treason of the trade union and parliamentary bureaucracies; the first voices of protest and the first acts of struggle; the attempts at international regrouping
and the Zimmerwald Conference—these are the contents of a volume of almost six hundred pages.

This historical work seems at the same time to be a devastating political pamphlet: in the pages of Rosmer's book the social patriots, of the Second International as well as of the Third, can find ready-made almost all the falsifications that they are now putting in circulation to dupe the workers. Leon Blum, Marcel Cachin, and their similars are now reliving a "second youth," more shameful and more cynical than the first. That is precisely why every serious proletarian revolutionist ought to read—more exactly, to study—Rosmer's book. To be sure, the book, due to its size, is expensive; but this obstacle should be overcome by gathering together in groups to buy a copy jointly. Every revolutionary organization ought to provide its propagandists with this book in order to arm them with facts and invaluable arguments. The rule should be established: nobody in our ranks who has not studied Rosmer's work ought to be allowed to speak publicly on the question of war.

These lines are not a critical evaluation of the book; or else we would have pointed out also some points on which we are not in agreement or in full agreement with the author. At present we want only to draw the attention of all internationalists to this work about which the press of the two patriotic Internationals is maintaining silence, just as it preserves an ignominious silence about every serious and honest production of revolutionary thought. With all the greater vigor and friendliness should the press of the Fourth International acclaim this work.

Let us add in conclusion that the book is written in excellent language—calm, clear, and precise—and is very well presented.
THE PLAN TO EXTERMINATE THE BOLSHEVIK-LENINISTS

March 25, 1936

The March 15 issue of Pravda carries a semiofficial order that emanates from a high source, obviously from Stalin, and deals with the treatment to be accorded the expelled party members. The question is not a simple one because, as we have only to recall, from the second half of last year to the present day more than 300,000 have been expelled—perhaps even half a million. The smallest percentage of the party members expelled is 7 percent, but in several instances over one-third have been expelled. At the present time the purge is continuing under the guise of “exchanging party cards,” or, as Stalin's order states, the party continues to rid itself of “Trotskyists, Zinovievists, White Guards, and other filth.” This list, and the order of naming the categories of the expelled, have become very firmly established, and, moreover, in all the lists, both local and general, the “Trotskyists” invariably occupy the first place. This means that the heaviest blows are directed against them.

Stalin's order leaves no room for doubt on this score. On the surface the order seems to be intended as a check upon the excessive zeal of local organizations, who are depriving all the expelled of work. With unexampled bureaucratic jesuitism, Stalin intervenes in behalf of certain categories of the expelled. Thus, the order remarks that certain Communists have been expelled as passive elements, for breaches of discipline or of party ethics. Harshness toward them is unwarranted. If they are too compromised for their old work, they must be given new work. One should not needlessly breed enemies. “Unfortunately, this simple truth is not understood everywhere.” A man who has committed “some sort of a grave breach of party ethics” may nevertheless remain a “useful individual for our socialist country”—under one condition: that he is not an “enemy,” i.e., the enemy of the bureaucracy. If a man has embezzled, given or
taken bribes, beat up an underling, or raped a girl—in short, committed a "grave breach of party ethics"—but has in the meantime remained loyal to the powers that be, then this "useful individual" must be given other work.

The chief quality that the order demands from the party leaders is: "the ability to distinguish between the enemy and the nonenemy." Ruthlessness is recommended only with regard to the political opponent. A docile grafter is not an enemy. The mortal enemy is the honest Oppositionist, who must be deprived of work of every kind.

The only employer in the USSR is the bureaucracy. Stalin's order implies in practice the doom of tens of thousands of Oppositionists to the tortures of unemployment and homelessness, even when they are exiled. To be sure, this used to be done before too, but not in every case. Today, this has been erected into a system.

This order of Stalin, which bears the caption "On Bolshevik Vigilance," must be brought to the attention of the workers the world over. Not a single appropriate occasion should be missed to raise this question at workers' meetings. Wherever possible, it is necessary to penetrate into the trade union press. Everything must be done to prevent Stalin from physically exterminating tens of thousands of irreproachable young fighters.
Dear Comrade Dauge:

1. *On expulsion from the party*: In such a complicated and delicate situation, the only correct course is not to be concerned with riddles—What will the bureaucracy do? When and how will they expel us?—but to develop ever wider, ever deeper, ever more unrelenting revolutionary activity. With respect to the [POB] statutes, of course, we must remain on the defensive right up to the moment of expulsion; but politically we develop a tireless offensive. Moreover, questions of statutory defense should occupy only one percent of your energies. Ninety-nine percent must be devoted to the offensive against the reformists, the centrists, and the pacifists.

We must reply to each threat of expulsion not by excuses, not by adapting to the apparatus, but by redoubling the vigor of our revolutionary offensive: we must declare *openly* that in their preparation for a new slaughter *the reformist traitors want to rid themselves of embarrassing witnesses.*

It is completely wrong to believe that in the present struggle the workers will be influenced exclusively or even mostly by legalistic considerations—who initiated the split, etc. This element naturally plays some role, but what is decisive in this extremely critical situation is the political *content,* the merit of your accusations and denunciations, and finally the tone of complete confidence in your position that must pervade your newspaper and all of your activity.

This does not mean that I am suggesting extravagances, exaggerations of language, or tactical blunders. *But it is the strategic line that is decisive.* Our language must be aimed not at the ears of Vandervelde, or even Godefroid or Libaers, but at the ears of the workers who are the most conscious, the most courageous, and the most dissatisfied: it is these elements, in the final analysis, who will play the decisive role.
You are numerically weak, but your revolutionary position makes you very strong. The coming epoch will open unprecedented possibilities before you—on just one condition: that you not weaken your own chances by seeking the line of least resistance with the reformists, centrists, and pacifists.

2. The considerations expressed in the first paragraph apply totally to electoral politics: not to take the initiative in the split but not to yield an inch in the realm of slogans and criticism.

3. The split is predetermined by the inexorable logic of the whole situation. It is necessary to prepare for it in advance:

(a) We must work out the action program of the new party by immediately opening the discussion on two documents: (1) the *Open Letter for the Fourth International*; (2) the draft program of the ASR, reworked according to experience or to criticism already made. The discussion of the program will be an excellent education for the cadres of the new party.

(b) We must take systematic organizational measures with respect to the plans of the political party (POB), the unions, and the youth.

4. The split will not be carried out in a single blow. After the expulsion of the leading nucleus, the struggle will continue in the local organizations. Everything will depend at this critical time on the tone of the ASR: it will have to inspire confidence in its supporters and sympathizers. The whole of revolutionary experience shows that in such situations the rank-and-file elements often prove more decisive than the leadership, who, frightened by the prospect of isolation, begin to weaken, disorient even their best supporters, and end up . . . being isolated. The most recent experience took place in France, where the leaders of the Bolshevik-Leninists under the goading of Molinier were aiming, at the crucial moment, above all not to break with Marceau Pivert (the French equivalent of Godefroid and Libaers); they toned down their slogans, gave way, and disoriented their own ranks, with the result that they strengthened Lagorgette and Marceau Pivert, and weakened their own position.

5. Even after total separation, the new party must keep a clandestine fraction in the POB. There is no reason to believe that your expulsion will be the last. With the help of events, there will again be internal struggles, defections, expulsions, and splits. The new party must have loyal and discreet supporters in the POB.

6. It would be an irreparable error to withdraw your members from the economic organizations, the unions, etc.—by no means! To create small, parallel unions would mean to take upon oneself
Suggestions for the Belgian Section

a crushing responsibility without any possibility of fulfilling their respective tasks in the foreseeable future. Even if you had already been an independent organization for a long time you would have to send your members into the unions, mutual societies, etc. . . . You need the independent party not to compete in a small way with the mass organization, but to win them from inside. That is the only way. The party is the instrument of our work; it must be well forged, well tempered, and well honed. But with this instrument we must work where the masses really are.

Then we have to pay dues to a treacherous bureaucracy? Yes, indeed; we have to pay to get in if we want to have an opportunity to undermine the bureaucracy.

The whole inconsistency of the Comintern is revealed by this dual fact: while they stayed in the mass organizations, the Stalinists made shameful deals with the reformists; when they broke from the reformists, they created parallel trade unions which were nothing more than a replica of the party. The Bolshevik policy is altogether different: an independent party for systematic, patient, tireless work inside the mass reformist organizations, in permanent struggle against the reformist leaders. This work must be partly open, partly clandestine, according to the circumstances and the opportunities.

The time is coming when the revolutionary elements will be compelled to work under conditions of illegality. For a revolutionary party an illegal existence in certain periods is, so to speak, normal. The party is a selection of the vanguard elements, that is, the most conscious and the most courageous ones.

The trade union as a mass organization cannot exist illegally. If you create small revolutionary unions, they would immediately be hit by government repression and almost inevitably wiped out. However, if your members remain in the reformist unions, they will have not only a necessary social milieu around them, but also legal cover against repression.

The reformist leaders, of course, will harass them and even hand them over to the police. But that means only that we must learn to work in secret from the reformist leaders, who themselves are nothing other than the unofficial capitalist police within the working class itself. Preparation for revolutionary illegality begins above all in the reformist unions. We must have comrades in them who work openly, leaving themselves open, in the final analysis, to expulsion. We must have others there who are not orators, but who are capable, by systematic work, of gathering around them revolutionary nuclei in the unions.

Even during 1917, when we had already become a powerful
party with a decisive hold on the soviets, most of the unions still remained under the leadership of the Mensheviks. Did we split from the unions? Not at all! We stayed in them to the end, that is, up until we captured the union leadership. Our situation then was more favorable than yours in other ways. *The great lesson of Bolshevism is the intransigence of the party toward reformism and centrism and the greatest flexibility towards the mass organizations.* Without the first quality the party inevitably becomes the instrument of capital; without the second, the party remains a sterile sect forever. It is the synthesis of iron hardness and extreme flexibility that assures success.

8. The break with the party imposed by the bureaucracy in no way means the voluntary desertion of the youth organization. Quite the contrary. It is precisely at the moment of expulsion that it is necessary to launch an unrelenting campaign among the youth against the reformist traitors, splitters, and expellers, for unity on a *revolutionary basis*. By this campaign, we must take care of the Godefroids. By this policy—if the split proves equally inevitable among the youth—we will take with us at least a solid part of the organization. And even in the event of such a split, it will be necessary to keep a clandestine fraction among the youth.

9. This policy requires a correct attitude—i.e., *not the least compromise* towards Godefroid and Libaers. *It is on this point that the greatest weakness of the ASR appears.* The greatest danger for a revolutionary is to have illusions not only about one’s enemies, but also about one’s allies. I do not deny the possibility and the necessity of some alliance or other with the centrist Godefroid or the pacifist Libaers. But the Marxist rule concerning alliances says: view today’s ally as tomorrow’s potential enemy, and openly denounce every mistake on his part, in order to prepare the workers for a possible, and even probable, betrayal. *To say openly what is* is a useful rule.

*No illusions about Godefroid.* Even the French Radical bourgeois, to defend themselves against the fascists, try to use the Socialists and Stalinists. If Godefroid really wanted to defend himself against the reformists, he would also have to try to use the “Trotskyists.” But he is using every means to try to eliminate and expel them. It is an unmistakable symptom: Godefroid is consciously preparing a betrayal.

You mention Godefroid’s attack against the chauvinist Hubin. But what of it? If Godefroid ends his polemic even against those of Hubin’s ilk, his respect among the youth is destroyed. In order to prepare his reconciliation with the bureaucracy he must keep
up appearances. His attack on the “Trotskyists” is a political act; his polemic against Hubin is nothing more than rhetoric.*

You may say that I am “exaggerating.”** Fair enough. I will accept for the moment the hypothesis that Godefroid has not yet made the definitive choice, that he is maneuvering, waiting for favorable opportunities on the right or the left. But even in this case the only correct tactic is to denounce Godefroid, openly to unmask his contradictions, to criticize his newspaper in an amicable but uncompromising manner, etc. . . . By putting him in a crossfire you will force his hand; you will oblige him to make a choice. If you say, “In the event of his betrayal, I would not hesitate to attack him,” etc. . . . you deceive yourself and you sow illusions. “Betrayal” is not always like a gunshot; more often it is a backsliding. And Godefroid has been sliding for a long time. To wait for his definitive betrayal means only to neglect the revolutionary education of the youth and to pave the way for the success of Godefroid.

10. Absolutely the same applies to Libaers.

11. Someone will say: “But won’t our criticism of the centrists and pacifists prevent us from making an alliance with them against the bureaucracy?” Not if they really do want to struggle against the bureaucracy. They know that they can always count on your support, and they will not hesitate to expel or dismiss revolutionaries. So should you renounce the right to criticize them? That would be a very advantageous capitulation for them, and a criminal one for the revolutionary wing.

*Besides, by attacking Hubin and keeping quiet about Vandervelde, Godefroid doubly misleads his readers: He is making a distinction in principle between Hubin and Vandervelde, and covering the latter by his decorative attacks against the former. In this way, he supports social patriotism while pretending to combat it.

**Besides, there is exaggeration and there is exaggeration. By this I mean that one can exaggerate in the right direction and in the wrong direction. Take for example Lenin’s book Against the Stream. In his polemic against me he used some obvious exaggerations, which were refuted by subsequent events. But these exaggerations were dictated to Lenin by his overriding concern to give the greatest précision to his thoughts. Everyone (myself included) could learn from these exaggerations and can still do so today, whereas an “exaggerated” confidence in the centrists and the pacifists educates nobody; in fact, it is very demoralizing, and it covers up the centrists’ slide toward complete betrayal.
12. The creation of a new party is a long and difficult task. Expulsion from the POB would be only the beginning. Even if in the beginning you are but a handful, a few hundred, you will be able to do remarkable work, on the condition—I will not tire of repeating it—that you combine programmatic firmness and intransigence toward the reformists and centrists with the greatest flexibility and patience toward the mass organizations.
OPEN LETTER
TO A BRITISH COMRADE

April 3, 1936

Dear Comrade:
The article written against me in the New Leader of March 20 of this year is sharp but incorrect. The sharpness is good. One must always welcome it when a revolutionary defends his ideas with sharpness and precision. Unfortunately, in spite of all the sharpness I fail to notice the necessary precision.
The polemical article sets itself the task of defending the “International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Parties” against my attacks. My criticism of the parties affiliated to the bureau is said to be totally wrong. These parties are said to be by no means disintegrating, but on the contrary to be showing themselves more and more unified in the international struggle.
Let us try to verify these assertions. As far as I am concerned, I know of only one single common international action of the London Bureau. That is the creation of the “World Committee for Peace.” I carefully criticized at the time the program of this committee, proposed by the SAP on the basis of their document, and branded it, with perfect justification, I think, as an expression of the shallowest petty-bourgeois pacifism. No one, not even the leaders of the SAP, has ever given a material and pertinent answer to this criticism. My point of view, consequently, remains valid. Parties which adopt a pacifist attitude on the question of war cannot be regarded by a Marxist as revolutionary proletarian parties. Maxton, for instance, is a pacifist and not a Marxist. His policy on war can perhaps contribute much to the saving of his soul, but scarcely to the liberation of the working class.
The above-mentioned committee was formed of three people: the German, Schwab, the Frenchman, Doriot (!), and the Spaniard, Gorkin. Since then Doriot, the host of the last conference of the so-called revolutionary socialist parties, has gone over with his clique to the reaction. Gorkin campaigned for election in Spain with a miserable democratic pacifist People’s Front program. And the third member, Schwab, has up to now
not yet explained that the Committee for Peace was an antirevolutionary undertaking and that the program laid down by him, Schwab, for the "fight for peace" mocks the whole teaching of Marx and Lenin in every word. (Incidentally there are still a few lamb-like people who think that they can still convince the minority of the SAP by endless, totally abstract discussion. We certainly believe that Schwab and some other leaders with their reactionary ideas are in the minority. But that this minority is to be won by good words—no, we are really not so naive as to believe that.)

This, then, is at present the growing capacity of the London Bureau for "united international action."

I have never put a low value on small organizations merely because they are small. Even here the *New Leader* twists the Marxist criterion. Mass organizations have value precisely because they are mass organizations. Even when they are under patriotic reformist leadership one cannot discount them. One must win the masses who are in their clutches: whether from outside or from inside depends on the circumstance.

Small organizations that regard themselves as selective, as pioneers, can have value only on the strength of their program and of the schooling and steeling of their cadres. A small organization that has no unified program and no really revolutionary will is less than nothing, is a negative quantity. In this sense I have spoken very contum曦uously of the small groups in Bulgaria, Rumania, and Poland. Their confusion is really too big for their small compass. The revolutionary movement is only injured by them. On the other hand, the smallest of our groups are valuable because they know what they want and because they base themselves on the great tradition of Bolshevism with which they are internationally closely bound. Sooner or later every one of these groups will show its value.

The Austrian "Red Front," which had united in itself the really militant worker elements, has apparently merged with the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Austria, i.e., with the old Austro-Marxist party.328 Fenner Brockway's bulletin affirms: "The united party, although it is affiliated to the Second International, supports the antiwar policy of the London Bureau."

This representation of Austro-Marxism is utterly wrong and confusing. Anyone who has read the theses of Messrs. Otto Bauer, Dan, and Zyromsky knows that Austro-Marxism represents even now nothing but a cowardly, wretched falsification of Marxism, i.e., has remained completely true to its tradition.

The "Red Front" could accomplish revolutionary work in the
Austro-Marxist party under two closely related conditions: firstly, it must itself have clear principles; secondly, it must see clearly the rottenness of Austro-Marxism. Both conditions are completely missing (incidentally, one might mention that Neue Front, the organ of the SAP, makes propaganda for Der Kampf, the Austro-Marxist organ). Actually the point is that the "Red Front" is being absorbed in the Austro-Marxist swamp.

The Norwegian group "Mot-Dag" adopts the point of view of the Locarno powers and is now preparing to be absorbed into the Labor Party. This group too has been for years nothing but confusion worse confounded.

It is really hardly worthwhile wasting any more words about the Italian section (the Maximalists). It is enough to say that this "revolutionary" organization, together with the Italian Socialist Party (Second International) and the Italian Communist Party (Third International), has signed a common appeal in which it calls on the League of Nations to widen sanctions, and tries to instill into the Italian people the notion that imperialist sanctions are a "means to peace." Perhaps Fenner Brockway does not know of this appeal? Let him become acquainted with it. And if he does know why does he treat these people as revolutionary friends and not as traitors to proletarian internationalism?

The policy article of the New Leader maintains that the Swedish Socialist Party feels itself more closely connected with the London Bureau than I have maintained. It is quite possible that this connection has recently become somewhat closer. But that the Swedish Socialist Party has an internationalist attitude—that is either a naive or a consciously false rumor. It is of course antiwar and it declares itself to be anti-League of Nations. But its "fight" against war leads it hand in hand with the peace organizations in the form of petitions. One could with the same success hold divine services for peace. But this method of action, which manifests a shrieking contradiction between goal and method, is enough to make us understand that the leaders of the Swedish Socialist Party, with all their phraseology, which by the way changes very easily, are pacifistic philistines and certainly not proletarian revolutionaries. The peace policy of Kilborn, like that of Schwab, is in the final analysis a small edition of the policy of Lord Cecil. Every important event in Sweden will confirm this explanation.

The ILP cannot and will not admit that the Swedish party is an anti-Marxist organization, because its own leadership shows that it itself is a pacifist centrist party through and through. We have heartily welcomed the series of truly revolutionary New Leader
articles about sanctions (see Unser Wort, nos. 67 and 68) without any of those mental reservations with which the critic has reproached us. But one swallow does not make a summer. And even these articles bestow no Marxist halo upon the ILP. Maxton and the others remain what they were—petty-bourgeois pacifists—and they decide the party’s course today, as yesterday.

May I be permitted to point out that I publicly warned the ILP more than two years ago against the sterile alliance with the Communist Party of Great Britain, as this alliance only multiplies the defects of both parties and diverts the attention of the ILP from the workers’ mass organizations. Were these warnings right or not? The Communist Party of Great Britain is ending in the swamp of opportunism. But the ILP is now politically weaker than ever, and its own ideas remain as indefinite and hazy as they were two years ago.

Lastly, a few more words about what the New Leader says concerning the organizations of the Fourth International: it calls them “the merest cliques.” In this characterization ignorance surpasses dishonesty. Clique is the word used by us Marxists for a group of individuals who have neither program nor high aim but who cluster around a leader in order to satisfy personal and certainly not praiseworthy desires. (“Sect,” on the other hand, is the designation of a group with definite ideas and methods.) “Clique” also implies lack of honor. Does the New Leader believe that our parties, organizations, and groups possess no principles, no program, and no revolutionary consciousness? It would be really interesting to hear this some time from Maxton or Fenner Brockway. On our side we maintain: we are the only international organization which has developed in a struggle of many years an absolutely definite program, which momentous events confirm and strengthen every day. The passion with which all our organizations enter into discussion in order to clarify all the questions of the international workers’ movement, the independence with which they develop their opinions, proves how seriously they understand Marxism and how many miles distant they are from an unprincipled clique spirit.

According to figures, too, they do not stand in any way inferior to the organizations around the London Bureau. A short time ago I proved, using the official Soviet press, that in the last few months of the year 1935 about 20,000 Bolshevik-Leninists had been expelled from the official Communist Party. I believe that in the Soviet Union alone we have more followers than the London Bureau has in the whole world. According to figures, the Dutch
party stands hardly inferior to the ILP. We have a courageous and militant section in France, the focal point of European politics. Although the French comrades of the Fourth International have no representative in parliament they play a much more important part today in French political life. The fascist and capitalist press of France is an irrefutable proof of this. And this is not to be wondered at: the Bolshevik-Leninists put forward in a revolutionary situation a really revolutionary program. It is true that our former Spanish section has declined into the worst opportunism. But why? Because it has fused with the Spanish section of the London Bureau in order to pursue “big politics” in the tow of Mr. Azana. Our friends in Belgium have fought their way to a significant influence. Even in South America we have important and growing sections. Our American section, which has now joined the Socialist Party, has gained within it considerable sympathy for its ideas. Incidentally, it seems to me that the banner of the Fourth International has some supporters even inside the ILP. And the number of these is systematically increasing.

The difference between the London Bureau and the association of the Fourth International is as follows. In the former case it is a question of different, hybrid organizations with quite a different past, different ideas, and a different future, which, being without a roof, have temporarily associated themselves with the International London Bureau. In contrast to this, the sections of the Fourth International are selective bodies which came into existence on the basis of quite definite ideas and methods worked out in the struggle with the Second and Third Internationals and the London Bureau. That is the reason why we increase systematically in spite of enormous difficulties, why the influence of the Fourth International grows stronger and stronger, why the two old Internationals have entered into a holy alliance against it, and why, when all is said and done, the sections of the London Bureau associate themselves everywhere with this holy alliance. The article in the New Leader is only one of the many proofs of these facts.

With the same certitude with which we some years ago warned the ILP against the alliance with the Communist Party of Great Britain, we affirm today that the ILP under its present leadership and on its present course is marching directly toward the abyss. We are at the same time no less certain that the best elements of the English workers’ movement will group themselves around the standard of the Fourth International, for it is now the only banner of the proletarian revolution.
A GOOD OMEN FOR JOINT WORK IN BRITAIN

April 9, 1936

To Comrade Jack and Comrades

Dear Comrades:

Your letter of March 31, 1936, really delighted me as a good omen for successful joint work in the country itself and also in the international field.

I will not here go into the past, for I must admit that in the history of the split the former member of the IS, Witte, who has long since left us, played a rather malignant role.

The most important points which I take from your letter are the following:

(a) You remain fully on the basis of the principles and policy of the Bolshevik-Leninists.

(b) You will work as a faction within the Labour Party on the basis of the Open Letter for the Fourth International, though not openly, owing to the police regime of the Labour bureaucracy.

(c) You are ready to set up a contact committee with the Marxist Group, by means of which, through active joint work, to prepare a real fusion as soon as possible.

(d) You wish to enter at once into regular connection with the IS.

I am now passing on our correspondence to the IS and I am sure that the IS will only welcome these proposals, just as I welcome them. I hope that from now on joint work will proceed actively and successfully.

To get down to business at once, I wish to ask you a question about the Socialist League. Do you regard it as fitting for our comrades to work in the Socialist League, i.e., under the banner of Messrs. Cripps and Company? I am, of course, far from sufficiently well informed about the situation inside the Labour Party and the Socialist League. So far as I know, however, Sir
Cripps is an utterly confused eccentric who flirts with the revolution one day and the next day crawls on his belly before the king. The Socialist League is *not a mass organization* but a faction, i.e., a selection in the likeness of Mr. Cripps himself. All experience indicates that one can work with success in a *mass* organization as an independent group, opposing each and every centrist faction. But if one enters a *centrist* faction then one loses one's own physiognomy and deprives oneself of the power to carry on real revolutionary work among the masses. I should be grateful to have clarification on this question.

Work among young people seems to me to be the *most important and promising field* for the Fourth International. In this field it is to be hoped that joint work with the Marxist Group may be begun at once!

With best wishes,
April 16, 1936

The Abolition of Soviets

Behind the Kremlin walls, work is going on to replace the Soviet constitution with a new one, which, according to the declarations of Stalin, Molotov, and others, will be the “most democratic in the world.” To be sure, doubts might be aroused by the procedure by which the constitution is being elaborated. Until recently, there has been no mention of this great reform, either in the press or at meetings. No one is acquainted with the draft of the constitution as yet. In the meantime, Stalin told the American interviewer Roy Howard, on March 1, 1936, that “We shall probably adopt our new constitution at the end of this year.” Thus Stalin is informed of the exact date of adoption of this constitution, about which the people still have practically no information. It is impossible not to conclude that the “most democratic constitution in the world” is being elaborated and introduced in a manner that is not entirely democratic.

Stalin confirmed to Howard, and through him also to the peoples of the USSR, that “according to the new constitution, suffrage will be universal, equal, direct, and secret.”

The inequalities in suffrage rights in favor of the workers against the peasants are to be abolished. Henceforth, obviously, not factories but citizens will vote, each one for himself. Once there are “no classes,” then all members of society are equal. Individuals can be disenfranchised only by the courts. All these principles are entirely derived from that very same program of bourgeois democracy which the soviets in their time came to replace. The party always held that the soviet system was a higher form of democracy. The soviet system was to wither away together with the dictatorship of the proletariat, of which it was the expression. The question of the new constitution therefore

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boils down to another and more fundamental question: Will the dictatorship continue to become “stronger” from now on, as is demanded by all the official speeches and articles, or will it begin to soften, weaken, and “wither away”? The meaning of the new constitution can be correctly appraised only in the light of this perspective. Let us immediately add here that the perspective itself does not at all depend upon the measure of Stalinist liberalism but upon the actual structure of the transitional Soviet society.

In explaining the reform, Pravda refers obscurely and not at all prudently to the party program written by Lenin in 1919, which does really state that “. . . disenfranchisement and any restrictions whatsoever upon liberty are necessary solely as temporary measures of struggle against the attempts of the exploiters to maintain or to restore their privileges. In proportion as the objective possibility for the exploitation of man by man disappears, all necessity for these temporary measures will likewise disappear, and the party will strive to narrow them down, and to completely abolish them” (our emphasis). These lines can no doubt serve to justify the refusal to “disenfranchise” in a society in which the possibility for exploitation has disappeared. But along with this the program demands the simultaneous abolition of “any restrictions whatsoever upon liberty.” For the entry into socialist society is characterized not by the peasants being made equal with the workers, and not by returning the franchise to the 3-5 percent of the citizens who are of bourgeois origin, but by the establishment of true liberty for 100 percent of the population. With the abolition of classes, according to Lenin, and according to Marx, not only the dictatorship but also the state itself withers away. Stalin, however, has said nothing as yet about removing “restrictions upon liberty” either to Howard or to the peoples of the USSR.

Molotov hastened to Stalin’s assistance, not, sad to say, very propitiously. In replying to a question of the editor-in-chief of le Temps, Molotov said, “Now not infrequently (?) there is already no need for those administrative measures which were employed formerly,” but “the Soviet power must of course be strong and consistent in the struggle against terrorists and wreckers of public property. . . .” Ergo: “a Soviet power”—without soviets; a proletarian dictatorship—without the proletariat; and, in addition to that, a dictatorship not against the bourgeoisie, but against . . . terrorists and thieves. At all events, the party program never foresaw such a type of state.
Molotov's promise to do "not infrequently" without those extreme measures which might prove unnecessary is not worth much even by itself; but it loses all its value alongside of the reference to the enemies of law and order, who are precisely the ones that make it impossible to renounce emergency measures.

Whence, however, arise these enemies of law and order, these terrorists and thieves, and, moreover in such threatening numbers as would justify the preservation of a dictatorship in a classless society? Here we must come to the assistance of Molotov. At the dawn of Soviet power the terrorist acts were perpetuated by the SR's and the Whites in the atmosphere of the still unfinished civil war. When the former ruling classes lost all their hopes, terrorism disappeared as well. Kulak terror, traces of which are observable even now, was always local in character, and supplemented the partisan war against the Soviet regime. This is not what Molotov has in mind. The new terror does not lean upon either the old ruling classes or the kulak. The terrorists of recent years are recruited exclusively from among the Soviet youth, from the ranks of the Young Communists and the party. While utterly impotent to solve those tasks which it sets itself, individual terror is, however, of the greatest symptomatic importance because it characterizes the sharpness of the antagonism between the bureaucracy and the broad masses of the people, especially the younger generation. Terrorism is the tragic supplement of Bonapartism. Each individual bureaucrat is afraid of the terror; but the bureaucracy as a whole successfully exploits it for the justification of its political monopoly. Stalin and Molotov did not discover any gunpowder in this field either.

Worst of all, however, is the fact that it is absolutely impossible to gather, either from the interviews or from the commentaries, the social nature of the state for which the new constitution is being prepared. The soviet system used to be officially considered as the expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But if the classes have been destroyed, then by reason of this very fact the social basis of the dictatorship has likewise been destroyed. Who, then, is its carrier now? Obviously the population as a whole. But when the entire people, emancipated from class contradictions, becomes the carrier of the dictatorship, this implies nothing else than the dissolution of the dictatorship into the socialist society, and consequently the liquidation of the state. The logic of Marxism is invulnerable. The liquidation of the state in its turn begins with the liquidation of the bureaucracy. Does the new constitution, perhaps, imply at least the liquidation of the GPU?
Should anyone venture to express this idea in the USSR, the GPU would immediately find convincing counter-arguments. The classes have been destroyed, the soviets are being abolished, the class theory of society is reduced to dust, but the bureaucracy remains. QED.

The Whip Against the Bureaucracy

We shall return later to the question of the extent to which universal, equal, and direct suffrage corresponds to the social equality that all citizens have allegedly attained. But if we accept this premise on faith, we become all the more perplexed by the following question: Why, if that is the case, must the elections be secret henceforth? Just whom does the populace in the socialist country fear? Against whose attempts in particular is it necessary to provide a defense? The child’s fear of darkness has a purely biological foundation; but when grown-up people dare not express their opinions openly, their fear is political in character. And for the Marxist, politics is always a function of the class struggle. In capitalist society the secret ballot is intended to provide a defense for the exploited against the terror of the exploiters. That the bourgeoisie did finally agree to such a reform—of course, under the pressure of the masses—was only because the bourgeoisie itself was interested in protecting its state at least partially against the demoralization of its own making. But in the USSR there obviously cannot be any pressure of the exploiters upon the toilers. Against whom, then, is it necessary to protect the Soviet citizens by means of the secret ballot?

Under the old Soviet constitution, the vote by show of hands was introduced as a weapon in the hands of the revolutionary class against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois enemies. The same purpose was served by the restrictions in the franchise itself. Now, at the end of the second decade after the revolution, no longer the class enemies but the toilers themselves are so frightened that they cannot vote except under the shield of secrecy. This concerns precisely the masses of the people, the overwhelming majority, for it is impossible to allow that the secret ballot is being especially introduced for the convenience of the counterrevolutionary minority!

But who is terrorizing the people? The answer is clear—the bureaucracy. It is preparing to protect the toilers against itself by means of the secret ballot. Stalin made this admission openly. To
the question, “Why the secret ballot?” his reply was verbatim as follows: “Because we want to give the Soviet people complete freedom to vote for those they want to elect.” Thus we learn from Stalin that the “Soviet people” cannot vote today for those they want to elect. “We” are only getting ready to provide them with such an opportunity. Who are these “we” who can give or refuse the freedom to vote? The stratum in whose name Stalin speaks and acts: the bureaucracy. Stalin need only have added that his important admission applies as much to the party as to the state, and that, in particular, he himself occupies the post of general secretary by means of a system which does not permit party members to elect those they desire. The phrase “We want to give the Soviet people” is in itself infinitely more important than all the constitutions Stalin has yet to write, for this brief phrase is a ready-made constitution, and, moreover, a very real one, not a myth.

Like the European bourgeoisie in its time, so the Soviet bureaucracy today is compelled to resort to the secret ballot in order at least partially to purge its state apparatus, which it exploits “as the rightful owner,” from the corruption of its own making. Stalin was compelled to give an inkling of this motive for the reform. Said he to Howard, “There are not a few institutions in our country which work badly... Secret suffrage in the USSR will be a whip in the hands of the population against the organs of government, which work badly.” A second noteworthy admission! After the bureaucracy has created with its own hands the socialist society, it feels the need... of a whip—not only because the organs of government “work badly,” but above all because they are corroded through and through with the vices of uncontrolled cliques.

As far back as 1928, Rakovsky wrote the following with regard to a number of horrible cases of bureaucratic demoralization that broke out into the open: “The most characteristic and most dangerous feature in the tidal wave of scandals is the passivity of the masses, among the Communists even more than among the nonparty people, toward the manifestations of unheard-of arbitrariness, of which the workers themselves were witnesses. Out of fear of those who wield power, or simply out of political indifference, they passed by without a protest, or confined themselves merely to grumbling.” More than eight years have elapsed since that time, and the situation has become infinitely worse. Stalin’s autocratic rule has erected nepotism, arbitrariness, profligacy, pillage, and bribery into a system of administra-
tion. The decay of the apparatus, cropping out at every step, has begun to threaten the very existence of the state as the source of power, income, and privileges of the ruling stratum. A reform became necessary. Taking fright at their own handiwork, the chiefs of the Kremlin turn to the population with a plea to help it cleanse and straighten out the apparatus of administration.

Democracy Without Politics

Turning to the people for the salutary whip, the bureaucracy, however, lays down one ultimatistic condition: *that there be no politics.* This holy function must remain as hitherto the monopoly of the "Leader." To the ticklish question of the American interlocutor relative to other parties, Stalin replied: "Since there are no classes, since the dividing lines between classes are being obliterated ("there are no classes"—"the dividing lines between classes [which do not exist!] are being obliterated"—L.T.) there remains only a slight, but not a fundamental, difference between various strata in socialist society, and there can be no fertile soil for the creation of contending parties. Where there are not several classes there cannot be several parties, for a party is a part of a class." Every word a mistake, sometimes even two!

According to Stalin, it seems that the dividing lines between classes are rigidly described, and that in every given period only one party corresponds to each class. The Marxist doctrine of the class nature of parties is transformed into a ludicrous bureaucratic caricature: political dynamics is entirely excluded from the historical process—in the interests of administrative order. In point of fact not a single instance can be found throughout the entire extent of political history of only one party corresponding to one class! Classes are not homogeneous; they are torn by internal antagonisms, and they arrive even at the solution of common tasks only through an internal struggle of tendencies, groupings, and parties. Within certain limits it may be allowed that "the party is a part of a class." But inasmuch as a class has many "parts"—some facing forward, others backward—one and the same class can put forth several parties. For the same reason, a single party can lean upon the parts of several classes.

Remarkably enough, this scandalous mistake of Stalin is absolutely disinterested in character, for, you see, in relation to the USSR he proceeds from the assertion that no classes at all exist there. Of what class is the CPSU a part—after the abolition of all classes? Carelessly straying into the field of theory, Stalin
proves more than he intended. From his reasoning it follows not that there cannot be different parties in the USSR, but that there cannot be even a single party. Where there are no classes there can be no room for politics in general. Stalin, however, makes a gracious exception from this law in the case of the party of which he is general secretary.

The history of the working class reveals best of all the bankruptcy of the Stalinist theory of parties. Despite the fact that the working class is in its social structure indubitably the least heterogeneous of all classes in capitalist society, the existence of such a “stratum” as the labor aristocracy and a labor bureaucracy bound up with it leads to the creation of reformist parties, which inevitably turn into one of the instruments of bourgeois rule. It matters nothing from the standpoint of Stalinist sociology whether the difference between the labor aristocracy and the proletarian mass is “fundamental” or only “slight”; but it was precisely by reason of this difference that the necessity to create the Third International arose in its time. On the other hand, it is indubitable that the structure of Soviet society is infinitely more heterogeneous and complex than that of the proletariat in capitalist countries. For this very reason, it can provide a sufficiently fertile soil for several parties.

Stalin is interested, as a matter of fact, not in the sociology of Marx but in the monopoly of the bureaucracy. These are two entirely different things. Every labor bureaucracy, even one that does not wield state power, inclines to the view that there is no “fertile soil” in the working class for the opposition. The leaders of the British Labour Party drive the revolutionists out of the trade unions on the grounds that there is no room for the struggle between parties within the framework of a “united” working class. Messrs. Vandervelde, Leon Blum, Jouhaux, etc., act in a similar manner. Their conduct is dictated not by the metaphysics of unity but by the egoistic interests of the privileged cliques. The Soviet bureaucracy is infinitely more powerful, wealthy, and self-reliant than the labor bureaucracy in bourgeois countries. Highly skilled workers in the Soviet Union enjoy privileges unknown to the highest categories of labor in Europe and America. This twofold stratum—the bureaucracy which leans upon the labor aristocracy—is the ruler of the country. The present ruling party of the USSR is nothing else than the political machine of a privileged stratum. The Stalinist bureaucracy has something to lose and nothing more to conquer. It is not inclined to share what it holds. For the future as well, it intends to reserve the “fertile soil” for itself.
To be sure, the Bolshevik Party also occupied a monopoly position in the state during the first period of the Soviet era. However, to identify these two phenomena is to mistake appearances for reality. During the years of civil war, under extremely difficult historical conditions, the party of the Bolsheviks found itself compelled temporarily to prohibit other parties, not because the latter lacked a “fertile soil” — in that case it would not have been necessary even to prohibit them — but on the contrary, precisely because fertile soil existed: this is what made them dangerous. The party explained openly to the masses what it was doing, for it was clear to everybody that at stake was the defense of the isolated revolution against mortal dangers. Today, the more the bureaucracy embellishes the social reality, the more shamelessly it exploits it for its own benefit. If it be true that the kingdom of socialism has already come, and the fertile soil for political parties has disappeared, there would be no need to prohibit them. It would only remain, in accordance with the program, to abolish “any restrictions whatsoever upon liberty.” But the bureaucracy will not allow so much as a peep about such a constitution. The internal falseness of the whole construction is all too apparent!

Seeking to dispel normal doubts on the part of his interlocutor, Stalin offered a new thought: “Candidates will be put forward not only by the Communist Party but by all sorts of public, nonparty organizations. And we have hundreds of these. . . . Each of these strata (of Soviet society) may have its special interests and express them through our numerous existing organizations.” Evidently, it is for this reason that the new Soviet constitution will be the “most democratic constitution in the world.”

This piece of sophistry is no better than the rest. The most important “strata” in Soviet society are: the summits of the bureaucracy and its middle and nethermost layers, the labor aristocracy, the kolkhoz [collective farm] aristocracy, the common run of workers, the middle layers of the kolkhozes, the peasant proprietors, the labor strata of workers and peasants, and beyond them the lumpenproletariat, the homeless, the prostitutes, and so on. As to the Soviet public organizations — trade union, cooperative, cultural, sport, etc. — they do not at all represent the interests of different “strata” because they all have one and the same hierarchic structure. Even in those cases when the organizations are based upon privileged circles, as for instance the trade unions and cooperatives, the active role in them is played exclusively by the representatives of the privileged summits, while the “party,” i.e., the political organization of the ruling stratum, has the last
The participation of nonpolitical organizations in the electoral struggle will consequently lead to nothing else than rivalry between the different cliques of the bureaucracy within the limits set by the Kremlin. The ruling summit calculates to learn in this manner some secrets hidden from it and to refurbish its regime, without at the same time permitting a political struggle which must inevitably be directed against itself.

The Historical Meaning of the New Constitution

In the person of its most authoritative leader, the bureaucracy again demonstrates how little it understands those historical tendencies which determine its movement. When Stalin remarks that the difference between various strata in Soviet society is "slight but not fundamental," he obviously has in mind the fact that exclusive of the individual peasant proprietors, who are sufficiently numerous even today to populate Czechoslovakia, all other "strata" depend upon the statified or collectivized means of production. This is beyond dispute. But a "fundamental" difference still remains between the collective, i.e., group property in agriculture and the nationalized property in industry: it can still make itself felt in the future. We shall not, however, enter into a discussion of this important question. Of considerably more immediate importance is the difference between the "strata" which is determined by their relation not to the means of production but to the articles of consumption. The sphere of distribution is, of course, only a "superstructure" in relation to the sphere of production. However, it is precisely the sphere of distribution that is of decisive importance in the everyday life of the people. From the standpoint of the ownership of the means of production, the difference between a marshal and a street cleaner, between the head of a trust and an unskilled laborer, between the son of a peoples' commissar and a homeless waif, is not "fundamental." But some occupy lordly apartments, enjoy several dachas (summer homes) in various parts of the country, have the best automobiles at their disposal, and have long since forgotten how to shine their own boots; while others not infrequently live in wooden barracks, without any partitions for privacy, lead a half-starved existence, and do not clean their own boots only because they are barefoot. To a high dignitary this difference seems to be only "slight," i.e., one that does not merit attention. To the unskilled laborer it appears, not without reason, to be "fundamental."
In addition to the terrorists, according to Molotov, the object of the dicatatorship in the USSR is the thief. But the very abundance of people of such a profession is a sure sign of the want that reigns in society. Where the material level of the overwhelming majority is so low that the ownership of bread and boots must be protected by firing squads, speeches about the alleged achievement of socialism sound like an infamous mockery of human beings!

In a truly homogeneous society, in which the normal wants of the citizens are satisfied without rancor and brawls, not only Bonapartist absolutism but bureaucracy in general would be inconceivable. The bureaucracy is not a technical but a social category. Every single bureaucracy originates in and maintains itself upon the heterogeneous nature of society, upon the antagonism of interests and the internal struggle. It regulates the social antagonisms in the interests of the privileged classes or layers, and exacts an enormous tribute for this from the toilers. This very same function, despite the great revolution in property relations, is being fulfilled, with cynicism and not without success, by the Soviet bureaucracy.

The latter raised itself on the NEP, exploiting the antagonism between the kulak and the NEPman, on the one hand, and the workers and peasants, on the other. When the kulak, grown strong, raised his hand against the bureaucracy itself, the latter, in the interests of self-defense, was compelled to lean directly upon the rank and file at the bottom. The bureaucracy was the weakest of all during the years of the struggle against the kulak (1929-32). Precisely for this reason, it zealously set about the formation of a labor and kolkhoz aristocracy: instituting a shocking difference in wage scales, bonuses, badges, and other similar measures which are called forth one-third by economic necessity and two-thirds by the political interests of the bureaucracy. Upon this new and ever deepening social antagonism, the ruling caste has exalted itself to its present Bonapartist heights.

In a country in which the lava of revolution has not cooled, the privileged are often very much afraid of their own privileges, especially against the background of general want. The topmost Soviet strata stand in dread of the masses, with a fear that is purely bourgeois. Stalin supplies the growing privileges of the ruling stratum with a "theoretical" justification by means of the Comintern, and he defends the Soviet aristocracy against dissatisfaction by means of concentration camps. Stalin is the indisputable leader of the bureaucracy and of the labor aris-
toctracy. He keeps in constant touch only with these “strata.” A sincere “worship” of the Leader emanates only from these circles. Such is the essence of the present political system of the USSR.

But to maintain this mechanism, Stalin is compelled from time to time to side with the “people” as against the bureaucracy, naturally, with the latter’s silent consent. He is even compelled to seek a whip from below against the abuses from above. As we have already said, this is one of the motives for the constitutional reform. There is another and no less important motive.

The new constitution abolishes the soviets, dissolving the workers into the general mass of the population. The soviets, it is true, have long since lost their political meaning. But they might have revived with the growth of new social antagonisms and with the awakening of the new generation. Above all, of course, are to be feared the city soviets, with the growing participation of fresh and exacting Young Communists. In the cities the contrast between luxury and dire want is all too glaring. The first care of the Soviet aristocracy is to get rid of the workers and Red Army soviets.

Despite the collectivization, the material and cultural contradiction between the city and the village has hardly been touched. The peasantry is still very backward and atomized. Social antagonisms also exist within the kolkhozes and between the kolkhozes. The bureaucracy finds it much easier to cope with dissatisfaction in the village. It is able to use the kolkhozniks not without success against the city workers. To smother the protest of the workers against the growing social inequality by the weight of the more backward masses of the village—this is the chief aim of the new constitution, about which neither Stalin nor Molotov naturally has communicated anything to the world. Bonapartism, incidentally, always leans upon the village as against the city. In this, too, Stalin remains true to tradition.

Learned philistines like the Webbs failed to see any great difference between Bolshevism and czarism prior to 1923, but, in return, they have completely recognized the “democracy” of Stalin’s regime. Small wonder: these people have all their lives been the ideologues of a labor bureaucracy. In point of fact, Soviet Bonapartism bears the same relation to Soviet democracy that bourgeois Bonapartism or even fascism bears to bourgeois democracy. Both arise equally from the frightful defeats of the world proletariat. Both will crash with its first victory.

Bonapartism, as history testifies, is able to abide very well with universal and even secret suffrage. The democratic ritual of
Bonapartism is the plebiscite. From time to time the question is put to the citizens: For or against the Leader? The Leader, on his part, takes precautions so that the voter is able to feel the barrel of a gun at his temple. Since the days of Napoleon III, who now looks like a provincial dilettante, this technique has attained an unprecedented development, as witness, say, the latest spectacle by Goebbels. The new constitution is thus intended to liquidate juridically the outworn Soviet regime, replacing it by Bonapartism on a plebiscitary basis.

Tasks of the Vanguard

Drawing profounder conclusions from Stalin, Molotov told the editor of le Temps that the question of parties in the USSR is “not a vital question as we are closely approaching the complete liquidation of . . . classes.” What precision in ideas and terminology! In the year 1931, they liquidated the “last capitalist class, that of the kulaks,” and in the year 1936 they are “closely approaching” the liquidation of classes. For better or for worse, the question of parties is not a “vital” one to Molotov. Entirely different, however, are the views held upon this matter by those workers who know that the bureaucracy, while suppressing the exploiting classes with one hand, prepares for their rebirth with the other. For these advanced workers the question of their own party, independent of the bureaucracy, is the most vital of all questions. Stalin and Molotov understand this very well indeed: not for nothing have they expelled during the last few months from the so-called Communist Party of the Soviet Union several tens of thousands of Bolshevik-Leninists, i.e., in reality, an entire revolutionary party.

When the editor of le Temps politely put the question about factions and their possible transformation into independent parties, Molotov replied, with the quick wit for which he is so noted: “In the party . . . attempts were made to create special factions . . . but it is now several years since the situation in this respect has fundamentally changed and the Communist Party is truly united.” Best of all, he might have added, this is proved by the interminable purges and concentration camps. However, the illegal existence of an opposition party is not nonexistence, but only a difficult form of existence. Arrests may prove very effective against the parties of a class that is departing from the historical stage: the revolutionary dictatorship of the years 1917-23 has proved this fully. But the arrests aimed against the revolutionary
vanguard will not save the outlived bureaucracy, which according to its own admission requires a "whip."

It is a lie and a triple lie to allege that socialism has been realized in the USSR. The flowering of bureaucratism is barbaric proof that socialism is still far removed. So long as the productivity of labor in the USSR is several times below that of the advanced capitalist countries; so long as the people have not emerged from want; so long as a cruel struggle continues to be waged for articles of consumption; so long as the individualistic bureaucracy can strum with impunity upon social antagonisms—just so long will the danger of bourgeois restoration retain its full force. At the present time, with the growth of inequality on the basis of economic successes, the danger has even been increased. In this and in this alone lies the justification for the need of state power. But the bureaucratically degenerated state has itself become the chief danger to the socialist future. Inequality can be reduced to its economically inevitable limits at the given stage, and a road can be cut to socialist equality, only by the active political control of the toilers, beginning with their vanguard. The regeneration of the party of the Bolsheviks in counterposition to the party of the Bonapartists is the key to all other difficulties and tasks.

On the road toward a goal, one must be able to utilize the real possibilities which arise at every stage. Any illusions about the Stalinist constitution would of course be out of place. But it is equally impermissible to wave it aside as an insignificant trifle. The bureaucracy assumes the risk of a reform not at its own whim but out of necessity. History tells of many cases of a bureaucratic dictatorship resorting for its salvation to "liberal" reforms, and still further weakening itself. By laying bare Bonapartism, the new constitution creates a semilegal cover for the struggle against it. The rivalry between the bureaucratic cliques can become the opening for a much wider political struggle. The whip against "government institutions that work badly" can be turned into a whip against Bonapartism. Everything depends upon the degree of activity of the advanced elements of the working class.

The Bolshevik-Leninists must henceforth follow attentively all the twists and turns of the constitutional reform, painstakingly taking into consideration the experience of the first coming elections. We must learn how to utilize the rivalry between the various "public organizations" in the interests of socialism. We must learn how to engage in battles on the subject of the
plebiscites as well. The bureaucracy is afraid of the workers; we must unfold our work among them more audaciously and on a more extensive scale. Bonapartism is afraid of the youth; we must rally it to the banner of Marx and Lenin. From the adventures of individual terrorism, the method of those who are desperate, we must lead the vanguard of the young generation onto the broad road of the world revolution. It is necessary to train new Bolshevik cadres which will come to replace the decaying bureaucratic regime.
IN THE COLUMNS OF PRAVDA

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Ever drawing newer and newer balance sheets of the so-called "checkup of party documents," Pravda is convinced that the behind-the-scenes purge takes the palm over the open purge. It turns out that "many of the disguised enemies were able to fool the purging committee, and in some places they even passed through the purge with applause." In other words, this is to say that many of those suspected of being oppositionists had the sympathies of their organizations with them, and the committees, appointed from above, had no pretext for expulsion. But in the behind-the-scenes checkup "the study of the party personnel was much deeper and more many-sided than during the purges" (Pravda, March 22). This is hardly to be wondered at; the searchlight here was the apparatus of the GPU.

We learn from Pravda, in passing, that in one of the Chelyabinsk factories "to the 103 Communists there are 318 who were expelled from the party at one time or another." In other words, three times as many have been expelled as have remained. The Chelyabinsk factory is hardly a rare exception. At all events, it illustrated the manner in which this sorry ruling "party" is living!

Pravda carries an exposure of the secretary of the Uspensk District Committee of the Azov-Black Sea region. "His motions during the session of the district committee—and he introduces them on every question—do not meet with any objections, because he does not tolerate any objections." How awful! What a shocking breach of democracy! Saltykov once wrote a history of the city of Glupov (Fools City), in which he portrayed the customs of the entire czarist autocracy. The piece about the Uspensk District Committee rings like an involuntary satire on the regime. The name of the Uspensk secretary is Saut. But if one were to put
down the USSR in place of the district and replace Saut with Stalin, one could leave unaltered everything else remaining in the text.

Molotov has succeeded in completely straightening out the front. Since the liquidation of the “third period,” Molotov, as is well known, has been in semi-disgrace. His name, it is true, was to be found among the inborn leaders but not on every occasion. His name was commonly put after Kaganovich and Voroshilov, and he was often deprived of his initials. In Soviet ritual all these are signs of paramount importance. Whenever a delegation arrived to see Molotov he was allowed to receive them only by having Rudzutak at his left shoulder and Chubar at his right. On his part, Molotov, though he did give necessary praise to the Leader, would do so only two or three times throughout an entire speech, which in the atmosphere of the Kremlin sounded almost like a call for the overthrow of Stalin. But, with God’s help, since the end of last year, a turn for the better has been noticed. Molotov was straightening out the front. In recent weeks he has delivered several panegyrics to Stalin which made Mikoyan himself turn green with envy. In reward Molotov has received his initials. His name figures in second place, and he bears the title of “closest companion-in-arms.”

All’s well that ends well. But in all decency it must be admitted that Molotov didn’t find it easy. After all, he has known Stalin for too many years to place him on the same plane with Lenin, as he did in his debased speech to the delegates from Soviet Georgia. But, after all, it is not for us to be concerned about Molotov’s dignity as a man. We have other concerns.

During the school term in Kremenchug, on the initiative of a propagandist named Potelyako, a discussion was instituted on the “possibility of building Communism in one country,” during which Potelyako “advanced Trotskyist formulations.” Despite the protests of several Communists, (obviously, the Pravda correspondent himself) “Potelyako was left at his post and continues to give his lectures.”

But after the correspondent’s notice in Pravda, we have reason to believe, Potelyako was not only removed as lecturer but also given all the necessary inspiration by the well-known theorist Yagoda.

Novoseletsky, who received the “best newspaperman” award at
the Ukrainian Communist Institute of Journalism, on arriving at his new post printed in the newspaper he edited a "Trotkyist counterrevolutionary article," for which he was expelled from the party (and, of course, arrested). This episode is a clear testimony to the upsurge of Oppositionist audacity. We note it with satisfaction.

In explaining the need for vigilance with respect to "Trotskyists," Pravda unb burdens itself of a brilliant image which is worthy of reprinting: "the class enemy in his deathbed death-throes (evidently there are death-throes which are not deathbed) refuses to surrender. He resorts to all sorts of snares and dirty devices, especially when there is a lull in vigilance." Thus the class enemy is terrible not when he defended his privileged positions with arms in hand at the height of his strength. No! He is particularly terrible now, "in his deathbed death-throes." His Most Serene Excellency Prince Potemkin once remarked on a similar occasion to the litterateur Fonvizin: "You might as well die, Denis, you will never write anything better."

On December 30, 1935, Pravda indignantly reported that revolutionists were being subjected to tortures in Yugoslav jails. Pravda forgets to mention that Yugoslav revolutionists are subjected to torture in the jails of Stalin, also.

From a conversation with a Soviet dignitary (not from Pravda [Truth], but forsooth the truth).
"Why do you flatter him so shamelessly?"
"What can one do? He loves it so."
Dear Comrade:

It is with great astonishment that I read the report of the conference of the Independent Labour Party in the New Leader of April 17, 1936. I really never entertained any illusions about the pacifist parliamentarians who run the ILP. But their political position and their whole conduct at the conference exceed even those bounds that can usually be expected of them. I am sure that you and your friends have drawn approximately the same conclusions as we have here. Nevertheless, I cannot refrain from making several observations.

1. Maxton and the others opine that the Italo-Ethiopian war is “a conflict between two rival dictators.” To these politicians it appears that this fact relieves the proletariat of the duty of making a choice between two dictators. They thus define the character of the war by the political form of the state, in the course of which they themselves regard this political form in a quite superficial and purely descriptive manner, without taking into consideration the social foundations of both “dictatorships.” A dictator can also play a very progressive role in history; for example, Oliver Cromwell, Robespierre, etc. On the other hand, right in the midst of the English democracy Lloyd George exercised a highly reactionary dictatorship during the war. Should a dictator place himself at the head of the next uprising of the Indian people in order to smash the British yoke—would Maxton then refuse this dictator his support? Yes or no? If not, why does he refuse his support to the Ethiopian “dictator” who is attempting to cast off the Italian yoke?

If Mussolini triumphs, it means the reinforcement of fascism,
the strengthening of imperialism, and the discouragement of the colonial peoples in Africa and elsewhere. The victory of the Negus, however, would mean a mighty blow not only at Italian imperialism but at imperialism as a whole, and would lend a powerful impulsion to the rebellious forces of the oppressed peoples. One must really be completely blind not to see this.

2. McGovern puts the "poor little Ethiopia" of 1935 on the same level with the "poor little Belgium" of 1914; in both cases it means support of war. Well, "poor little Belgium" has ten million slaves in Africa, whereas the Ethiopian people are fighting in order not to be the slaves of Italy. Belgium was and remains a link of the European imperialist chain. Ethiopia is only a victim of imperialist appetites. Putting the two cases on the same plane is the sheerest nonsense.

On the other hand, to take up the defense of Ethiopia against Italy in no way means to encourage British imperialism to make war. At one time this is just what was very well demonstrated in several articles in the New Leader. McGovern's conclusion that it should have been the ILP's task "to stand aside from quarrels between dictators," is an exemplary model of the spiritual and moral impotence of pacifism.

3. The most shameful thing of all, however, only comes after the voting. After the conference had rejected the scandalous pacifist quackery by a vote of 70 to 57, the tender pacifist Maxton put the revolver of an ultimatum at the breast of the conference and forced a new decision by a vote of 93 to 39. So we see that there are dictators not only in Rome and in Addis Ababa, but also in London. And of the three dictators, I consider most harmful the one who grabs his own party by the throat in the name of his parliamentary prestige and his pacifist confusion. A party that tolerates such conduct is not a revolutionary party; for if it surrenders (or "postpones") its principled position on a highly important and topical question because of threats of resignation made by Maxton, then at the decisive moment it will never withstand the immeasurably mightier pressure of the bourgeoisie.

4. By an overwhelming majority, the conference forbade the existence of groups inside the party. Good! But in whose name did Maxton put an ultimatum to the conference? In the name of the parliamentary group which regards the party machine as its private property and which actually represents the only faction that should have been sharply beaten into respect for the democratic decisions of the party. A party which dissolves the oppositional groups but lets the ruling clique do as it jolly well
pleases is not a revolutionary party. It will not be able to lead the proletariat to victory.

5. Fenner Brockway’s position on this question is a highly instructive example of the political and moral insufficiency of centrism. Fenner Brockway was lucky enough to adopt a correct point of view on an important question, a view that coincides with ours. The difference lies in this, however, that we Marxists really mean the thing seriously. To Fenner Brockway, on the other hand, it is a matter of something “incidental.” He believes it is better for the British workers to have Maxton as chairman with a false point of view than to have a correct point of view without Maxton. That is the fate of centrism—to consider the incidental thing serious and the serious thing incidental. That’s why centrism should never be taken seriously.

6. On the question of the International, the old confusion was once more approved, despite the obvious bankruptcy of the previous perspective. In any case, nothing more is said about an “invitation” from the Third International. But the centrist doesn’t take anything seriously. Even when he now admits that there is no longer a proletarian International, he nevertheless hesitates to build one up. Why? Because he has no principles. Because he can’t have any. For if he but once makes the sober attempt to adopt a principled position on only one important question, he promptly receives an ultimatum from the right and starts to back down. How can he think of a rounded-out revolutionary program under such circumstances? He then expresses his spiritual and moral helplessness in the form of profound aphorisms, that the new International must come “from the development of socialist movements,” that is, from the historical process, which really ought to produce something some day. This dubious ally has various ways, however: it has even got to the point of reducing the Lenin International to the level of the Second. Proletarian revolutionists should therefore strike out on their own path, that is, work out the program of the new International and, basing themselves on the favorable tendencies of the historical process, help this program gain prevalence.

7. Fenner Brockway, after his lamentable capitulation to Maxton, found his courage again in struggle against the undersigned. He, Brockway, cannot allow a new International to be constructed from “the heights of Oslo.” I leave aside the fact that I do not live in Oslo and that, besides, Oslo is not situated on heights. The principles which I defend in common with many thousand comrades bear absolutely no local or geographical
character. They are Marxian and international. They are formulated, expounded, and defended in theses, pamphlets, and books. If Fenner Brockway finds these principles to be false, let him put his own up against them. We are always ready to be taught better. But unfortunately Fenner Brockway cannot venture into this field, for he has just turned over to Maxton that oh so paltry parcel of principles. That is why there is nothing left for him to do save to make merry about the "heights of Oslo," wherein he promptly commits a threefold mistake: with respect to my address, to the topography of the Norwegian capital, and, last but not least, to the fundamental principles of international action.

My conclusions? The cause of the ILP seems to me to be hopeless. The thirty-nine delegates who, despite the failure of the Fenner Brockway faction, did not surrender to Maxton's ultimatum must seek ways of preparing a truly revolutionary party for the British proletariat. It can stand only under the banner of the Fourth International.

Leon Trotsky
Dear Comrade:

Unfortunately I could not produce the article you asked for. First, because of lack of time, and second, because I did not wish to confine myself to platitudes and I was not really familiar enough with your activities, plans, and opportunities to comment on them.

Although I do not know enough about conditions in Holland (unfortunately I don’t read Dutch), it seems to me that the major arena for your activities must be the Social Democratic youth and the reformist trade unions, just as was the case a year ago. Of course, I do not mean by this that your Leninist Youth Guard has to give up its independence. But to avoid this in the future, it should have *long since* built a substantial fraction within the Social Democratic youth. I fear that you have already lost too much time in doing this.

You speak of a separate sports organization as the point of departure for the workers’ militia and aptly note: “Ours should be better than the Social Democratic sports organizations.” This correct observation, however, lays bare the whole utopian character of the plan. You are superior to the Social Democracy *in revolutionary ideas, in program*, not in financial resources, technique, or athletic capabilities. Under such circumstances, how can you build a better sports organization? The same applies to the trade unions. There are many historical examples of how a small revolutionary group became an important, even a decisive political organization. But I know of no instances in which small groups successfully built competing unions, not to mention sports organizations. Youth should learn from history in order to avoid repeating the old mistakes. We need the greatest ideological steadfastness and the sharpest and clearest revolutionary thinking not in order to isolate ourselves from the existing mass organizations in a sectarian manner, but rather in order to work effectively in their midst without losing our perspective.
All over the world, the Social Democratic youth is coming into conflict with the old bosses both in the parties and in the trade unions. Where the representatives of the Fourth International take a sectarian-pure, negative approach, the reformist youth trying to move left fall under the influence of Stalinism. On the other hand, where our people are not content with admiring their own purity, but find their place in the mass organizations, there the leftward-moving youth come into contact with anti-Stalinism, i.e., Marxism.

In Spain, where our section is carrying out a miserable political line, the youth, who were just becoming interested in the Fourth International, were handed over to the Stalinists. In England, where our people were slow to get involved, the Stalinists have become the most important force among the Labour Party youth and we are in second place. In Belgium, our comrades have won over an important section of the youth, brought the majority into opposition against Stalinism, and in so doing opened up new fields of activity for themselves. In Brussels, however, where Vereecken and his group remained on the sidelines, the left wing of the Labor Party as well as the youth have fallen under the influence of the Stalinists. In America, where our comrades have carried out a very correct political line, they have already won over a significant section of the Social Democratic youth. Anyone who refuses to consider these facts is bound to make nothing but mistakes.

What you, dear comrade, say about the American party is based on incorrect information. Our people are already in the Socialist organizations. It is only the leadership which has not yet joined, for tactical reasons. And it is possible that even this step has already been taken. Our American comrades have taken a very bold step. They are so determined and so sure of themselves that they look to the future with the greatest confidence and even the bitterest former opponents [of entry] have taken up their work in the Socialist Party with enthusiasm. They all hope that our ideas will win over not a minority but a majority of the party. Naturally, from this vantage point I cannot form an independent opinion, but I know our American friends well enough and have complete confidence in them, particularly now that they have carried out the entry with such decisiveness and unanimity. Our Dutch comrades would do better to criticize the American experience less and attempt to learn from it more, so that they can adapt it to conditions in their own country.

What you write on the subject of “forming blocs with the youth
organizations” seems to me—I must admit—not very convincing. Large organizations seldom enter into blocs with small groupings, and quite rightly so. On the other hand, playing around with blocs is of no practical value for the smaller groups, as our Belgian experience has adequately demonstrated. If the leaders of an organization of a few hundred young people meet once or twice a month with the leaders of the mass organizations, this may perhaps flatter their vanity, but it opens up no practical opportunities. One must win the ranks away from the leaders and not engage in diplomacy with the leaders.

Best greetings,

Yours,

L. Trotsky

P.S.—You have interpreted Comrade Braun’s letter to mean that it is necessary to build an independent party in Belgium, whatever the cost, just for the sake of its independence. However, this is not at all the case. Our comrades in Charleroi gave up formal independence for a time in order to broaden their field of activity. They scored unquestionable successes. But since they acted like revolutionaries and not like opportunists, a political conflict of great importance arose. It is now a matter of seeing this through to the end. For although we are not sectarians who in no case (ever and anywhere) wish to enter the reformist organizations, neither are we SAPists, who as soon as they are in the mass organizations refuse to leave them under any conditions, that is, are ready to sacrifice what is left of their political principles. One must appreciate the deeper meaning of the words to maneuver, for the revolutionary movement is really only a movement when it is not at a standstill!

L.T.
Wide publicity has been given recently by the American press, and the world press in general, to the preparations made for a new constitution in the Soviet Union. The Soviet leaders have stated that this constitution is going to be "the most democratic of all constitutions in the world," and that from now on elections are going to be carried out by universal, equal, direct, and secret ballot. A few press interviewers, it is true, have asked whether in view of the existence of only one party, the elections could truly be regarded as free elections.

It is not my intention to deal with this particular argument within the framework of this statement; but it is necessary to ask another question: In what manner is the only party in existence preparing the constitutional reform? The answer is: by unheard-of and uninterrupted acts of repression, not against the enemies of the Soviet Union, but mainly against those elements who, while remaining absolutely loyal to the [Soviet] system, find themselves in opposition to the leadership, which it is impossible to remove or even control. It is perfectly safe to state that nine-tenths of the acts of political repression are serving not the defense of the Soviet state, but the defense of the autocratic government and privileges of the bureaucratic section within the state. Thus, the only political party in existence becomes the exclusive tool of the governing group.

Until recently, the "isolator", i.e., the prison, has been regarded—next to the death sentence—as the severest form of punishment. The inhabitants of the political isolators, since 1928, are in the main former members of the governing party who, without having in any way broken discipline, have taken a critical stand in relation to the governing group or Stalin personally. However, the latest developments show that the isolators, owing to their limited capacity and the high cost of
their maintenance, are being rapidly replaced by concentration camps, where prisoners are forced to live under inhuman physical and moral conditions. The concentration camps are now spread over the whole periphery of the country and are imitations of the camps in Hitler Germany. Prisoners regard the transfer from an isolator to a concentration camp as condemnation to slow death. In consequence, during recent months in the Soviet Union numerous hunger strikes have occurred among political prisoners who thereby back their demands to stay in prison. The hunger strike, generally recognized as a last act of desperation, has now become the most common method used by political prisoners.

Taking as a basis for calculation the news published in the official Soviet press, during the last nine months far more than 300,000, possibly up to half a million, members have been expelled from the CP, and this form of “party purge” is being constantly developed further. In the majority of cases, the expelled are arrested, one section being sent to the concentration camps, the other into exile. Stalin’s organ, Pravda, of March 15, publishes instructions to local authorities forbidding them to give employment to political oppositionists. In a country where the state is the only employer, this decree means starvation for the victims. Hundreds of miserable remote hamlets in Siberia and Central Asia are inhabited by tens of thousands of former members of the Bolshevik Party who are leading the life of Hindu pariahs. A single word of protest, the mere demand for work, will send them to concentration camps, i.e., into the worst forms of hard labor. Moreover, those who succeed in surviving their periods of imprisonment or exile receive a so-called “wolf’s passport,” an identity paper which actually outlaws its bearer. No one will house him; he is condemned to the life of a homeless vagabond. The object of all these measures is to break the spirit of these people, to force them into line with official views, or at least to make them pretend by an open declaration that they endorse the policy of the ruling power. By this method the bureaucracy hopes to be able, after the introduction of the “universal, secret ballot,” to smother every spark of critical thought in the country and thereby make sure that those types of plebiscites can be put into operation which are sufficiently well known to us in the history of present-day Germany.

If one wants to illustrate this general picture by individual examples, the difficulty is to choose among a wealth of instances. The following cases are reported recently from absolutely trustworthy sources.
Last January, E.B. Solntsev died, at age 36, in Siberia. He was one of the most brilliant of the young generation in the Soviet Union, a highly educated economist. He had worked for about two years with the Amtorg [Soviet Trade Organization] in America, but when he returned in 1928 he was arrested as a "Trotskyist." After having served his sentence of three years imprisonment in the Verkhne-Uralsk Isolator, he received a further sentence of two years without any fresh charges. After five years in the isolator, he was sent into exile in Siberia, his wife and family being exiled to another place. This is the common procedure for political prisoners, in spite of the official Soviet line of "Defend the family." Although it was impossible for Solntsev to work politically in the Siberian wilderness, he was again arrested in 1935 and sentenced, without any justification, to a further five years imprisonment. Solntsev declared a so-called hunger strike to death, and thereby his intention to commit suicide in this manner. After starving for eighteen days, he was told by the authorities he would be transferred not to prison, but to another place of exile. But on the way, at one of the Siberian relay stations, due to his weakened condition, he succumbed to a chance infection and died.

Two other eminent representatives of the young generation, Dingelstedt and Yakovin, are now going through the same ordeal. They have already spent seven years in prison and it is unlikely that they will ever be freed by the present authorities.

Lado Dumbadze, one of the oldest Bolsheviks; at the beginning of the century the organizer of the underground printing shop in the Caucasus; later, participant in the October Revolution and highly esteemed by Lenin; a man of extremely modest and self-sacrificing character. From 1928 onwards, he exchanged prison with exile and exile with prison. The ordeals and privations caused paralysis of his arms. The old man cannot dress alone, nor write letters. Nevertheless, the vindictive bureaucracy has sent him from the prison hospital into exile where sure death awaits him.

Mrs. A.L. Bronstein, over 60 years old, with a record of forty years of party work, has been torn from her grandchildren, whom she was to look after, and taken from Leningrad to a Siberian village where she can find neither work nor food.

If space permitted, I could also describe the fate of the Eltsin family, of the old father and his two sons, who have been sent first to prison and then into exile, where recently one of the sons has died; the tragic fate of Pankratov, a sailor, whose wife has
been sent to Siberia only because she refused to divorce her husband, who lives in an isolator; the case of Mikhail Bodrov, a heroic Moscow worker, who has now been transferred from an isolator to a concentration camp; and dozens and hundreds of others.

Let me only mention also the persecution against Lakhovitsky, a tailor, whose relatives live in the USA. This worker, after being deprived of every opportunity for work, was dragged from place to place and has been driven to extreme misery. His wife, a worker, has lost her factory job because of her refusal to divorce her husband.

The exiles are deprived of the opportunity to correspond with each other and with their relatives. Families who remain in contact with their exiled relatives are in turn persecuted. Remittances of money or parcels of commodities coming from abroad are not handed over to the Oppositionists. The GPU simply confiscates them without advising the sender or the consignee. The exiled person is usually driven to a more remote spot, so as to obliterate all trace of him to those abroad.

Even mutual aid of the exiles among each other is regarded as a crime. A recent example: Mrs. M.M. Joffe, the widow of the late famous Soviet diplomat, ambassador to Rome, Tokyo, etc., has now been sent, after many years of exile, farther away to the north of Siberia, because she endeavored to assist her suffering friends. She has been accused of having initiated the oppositional Red Cross. Her child has died in consequence of the severe physical hardships of exile. Recalling that in 1928 A. Joffe himself was driven by merciless persecution to commit suicide, one has a complete picture of the family's tragic fate.346

A few weeks ago, Victor Serge arrived abroad with his family.347 He is half-Russian, half-Belgian, a talented French writer who since 1928, as an Oppositionist in the Soviet Union, was exposed to such incredible persecution and slander that it completely unbalanced his wife's mind. The Moscow government was compelled to deport him only because of the publicity given by the European press to the terrible fate of this family and because Victor Serge is very well known in the Belgian and French literary world.

I have to add that in the Solovyetsky Isolator (possibly also in others) a large number of foreign Oppositionist Communists are kept in prison: Hungarians, Bulgarians, Rumanians, Poles, and in general those nationalities whose governments are hardly expected to raise a protest. Foreign Oppositionists are simply
condemned by the GPU as “spies.” By this method the Moscow leadership of the Comintern is able to rid itself of all those members who have become disgruntled and critical and thus fallen into disfavor.

I need not emphasize that I am fully aware of the gravity of my statements, and that I take unqualified political and moral responsibility for them. I suggest that an unbiased international commission, composed of trustworthy persons who have the confidence of the public, and in particular of the workers’ organizations, could find the means of investigating on the spot all these facts, in order to clear up this matter once and for all. In all countries there are societies of “Friends of the Soviet Union.” If they are in fact composed of true friends of the Soviet people, and not of the ruling bureaucratic clique, it is their duty to raise aloud with us the demand for such a commission, and thus put a stop to these disgraceful persecutions and acts of vindictiveness.
In Comrade Ciliga’s article “The Struggle for a Way Out” (Biułleten Oppozitsii, no. 49), there is an account of the tortures to which the GPU subjected a certain sailor in order to force from him a confession that he took part in “a nonexistent conspiracy against Stalin.” They left the sailor alone only when he “went half-mad.” This fact deserves the most serious attention.

The whole series of public political trials in the USSR has shown how readily some of the accused inculpate themselves in crimes which they clearly had not committed. Those accused who seem, in court, to be playing a part learned by heart get off with light, sometimes deliberately fake punishments. It is precisely in exchange for this indulgence by the law that they made their “confessions.” But why are fictitious conspiracies necessary to the authorities? Sometimes in order to implicate a third party, known not to be involved in the matter; sometimes so as to cover up their own crimes, such as bloody repressions unjustified by anything; or finally, to create a climate favorable to the Bonapartist dictatorship.

We have already shown, on the basis of official materials, that a clear and direct part in the assassination of Kirov was played by Medved, Yagoda, and Stalin. Not one of them, probably, wanted the death of Kirov. But they all played with his life, trying to create for the preparation of the terrorist act an amalgam—with the “participation” of Zinoviev and Trotsky.

Zinoviev’s testimony at the trial clearly had an evasive character, which was the result of previous agreement between accusers and accused: it was evidently only on this condition that Zinoviev was promised his life.

Forcing fantastic testimony from the accused against themselves so as to hit others on the rebound has long been the system of the GPU, that is to say, the system of Stalin.
But why did an attempt on Stalin in 1930 have to be set up? And why did a sailor get drawn into the affair? We have no evidence on this score but a few lines in Comrade Ciliga’s article. We will, nevertheless, take the risk of putting forward a hypothesis.

In 1929, the author of these lines was exiled to Turkey. Soon afterwards, he was visited in Constantinople by Blumkin, who paid for the visit with his life.\(^{349}\) The shooting of Blumkin by Stalin produced at the time a shattering impression on many Communists, both in the USSR and in other countries. Abroad, the Bolshevik-Leninist center was set up at that time and the Biulleten and other publications started coming out. Under these conditions Stalin had a pressing need for an “attempt,” especially a kind of attempt whose threads would lead across the frontier and in which Blumkin could be involved, or, more exactly, his ghost could be. For this purpose a sailor would do very well, especially if he went on trips between a Soviet port and Constantinople. The sailor might have been arrested by chance—for incautious talk, for reading illegal literature, or simply for smuggling: we know nothing about this sailor. They threatened him, possibly with years in prison. But the inventive Yagoda promised him his liberty and all sorts of other bonuses if he would testify that Blumkin, on Trotsky’s orders, involved him in a conspiracy against Stalin. If the affair had succeeded, the exile of Trotsky and the shooting of Blumkin would have been dealt with at a single stroke. But then came the trouble: the sailor “went half-mad.”

Our hypothesis is only a hypothesis. But it completely fits the moral nature of Stalin and the methods of his policy. “This cook,” said Lenin in warning against Stalin, “will prepare only spicy dishes.” But even Lenin could not, of course, have foreseen in February 1922, when these words were spoken, what a devil’s kitchen Stalin would build on the foundations of the Bolshevik party.

It is now 1936. Stalin’s methods remain the same. The political dangers facing him have grown. The techniques of Stalin and Yagoda have been improved by the experience of several mistakes. We shall not fall into any illusions for that reason: the spiciest dishes are still to come!
ON COMRADE CILIGA’S ARTICLES

June 3, 1936

In publishing Comrade Ciliga’s first article, we noted that the author stood at that time outside the ranks of any party. In his article in the Biulleten, no. 49, Comrade Ciliga briefly stated his view of the USSR to be that of the “ultraleft” wing. At the same time, Comrade Ciliga considers it possible to collaborate with the Mensheviks. The history of the revolutionary movement is full of examples of ultraleftists who approached opportunism . . . from the other end of the spectrum. It goes without saying that our Biulleten cannot have any political collaborators in common with Menshevik publications. We are obliged therefore to cease publication of Comrade Ciliga’s articles.

We repeat once again: the political waverings of Comrade Ciliga do not of course diminish in any way the significance of the exceptionally important information that, thanks to him, has become the property of the world working class.
THE NEW REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE AND THE TASKS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

July 1936

1. The June strikes open a new period in the internal development of France and Belgium. They will without doubt call forth not only a further sharpening of the class struggle in these countries, but also, in due course, mass movements over a considerable part of Europe, including Great Britain, and possibly even outside Europe. Thus the Spanish revolution ceases to be isolated.

2. The June strikes have shown how much indignation and readiness for struggle have accumulated, under the deceptively passive exterior, in the proletarian masses of the towns and countryside during the years of crisis and reaction. They have disclosed the sympathy of the broad masses of the urban petty bourgeoisie and of the peasantry with the struggles of the workers. Finally, they have shown the extreme instability of the whole regime, the lack of self-confidence of the ruling classes, their vacillations between Leon Blum and de la Rocque. These three conditions—the readiness for struggle of the whole of the proletariat, the acute dissatisfaction of the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie, the confusion in the camp of finance capital—provide the basic prerequisites for the proletarian revolution.

3. The militant offensive of the masses has assumed, this time also, the character of a general strike. Partial, trade unionist demands, important in themselves, were, for the workers, the necessary means by which, after the long period of immobility, the broadest possible masses could be aroused and united against the bourgeoisie and its state. A general strike, opening a period of revolutionary struggles, cannot but unite trade unionist and partial demands with the general, though as yet unclearly formulated, tasks of the whole class. In this union lies the strength of the general strike, the guarantee of unity between the vanguard and the broad masses of the class.
4. Our French section during recent years has placed the general strike in the center of its propaganda. In distinction from all other parties and groups speaking in the name of the working class, the French Bolshevik-Leninists appraised the situation in time as a prerevolutionary one, correctly understood the symptomatic significance of the strike outbursts at Brest and Toulon, and despite the ceaseless attacks of the opportunists and social patriots (SFIO, CP, CGT) and the opposition of the centrists (Marceau Pivert, etc.) prepared by their agitation for a general strike. On fertile soil a handful of seed gives a big yield. Thus, under the conditions of social crisis and of the indignation of the masses, a small organization, poor in material resources but armed with correct slogans, has exercised an undoubted influence upon the course of revolutionary events. The furious persecution of the Bolshevik-Leninists by the whole capitalist, Social Democratic, Stalinist, and trade unionist press, together with the repression by the police and judges of Leon Blum, serves as an external confirmation of this truth.

5. Not one of the official workers’ organizations, either in France or in Belgium, desired the struggle. The strikes arose against the wishes of the trade unions and of both parties. Only when confronted with an accomplished fact did the official leaders “recognize” the strike, in order all the more readily to strangle it. But so far there has only been the question of a comparatively “peaceful” movement, under slogans of partial demands. Can it be doubted even for a moment that during the period of open struggle for power the apparatuses of the Second and Third Internationals will be, as was the case with the parties of the Russian Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in 1917, fully at the disposal of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat? The necessity for a new International, as a world party of the proletarian revolution, is once more irrefutably proved by the events in France and Belgium.

6. Nevertheless the direct and immediate result of the great June strike wave is the exceptionally rapid growth of the old organizations. This fact is historically fully understandable. Thus the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries grew feverishly after the February revolution of 1917 which they, as social patriots, had not wanted during the war, and the German Social Democracy expanded rapidly after the November revolution of 1918, which took place against its will. Before exposing their bankruptcy before the whole class, the opportunist parties become for a short time the refuge of the very broadest masses.
The rapid growth of the Socialist, and especially of the "Communist" Party in France is a sure symptom of a revolutionary crisis in the country and prepares at the same time the death crises of the parties of the Second and Third Internationals.

No less significant is the unprecedentedly rapid growth of the trade unions in France. While apparently increasing the weight and importance of the united reformist-Stalinist trade union general staff (Jouhaux, Racamond, etc.), the influx of millions of new workers and employees in actual fact undermines the very basis of the conservative trade union apparatus.

7. Great mass movements are the best tests of theories and programs. The June strikes show how false are the ultraleft, sectarian theories that the trade unions have "outlived" their time and must be replaced by other organizations or that it is necessary to build new, "genuine" trade unions alongside the old conservative ones. In actual fact, during a revolutionary epoch the struggle for economic demands and for social legislation does not cease but, on the contrary, expands to an unheard-of extent. The hundreds of thousands and millions of workers who have swarmed into the trade unions destroy routine, shake loose the conservative apparatus, allow the revolutionary party to build its fractions in the unions, to gain influence, and successfully to struggle for the leading role in the trade union movement. A revolutionary party which is incapable of carrying on systematic and successful work in the trade union organizations will be yet more incapable of creating its own trade unions. All such attempts are doomed to failure.

8. Contrary to the assertions of the leaders of the Second and Third Internationals, present-day capitalism is already incapable of either giving work to all workers or raising the standard of living of the workers. Finance capital passes the costs of social reform onto the shoulders of the workers themselves and of the petty bourgeoisie by means of rising prices, open or concealed inflation, taxes, etc. The essence of the present "statism," of state interference—in both "democratic" and fascist countries—consists in saving rotting capitalism at the price of lowering the living and cultural standards of the people. No other method is possible on the basis of private property. The programs of the People's Fronts of France and Spain and that of the Belgian coalition are a deliberate mirage and deception, the preparation for a new disillusioning of the working masses.

9. The complete hopelessness of the position of the petty bourgeoisie under the conditions of rotting capitalism means,
despite the shameful theories of "social harmony" of Leon Blum, Vandervelde, Dimitrov, Cachin, and Company, that total reforms in favor of the proletariat, unstable and deceitful in themselves, accelerate the ruin of the small proprietors of the towns and countryside and push them into the arms of fascism. A serious, profound, and lasting union of the proletariat with the petty-bourgeois masses, as opposed to parliamentary combinations with the Radical exploiters of the petty bourgeoisie, is possible only on the basis of a revolutionary program, i.e., the seizure of power by the proletariat and a revolution in property relations in the interests of all the toilers. The "People's Front," as a coalition with the bourgeoisie, is a brake on the revolution and a safety valve for imperialism.

10. The first step to an alliance with the petty bourgeoisie is the breaking up of the bloc with the bourgeois Radicals in France and Spain, the bloc with the Catholics and Liberals in Belgium, etc. It is necessary to explain this truth, on the basis of experience, to every Socialist and Communist worker. Such is the central task of the moment. The struggle against reformism and Stalinism is at the present stage a struggle above all against a bloc with the bourgeoisie. For the honest unity of the workers, against dishonest unity with the exploiters! Bourgeoisie out of the People's Front! Down with the capitalist ministers!

11. At present it is only possible to guess at the tempo of the coming revolutionary developments. Thanks to exceptional conditions (the defeat in the war, the peasant problem, the Bolshevik Party), the Russian revolution completed its ascent—from the overthrow of absolutism to the conquest of power by the proletariat—in eight months. But even in this short period it knew the armed April demonstration, the July defeat in Petrograd, and the attempt of Kornilov to carry out a counterrevolutionary coup in August. The Spanish revolution has already lasted with ebbs and flows for five years. During this period the workers and poor peasants of Spain have displayed such magnificent political instincts, have developed so much energy, devotion, and heroism, that state power would have been in their hands long ago if the leadership had even to a small extent corresponded to the political situation and to the militant qualities of the proletariat. The true saviors of Spanish capitalism were and remain not Zamora, not Azana, not Gil Robles, but the Socialist, Communist, and anarchist leaders of their organizations.

12. The same now applies to France and Belgium. If the party
of Leon Blum was really Socialist it might, basing itself upon the
general strike, have overthrown the bourgeoisie in June, almost
without civil war, with a minimum of disturbance and of
sacrifices. But the party of Blum is a bourgeois party, the younger
brother of rotten Radicalism. If, in its turn, the "Communist"
Party had anything in common with Communism, it would from
the very first day of the strike have corrected its criminal
mistake, broken off its fatal bloc with the Radicals, called the
workers to the creation of factory committees and soviets, and
thus established in the country a regime of dual power as the
shortest and surest bridge to the dictatorship of the proletariat.
But in actual fact the apparatus of the Communist Party is
merely one of the tools of French imperialism. The key to the fate
of Spain, France, and Belgium is the problem of revolutionary
leadership.

13. The same conclusion follows from the lessons of interna-
tional policy, from the so-called "struggle against war" in
particular. The social patriots and the centrists, especially the
French ones, justify their kowtowing to the League of Nations by
the passivity of the masses, especially by the unreadiness of the
masses to apply a boycott to Italy during her robber attack upon
Ethiopia. The same argument is used by pacifists of the Maxton
type in order to hide their prostration. In the light of the June
events it becomes especially clear that the masses did not react to
the international provocations of the imperialists simply because
they were deceived, lulled to sleep, held back, paralyzed, and
demoralized by the leaderships of their own organizations. If the
Soviet trade unions had given a timely example by boycotting
Italy, the movement would, like a prairie fire, have inevitably
embraced all of Europe and the whole world, and at once become
menacing to the imperialists of all countries. But the Soviet
bureaucracy forbade and stifled all revolutionary initiative,
replacing it by the prostration of the Comintern before Herriot,
Leon Blum, and the League of Nations. The problem of the
international policy of the proletariat, like that of the internal
policy, is a problem of revolutionary leadership.

14. Every real mass movement freshens the atmosphere like a
storm, and at the same time destroys every kind of political
fiction and ambiguity. In the light of the June events the slogan
of "uniting" the two Internationals, which are already sufficient-
ly united in betraying the interests of the proletariat, and the
homeopathic recipes of the London Bureau (the Two-and-a-Half
International), which vacillates between all possible courses of
policy and always picks out the worst, appear pitiable and contemptible.

The June events have exposed at the same time the complete bankruptcy of anarchism and of so-called "revolutionary syndicalism." Neither one nor the other, so far as they actually exist upon this earth, foresaw the events or helped to prepare for them. The propaganda for a general strike, for factory committees, for workers' control, has been exclusively carried on by a political organization, i.e., a party. It could not be otherwise. The mass organizations of the working class remain powerless, undecided, and lost, if they are not inspired and led forward by a firmly welded-together vanguard. The necessity for a revolutionary party is shown with new force.

15. Thus, all the tasks of the revolutionary struggle unfailingly lead to one task—the creation of a new, really revolutionary, leadership, capable of dealing with the tasks and possibilities of our epoch. Direct participation in the movement of the masses, bold class slogans taken to their conclusion, an independent banner, irreconcilability toward compromisers, mercilessness toward traitors—here lies the road of the Fourth International. It is both amusing and absurd to discuss whether it is yet time to "found" it. An International is not "founded" like a cooperative, but created in struggle. The June days provide an answer to the pedants who discuss its "timeliness." There is no room for further discussion.

16. The bourgeoisie seeks its revenge. A new social conflict, which is being deliberately prepared in the general staffs of big capital, will undoubtedly assume from the very first the character of a large-scale provocation or series of provocations directed at the workers. At the same time the "dissolved" fascist organizations are making feverish preparations. The collision of the two camps in France, Belgium, and Spain is absolutely inevitable. The more the leaders of the People's Front "reconcile" the class antagonisms and dampen the revolutionary struggle, the more explosive and convulsive a character it will assume in the immediate future, the more sacrifices it will cause, the more defenseless the proletariat will find itself against fascism.

17. The sections of the Fourth International clearly and distinctly see this danger. They openly warn the proletariat of it. They teach the vanguard to organize itself and to prepare. At the same time they contemptuously reject the policy of washing their hands of responsibility; they identify their fate with the fate of the struggling masses, however severe may be the blows which
fall on them in the coming months and years. They participate in every act of struggle in order to bring to it the utmost possible clarity and organization. They tirelessly call for the creation of factory committees and soviets. They unite with the best workers brought to the top by the movement and hand-in-hand with them build the new revolutionary leadership.

By their example and criticism, they speed the formation of a revolutionary wing in the old parties, drawing it closer in the course of the struggle and impelling it along the road of the Fourth International.

Participation in the living struggle, always in the front line of fire, work in the trade unions, and the building up of the party—all go on at the same time, mutually supplementing each other. All the fighting slogans—workers’ control, workers’ militia, the arming of the workers, a government of workers and peasants, the socialization of the means of production—are indissolubly bound up with the creation of workers’, peasants’, and soldiers’ soviets.

18. The fact that at the moment of mass struggle the French Bolshevik-Leninists found themselves at once at the center of political attention and hatred of the class enemies is no accident; on the contrary, it unmistakably indicates the future. Bolshevism, which appears to be sectarianism to philistines of all descriptions, in actual fact unites ideological irreconcilability with the greatest sensitivity with regard to movements of the masses. Ideological irreconcilability itself is nothing else than the purging of the consciousness of the advanced workers of routine, inertia, irresoluteness, i.e., the education of the vanguard in the spirit of the boldest decisions, preparing it to participate in the relentless mass struggle.

19. Not a single revolutionary grouping in world history has yet experienced such terrible pressure as the grouping of the Fourth International. The Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels spoke of the forces of the “pope and the czar... French Radicals and German police” united against communism. From this list only the czar is now missing. But the Stalinist bureaucracy is a far more threatening and treacherous obstacle on the road of the world revolution than the autocratic czar once was. The Comintern covers a policy of social patriotism and Menshevism with the authority of the October Revolution and the banner of Lenin. The world agency of the GPU is already, hand-in-hand with the police of “friendly” imperialist countries, carrying on systematic work against the Fourth International. In
the event of the outbreak of war, the united forces of imperialism and Stalinism will inflict upon the revolutionary internationalists immeasurably more furious persecutions than those which the generals of the Hohenzollerns together with the Social Democratic butchers inflicted in their time upon Luxemburg, Liebknecht, and their supporters.

20. The sections of the Fourth International are not frightened either by the immensity of the tasks, the furious hatred of their enemies, or even their own smallness in numbers. Even now the struggling masses, without yet being conscious of it, stand much nearer to us than to their official leaders. Under the blows of coming events in the workers’ movement there will take place an ever more rapid and far-reaching regroupment. In France the Socialist Party will be squeezed out of the ranks of the proletariat. In the Communist Party a series of splits may surely be expected. In the unions there will be created a powerful left movement susceptible to the slogans of Bolshevism. In another form identical processes will take place in other countries also drawn into the revolutionary crisis. The organizations of the revolutionary vanguard will cease to be isolated. The slogans of Bolshevism will become the slogans of the masses. The coming epoch will be the epoch of the Fourth International.

POSTSCRIPT

“The collision of the two camps in France, Belgium, and Spain is absolutely inevitable. The more the leaders of the People’s Front ‘reconcile’ the class antagonisms and dampen the revolutionary struggle, the more explosive and convulsive a character it will assume in the immediate future, the more sacrifices it will cause, and the more defenseless the proletariat will find itself against fascism” (see above, paragraph 16). The events have brought a confirmation of this prediction even before the present theses could be published.

The July days [in Spain] deepen and supplement the lessons of the June days in France with exceptional force. For the second time in five years the coalition of the labor parties with the Radical bourgeoisie has brought the revolution to the edge of the abyss. Incapable of solving a single one of the tasks posed by the revolution—since all these tasks boil down to one, namely, the crushing of the bourgeoisie—the People’s Front renders the existence of the bourgeois regime impossible and thereby provokes the fascist coup d’état. By lulling the workers and
peasants with parliamentary illusions, by paralyzing their will to struggle, the People's Front creates favorable conditions for the victory of fascism. The policy of coalition with the bourgeoisie must be paid for by the proletariat with years of new torments and sacrifice, if not by decades of fascist terror.

The People's Front government reveals its total inadequacy precisely at the most critical moment, one ministerial crisis follows the other because the bourgeois Radicals fear the armed workers more than they do the fascists. The civil war takes on a lingering character. Whatever the immediate outcome of the civil war in Spain may be, it strikes a death blow at the People's Front in France and other countries. It must henceforth become clear to every French worker that the bloc with the Radicals signifies the legal preparation of a military coup d'etat by the French general staff under cover of the minister of war Daladier.

The administrative dissolution of the fascist leagues while the bourgeois state apparatus is maintained, is, as the Spanish example shows, a lie and a deception. Only the armed workers can resist fascism. The conquest of power by the proletariat is possible only on the road of armed insurrection against the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie. The smashing of this apparatus and its replacement by worker, soldier, and peasant councils is the necessary condition for the fulfillment of the socialist program. Without the carrying out of these tasks, the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie have no way out of misery and need, and no way of being saved from the new war.
TO THE PUBLIC OPINION OF THE WORKERS OF THE WHOLE WORLD

July 4, 1936

The question of the fate of the Soviet Union is near to the heart of every thinking worker. A hundred and seventy million human beings are carrying out the greatest experiment in social emancipation in history. The destruction of the new regime would signify a terrible blow to the development of the whole of mankind. But precisely for this reason there arises the necessity for an honest, i.e., critical attitude toward all those complex processes and contradictory phenomena which are to be observed in the life of the Soviet Union.

The most alarming symptom of the internal life of the USSR is without doubt the continued and severe repressions, which are carried out in most cases not against the supporters of capitalist restoration but against revolutionaries who have come into some sort of conflict with the ruling stratum. In recent months the world press has carried numerous communications concerning exceptionally severe repressions against the oppositional members of the ruling party itself and also against foreign Communists, who cannot count upon the protection of the embassy of their own country. Prisons have already proved inadequate. Concentration camps have been developed to a greater degree than was ever the case during the civil war. Ever increasing collective and individual hunger strikes and suicides have been the answer of the prisoners to the unendurable persecutions. The numerous tragic facts have been confirmed by persons meriting full confidence and ready to appear before any tribunal with confirmation of their evidence. A critical mind refuses to reconcile these facts with the official affirmation that a socialist society has been “finally and irrevocably” set up in the USSR.

On June 5 Pravda, the leading paper of the USSR, announced the acceptance by the Central Committee of the ruling party of
the draft of a new constitution, “the most democratic in the
world.” The leading article, in commenting on this most
important decision, announced at the same time new and yet
more terrible repressions against the oppositionists. The question
is so important that we consider it necessary to repeat word for
word the statement made by Pravda, as the direct mouthpiece of
the ruling circles. Having pointed out “the tremendous victories
of socialism” which find their expression in the new constitution,
the paper at the same time demands “increased vigilance”
against “the class forces hostile to socialism.”

It would, however, be a mistake to think that it is here a
question of advocates of the restoration of the monarchy, the
nobility, or the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, by means of a series
of decrees and subsequently in the corresponding paragraph of
the new constitution, the inequality of citizens by reason of their
social origin has been finally removed. According to the official
explanations, socialist society has become so strong that it need
no longer fear those of noble or bourgeois origin. So far as “as the
class hostilities to socialism,” against which sterner measures are
demanded, are concerned, Pravda says the following: “The
struggle continues. Too weak for a direct attack, the remains of
the counterrevolutionary groups, the White Guardists of all
colors, especially the Trotskyists and Zinovievists, have not given
up their base, spying, sabotage, and terrorist work. With a firm
hand we will continue in the future to strike down and destroy the
enemies of the people, the Trotskyist vermin and furies, however
skillfully they may disguise themselves.”

These words speak for themselves. While publishing “the most
democratic constitution in the world” the ruling group of the
Soviet Union promises at the same time to “destroy” the
supporters of a definite section of socialist thought, accusing
them of such crimes as “spying,” “sabotage” (?), and “terrorist
work.” The accusation obviously has a hallucinatory character. It
is not one jot better than the accusations against the medieval
heretics of causing droughts and epidemics or the accusations
against the Jews of using Christian blood. But this does not
detract from the terrible reality of the threat of destruction.

The so-called “Trotskyist” movement has an international
character and publishes books and papers in no less than fifteen
languages. One can regard this movement in various ways: one
can sympathize with it, or, on the contrary, condemn it; but every
thinking worker, every serious-minded person, is able to convince
himself from irrefutable documents that it is a question of a
revolutionary grouping setting itself the task of emancipating the toilers. Thus, during the June events in Paris the bourgeois press unanimously attacked the “Trotskyists” for stirring up strikes and the press of the Comintern accused them of trying to evoke a revolution artificially. Can it be believed for a moment that one and the same movement, guided by the same people and ideas, strives in all capitalist countries to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie, but attempts in the USSR to restore capitalism with the assistance of “spying,” “sabotage,” and “terrorist” work?

Every disinterested friend of the USSR, i.e., every friend of the toiling masses, must say to himself: The official explanations contain a plain, an obvious falsehood. While openly preparing the physical destruction of its ideological opponents, the ruling group cannot find a single serious word to say in explanation or justification of such repressions. Can such a position be borne passively and silently?

We declare before the public opinion of the whole world that it is not true that the “Trotskyists” and “Zinovievists” are striving or can strive toward the restoration of capitalism; it is not true that they have or can have any connection with the spying intrigues or terrorist attempts of the counterrevolution; it is not true that their activity is directed or can be directed against socialism. But on the other hand, it is an incontrovertible truth, as is evident from the whole literature on the question, that the “Trotskyists” are the opponents of the policy of the ruling Soviet group, the opponents of the ever-increasing social inequality in the USSR, the opponents of the restoration of the officer-caste, and, above all, the opponents of the unlimited power and unlimited privileges of the bureaucracy. It is not the Soviet proletariat which is punishing its “class enemies,” but the Soviet bureaucracy which, in the struggle for the maintenance of its power and privileges, is destroying a group which is trying to express the protest and discontent of the toiling masses.

We take upon ourselves full responsibility for our words, which can be verified at any moment without difficulty; it is only necessary for the Soviet government to give an impartial international commission the opportunity to freely acquaint itself on the spot with the real or alleged crimes of the Trotskyists, Zinovievists, and other oppositional groups. We desire nothing better.

Every working class organization, every progressive social group, every honest newspaper, every friend of the toilers, is interested in the full and conclusive clarification of this burning
question. It is necessary to draw back the curtain from an unending series of tragedies. It is necessary to obtain an investigation. It is necessary to discover the whole truth. In working class organizations, at meetings, in the press, it is necessary to raise and support the demand for sending to the USSR an impartial commission, authoritative to everyone, with the object of investigating the real reasons for the repressions with which the bureaucracy threatens the revolutionaries, both Trotskyists and Zinovievists, and also the representatives of other movements. If the Soviet bureaucracy has nothing to hide in this matter from the world working class, it must meet such a demand.
HOW THE WORKERS IN AUSTRIA SHOULD FIGHT HITLER

Published July 1936

A: Don’t you think the Revolutionary Socialists and the CP are right when they say that the Austrian workers have the same obligation as the French workers? Don’t they have to defend their country in order not to be attacked by Hitler?

B: If the French workers defended “their” country (is it really then their country?) under the leadership of Blum and Cachin, they would do Hitler the greatest service they are capable of. They would make it possible for him to tell the German workers: “They always talk to you about class struggle. The class struggle is a fraud. The French worker defends his country. Ties of blood are stronger than Marxist dogma. The German worker must also defend his fatherland. We are engaged in a holy, national struggle.”

That is how Hitler would speak. And he would not find it difficult to win belief, in view of the fact that a significant part of the German working class is contaminated with nationalism, a contamination encouraged by the earlier policies of the German SP and CP. No, there is only one way to cure the German working class of its nationalist infection: the class struggle against one’s own bourgeoisie in every country!

A: And are we then to take no notice of the political regime of a country? France is a democracy, Germany a fascist dictatorship. Isn’t a war between France and Germany a struggle of two irreconcilable political regimes?

B: No. It is a struggle of two imperialisms. In the world war, too, the social patriots of the Entente countries, like Longuet and Henderson, spoke of the struggle of democracy against Habsburg and Hohenzollern militarism and of the struggle for a “just” peace. We are familiar with the “just” Versailles peace.
On the other side, the German social patriots like Wels and Scheidemann chattered about the fight “against czarism.” But this did not hinder these gentlemen from supporting their government after czarism had been overthrown and when the German army was led against the Russian revolution.

They did not even vote against the vile peace dictated at Brest-Litovsk. All these formulas—“struggle of the democracies,” “friend of peace,” “antifascist alliance,” etc.—are nothing but ideological cloaks. If fascist Italy decides to fight on the side of France, these people will begin to distinguish between a “constructive” and a “destructive” fascism.

A: But one cannot overlook the fact that France is an ally of Soviet Russia. If French imperialism is weakened, Soviet Russia will also be weakened.

B: Does imperialist France really appear to you to be a certain, reliable partner of the Soviet Union?

Let’s consider the question from the standpoint of the best possible case: the day on which National Socialist Germany is conquered. On that day at the latest, imperialist France will ally itself with death and the devil and, if need be, with recently defeated bourgeois Germany, against the Soviet Union. The only certain aid for the Soviet Union is the victory of the revolution in the capitalist countries, no matter what their political regime and foreign policy may be.

The development of revolutionary struggle will weaken imperialism? Of course. That is precisely the point! That is the way the Soviet Union will be strengthened.

A: Perhaps you didn’t completely understand me. I see the following danger: If French imperialism is weakened by the sharpening of revolutionary struggle, and the French army is undermined, then Hitler would be strengthened and could win a military victory over a France embroiled in civil war. He might even capture all of France.

B: If revolutionary battles and victories had no effect outside the country in which they occur, events might turn out as you have pictured them. But reality is quite different.

In war, the morale of the soldiers is crucial. To undermine the bourgeois morale of an army, there is no stronger means than the example of revolutionary struggle. Revolutionary example is
effective in any situation, but to an especially high degree in wartime. For the hungry masses, who have death staring them in the face, engaging in a revolution during a war is far less of a risk than not engaging in it.

There is also a whole series of new circumstances that hasten the unleashing of the revolutionary process and that drastically shorten, in particular, the duration of the revolutionary struggle for power. Consider only the changed picture of modern war, the direct horrors of which (air war!) will this time be visited on the rear areas too.

And let's not forget that the masses have learned a great deal from the experiences of the last war and the postwar period. Above all, don't overlook the proletarian revolution throughout the world, which represents a far more important factor than in the previous world war, not only in numbers but also in richness of experience and political maturity. All this makes it probable that the revolutionary process will be incomparably quicker than it was in Russia in 1917.

Nevertheless, we cannot say it is excluded that the ever-so-short period before the victory of the proletarian uprising will permit Hitler to occupy a portion of France. It is conceivable that at first Hitler's powers of endurance will be stronger than the effects of revolutionary battle. But with the victory of the revolution, the opportunity will be quickly regained to reconquer the lost regions and, beyond that, to squeeze German capitalism to death in the vise of a workers' France and the Soviet Union.

A. I have to admit there is much to that. But does the same thing apply for little Austria that applies for big France? Isn't there the danger that Hitler will swallow all of Austria?

B: Politics, especially revolutionary politics, is inconceivable without danger. "A real socialist," Lenin writes in his August 20, 1918, letter to the American workers, "would not fail to understand that for the sake of achieving victory over the bourgeoisie, for the sake of power passing to the workers, for the sake of starting the world proletarian revolution, we cannot and must not hesitate to make the heaviest sacrifices, including the sacrifice of part of our territory, the sacrifice of heavy defeats at the hands of imperialism. A real socialist would have proved by deeds his willingness for 'his' country to make the greatest sacrifice to give a real push forward to the cause of the socialist revolution.
"For the sake of 'their' cause, that is, for the sake of winning world hegemony, the imperialists of Britain and Germany have not hesitated to utterly ruin and throttle a whole number of countries, from Belgium and Serbia to Palestine and Mesopotamia. But must socialists wait with 'their' cause, the cause of liberating the working people of the whole world from the yoke of capital, of winning universal and lasting peace, until a path without sacrifice is found? Must they fear to open the battle until an easy victory is 'guaranteed'? Must they place the integrity and security of 'their' bourgeois-created 'fatherland' above the interests of the world socialist revolution? The scoundrels . . . who think this way, those lackeys who grovel to bourgeois morality, thrice stand condemned" [Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow, 1965), vol. 28].

If there is a way to defend oneself against Hitler in Austria, it is by striking at one's own bourgeoisie. The politics of the "lesser evil" leads only to the greatest evil. To get Hitler, there was no more certain way than supporting Bruening. The same holds true for the Austrian Bruenings.

A: And your solution is?

B: The revolutionary two-front war. The task is to combine the struggle against Schuschnigg with the struggle against the Nazis. One cannot participate in the independence swindle. But that is a problem we must discuss another time.

A: You just said that the Austrian proletariat must combine the struggle against Schuschnigg with the struggle against Hitler. You shouldn't overlook the fact that the Revolutionary Socialists and the CP also want to overthrow Schuschnigg.

B: Of course they want to. But at the same time they take the position of defending Austrian "independence," that is, the same position as Schuschnigg. By doing so they confuse the workers; they disorganize and hamstring the proletarian struggle. Their speech is less and less distinguishable from that of the government. "Austria" is the battle cry of the government. "Austria" is also the slogan of the CP. One can read in its *Rote Fahne* (the issue for the end of June 1936):

"Yes, we declare ourselves for Austria! Not only do we declare ourselves: the workers are the only ones who fight for Austria. We will save Austria from betrayal and catastrophe by fighting
How the Workers in Austria Should Fight Hitler

against the handful of adventurers and politicians of catastrophe in the authoritarian government, the Heimwehr [Home Guard] bands, the Nazis, and the supporters of the Hapsburgs."

Arbeiter-Zeitung, the organ of the Revolutionary Socialists, uses the same kind of language.

A: But don't the Revolutionary Socialists and the CP want to defend Austrian independence only after the bourgeoisie has restored democracy?

B: Certainly. "The workers will defend only a free Austria" is the way their continual declamations go. The bureaucrats would like to be paid for handing over to the bourgeoisie workers trained to be enthusiastic cannon fodder.

A: But don't they want to defend the independence of Austria in order to fend off Hitler?

B: First of all, the so-called independence of Austria is a lie. In reality Austria is a vassal of Italian imperialism. When the Revolutionary Socialists and the CP scream at the top of their lungs about the "independence" of Austria, that only indicates their effort to protect Austria from Anschluss [union with Germany] and to make it into a vassal of the no-less-imperialist bloc of France and the Little Entente, which is allied with the Soviet Union.

Their entire policy proceeds from the idea: The main enemy of both the Austrian and the Russian workers is Hitler. Therefore the first task is to strike at Hitler. For this reason it is necessary to ally the proletariat with all the "antifascist forces," under which shamefaced name the "democratic" bourgeoisie inside and outside of Austria are included. This alliance, naturally, is possible only with the complete deferment of the class struggle. On any other basis an alliance between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is inconceivable. But as we have just attempted to show, this policy facilitates the victory of the Nazis.

Our path is quite different. We proceed from the opinion that war puts the question of fighting for power before the workers perhaps even more sharply than the economic crisis.

One must use the war to unchain the proletarian revolution in all countries. But that is possible only through the sharpest opposition and struggle against the power conducting the war. Only in this way can we gather the lower layers of the petty
bourgeoisie and decisive parts of the army around the proletariat and carry out the revolution.

On Sundays and holidays the Revolutionary Socialists and the CP also speak about the revolution, but they don’t really believe in it. If they did, they would not direct the hopes of the masses they influence toward parts of their own bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie of other countries. They would not talk of the “peace front”—that is, the front of the bourgeoisie in those countries that are opposed to Hitler, but are just as imperialistic as Hitler—and ignore the only real peace front, that of the international working class.

If the present situation is not to end in another war, in which one imperialist grouping emerges victorious, instead of the proletarian revolution in as many countries as possible, then the hopes of the workers must be directed not toward the class enemy, whatever the guise it takes, but toward their own strength, toward revolutionary action against their own bourgeoisie.

The proletariat can be the strongest social force in modern society. What hinders the victorious unfolding of this power is the parties that still have great influence over the proletariat. The proletariat has been weakened and is kept in this weakened condition by its old and degenerated parties, whose entire work consists of inoculating their followers with disbelief in the proletariat’s class strength.

One cannot make the revolution with leaders who do not believe in the revolution. From this comes the unavoidable conclusion: If the socialist revolution is to triumph, it is necessary to devote all our strength in every country to the building of a new revolutionary workers’ organization. This is an obligation for everyone who does not want to see the working class again neglect a great historic opportunity.
Dear Comrade Glotzer:

I must say quite frankly that your letter brings me no new facts about the Socialist Party. I have had absolutely no illusions about this organization, especially insofar as the leadership is concerned. Whether the number of members is 16 or 20 or even 25,000 is not very important. What is far more important is that a number of our comrades, as for example Comrade Gould, have a distorted position. Far too much attention is paid to Hoan and the like and, I fear, far too little to the positive tasks of our work, especially in the youth.

Also the question long-term–short-term seems artificial to me at this point. Comrade Muste showed me his document on this where it says more or less: in the next five months the party will be absorbed with the elections. During this period, it is a question of calmly going about gaining a foothold in this party, i.e., carrying out calm preparatory and especially propaganda work. A further practical line can only flow out of the experience of the next months. In my opinion, therefore, the memories of previous arguments and ruminations over every possible variant for development should be put aside and you should go to work in a calm and objective fashion. A regrouping in your own ranks is unavoidable. Many people who did not want to enter the SP will adhere to this party enthusiastically if the local is successful. And on the other hand, supporters of entry who are disillusioned in practical work will surely become intransigent, and so on.

As for Comrade Gould, for whom I have heard strong praise from many sides, I regret that he has taken such a biased and incorrect attitude concerning Comrade Cannon. Cannon has never "lied" to me. Moreover, his letters to me have been published. I have carefully studied all of the documents. I have had no illusions from the beginning. It is better, moreover, to win
With Natalia Sedova (second from right) and their hosts, the Knudsens.

over a thousand young Socialists than to lose three or four hundred old members through permanent internal strife.

We have had very extensive discussions with Comrade Muste with great benefit—I trust—for mutual understanding. We said good-bye to him and his wife as the best of friends yesterday. We are now waiting for Shachtman.

With best greetings,
Yours,
L. Trotsky
1. The decision of the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, according to which socialism in the Soviet Union has "finally and irrevocably" triumphed—regardless of the low level of labor productivity as compared with the advanced capitalist countries and independently of the course of development of all the rest of the world!—is a crude and dangerous lie. The reference to the fact that the Soviet Union covers "one-sixth of the earth's surface" is all the less decisive in this question by virtue of the fact that only 8.5 percent of humanity has settled upon this area. It continues to be a question of the struggle between two irreconcilable systems—socialism and capitalism. This struggle has not been decided and cannot be decided within the boundaries of the USSR. It will be possible to decide the question "finally and irrevocably" only on the world arena.

2. The principal mass of the means of production in the industry of the Soviet Union has grown tremendously and remains in the hands of the state—in agriculture, in the hands of the kolkhozes, which stand between state and private property. But not even state property is as yet socialist property, for the latter has as its premise the dying away of the state as the guardian of property, the mitigation of inequality and the gradual dissolution of the property concept even in the morals and customs of society. The real development in the Soviet Union in recent years has followed a directly opposite road. Inequality grows and, together with it, state coercion. Given favorable domestic and international conditions, the transition is possible from the present state property to socialism; given unfavorable conditions, however, a reversion to capitalism is also possible.

3. Every workers' state, in the first period, will, in the interests of raising the productive forces, retain the system of work-wages, or as Marx puts it, "the bourgeois norms of distribution."
question is, however, decided by the general direction of the development. Were the advanced countries to be drawn into the revolution, and were social wealth to grow rapidly, then inequality would have to diminish speedily and the state would soon have nothing more to "guard." Given the isolation and the backwardness of the Soviet land, the bourgeois norms of distribution took on a crude and meretricious character (enormous differentiation of work-wages, bonuses, titles, orders, and more of the same), and engendered retrograde tendencies that imperil the very system of state property.

4. Low productivity, with high capital investments, with tremendous military expenditures and the enormous wastefulness of the uncontrolled apparatus, signifies the continuous salient lack of the most important objects of personal consumption for the masses of the population. The economic successes, which are much too modest for a significant material and cultural elevation of the whole people, are already proving adequate for the emergence of a broad, privileged stratum. The social antagonisms have not been mitigated in the course of the second five year plan, but are enormously accentuated. Inequality is growing by leaps and bounds. The hymns of praise to the "happy life" are sung only by the summits, while the lower strata continue in enforced silence.

5. Playing upon the manifold social antagonisms (town and country, mental and physical labor, individual farms, kolkhozes, and tiny private farms of the kolkhoz members, Stakhanovites and the rest of the working masses), the Soviet bureaucracy has acquired an actual independence from the toilers. Like every bureaucracy, it regulates the antagonisms in the interests of the stronger, of the better off, of the privileged. Like every bureaucracy, it takes, toward the end, a significant portion of the national income for itself and thereby becomes the most privileged of all the privileged strata.

6. By its conditions of personal existence, Soviet society even now presents an enormous hierarchy: from vagabond children, prostitutes, slum proletarians—to the ruling "ten thousand" who lead the life of Western European magnates of capital. In contradiction to the contentions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, socialism has not yet triumphed; neither in the objective economic conditions of the USSR (the criterion of the productivity of labor) nor in the consciousness of the producing masses (the criterion of personal consumption).

7. It remains a fact of decisive significance, however, that all
the social relationships of the USSR, the privileges of the Soviet aristocracy included, base themselves in the long run on state and kolkhoz property, acquired by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie which, in distinction from capitalist property, opens up the possibility of the growth of industry and of culture. The historical gulf dug by the October Revolution continues to separate the Soviet state planned economy from capitalist "state­ism," which signifies state intervention for the purpose of saving private property and which "regulates" the obsolete economic system by putting the brakes on the development of the productive forces and by lowering the standard of living of the people. The identification of the Soviet economy with the fascist (Italy, Germany), which occurs so frequently among liberal economists, is a fruit of ignorance or of unscrupulousness. The victory of the Bonapartist bureaucracy of the USSR over the proletarian vanguard is by no means equivalent to the victory of the capitalist counterrevolution, although the former blazes the trail for the latter.

8. To assert (like the anarchists and all sorts of ultraleftists), that the Soviet Union deserves, on the part of the revolutionary proletariat, the same attitude as do the imperialist states, is to assert that it is a matter of indifference to the working class whether state industry and collectivized agriculture in the Soviet Union are to be preserved and further developed, or whether the economy is to be flung back into conditions of decomposition and, by means of a civil war, to fascist capitalism. Such an attitude is worthy of the disappointed idealistic "friends" of the Soviet Union, that is, of the dilettantes and political windbags of the liberal and anarchist type, but by no means of Marxian revolutionists, who never leave out of consideration the basic factor of history: the development of production.

9. As has been said, the social stratification of Soviet society is developing mainly in the field of distribution and only partially, above all in agriculture, in the field of production. But distribution is not separated by an impenetrable wall from production. By deliberately stimulating the appetites of individuals and groups to the point where they become unbridled, the bureaucracy directly discredits the idea of social property. The growth of economic privileges engenders among the masses a justified doubt as to whom, in the long run, the whole system will actually serve. The "bourgeois norms of distribution," which have already far exceeded the permissible limit, finally threaten to blow up the social discipline of the planned economy and therewith also state and kolkhoz property.
10. The possible roads to the restoration of the bourgeois system are revealed with particular clarity in the question of the family. Since the bureaucracy, as a consequence both of the low material and cultural level of the country and of the throttling of the initiative of the masses, has not succeeded in fulfilling the tasks of social maintenance and upbringing, it has begun to reestablish and glorify the petty-bourgeois family, including its narrow private economy—that fostering soil of all species of social idiocy. But the family raises with particular sharpness the question of the right of inheritance. The bureaucracy itself, which endeavors to base itself politically upon the conservative family, feels its own domination to be defective and incomplete, for it is not in a position to bequeath its material privileges to its successors. The question of the right of inheritance leads, however, to the question of the further extension of the bounds of private property. This is one of the possible channels of the restoration of capitalism. In all fields of social life, the bureaucracy imperils everything that is progressive in the Soviet system. Instead of the guardian of “socialist property,” it becomes its gravedigger.

11. The political significance of the new constitution of the USSR is in direct contradiction to its official interpretation. The “Stalinist constitution” is no step forward, “from socialism to the communist society,” as the official authorities brazenly assert, but it is on the contrary a step backward, from the dictatorship of the proletariat toward a bourgeois political regime.

The development of socialist society should find its expression in the political field in the dying away of the state. The degree of this dying away is the surest measure of the successes of socialist development. The beginning of the dying away of the state should be the complete liquidation of the bureaucracy lifting itself above society. In actual fact, however, the new constitution raises exactly the opposite process of development to a law. Nor can it be otherwise. The growth of privileges requires a gendarme for their supervision.

12. State coercion is not being attenuated, according to the new constitution, but on the contrary is acquiring an exceptionally concentrated, open, and cynical character. The soviets are destroyed. The local and central, that is, the “municipal” and “parliamentary” institutions, built up on the basis of the plebiscitary system, have nothing in common with the soviets as the fighting organizations of the toiling masses. Besides, they have been deprived in advance of all genuine significance. The new constitution officially and publicly unites the power and
control over all fields of economic and cultural life in the hands of the Stalinist "party," which is independent both of the people and of its own members and which represents a political machine of the ruling caste.

13. In passing, the constitution liquidates de jure the ruling position of the proletariat in the state, a position which, de facto, has long been liquidated. Henceforth, it is declared, the dictatorship is "classless" and "popular," which, from the Marxian standpoint, is pure nonsense. The dictatorship of the "people" over itself should have signified the dissolution of the state into society, that is, the death of the state. In reality, the new constitution seals the dictatorship of the privileged strata of Soviet society over the producing masses, thereby making the peaceful dying away of the state an impossibility, and opens up for the bureaucracy "legal" roads for the economic counterrevolution, that is, the restoration of capitalism by means of a "cold stroke," a possibility for which the bureaucracy directly prepares by its deception about the "victory" of socialism." It is our task to call upon the working class to oppose its own strength to the pressure of the bureaucracy—for the defense of the great conquests of October.

14. In direct contradiction to the official lie, the new constitution not only does not extend Soviet "democracy" but on the contrary confirms its total strangulation. By every one of its paragraphs it proclaims that the present masters of the situation will not voluntarily relinquish their positions to the people. The aristocratic and absolutist character of the new constitution is most clearly expressed in the new crusade announced on the day of its publication—the crusade for the "extermination of the enemies of the people, the Trotskyist vermin and furies" (Pravda, June 5, 1936). The bureaucracy is very clearly aware of whence comes the mortal danger that threatens it and it directs the Bonapartist terror against the representatives of the proletarian vanguard.

15. The working class of the USSR has been robbed of the last possibility of a legal reformation of the state. The struggle against the bureaucracy necessarily becomes a revolutionary struggle. True to the traditions of Marxism, the Fourth International decisively rejects individual terror, as it does all other means of political adventurism. The bureaucracy can be smashed only by means of the goal-conscious movement of the masses against the usurpers, parasites, and oppressors.

If a social counterrevolution—i.e., the overthrow of state ownership of the means of production and of the land as well as
the reestablishment of private property—is necessary for the return of the USSR to capitalism, then for the further development of socialism a political revolution has become inevitable, i.e., the violent overthrow of the political rule of the degenerated bureaucracy while maintaining the property relations established by the October Revolution. The proletarian vanguard of the USSR, basing itself upon the toiling masses of the whole country and upon the revolutionary movement of the whole world, will have to batter down the bureaucracy by force, restore Soviet democracy, eliminate the enormous privileges, and assure a genuine advance to socialist equality.

16. On the question of war, as on all other questions, the parties of the Fourth International do not permit themselves to be guided by formalistic and idealistic considerations and sympathies, but only by Marxian criteria. If, for example, they support Ethiopia, despite the slavery that still prevails there and despite the barbaric political regime, it is, in the first place, because an independent national state represents a progressive historical stage for a precapitalist country and, secondly, because the defeat of Italy would signify the beginning of the collapse of the obsolescent capitalist society.

The proletarian vanguard of the entire world will support the USSR in war, in spite of the parasitic bureaucracy and of the uncrowned negus in the Kremlin, because the social regime of the USSR, despite all its deformations and ulcers, represents an enormous historical step forward in comparison with putrefied capitalism. The defeat of an imperialist land in the new war will lead to the collapse not only of its state form but also of its capitalist foundation, and consequently will also replace private by state property. The defeat of the Soviet Union would not only signify the collapse of the Soviet bureaucracy but also the replacement of state and collective property by capitalist chaos. The choice of political line under these conditions is inescapable.

The resolute and intrepid support of the USSR by the world proletariat vanguard in a war does not, however, signify that the proletariat should become the ally of the imperialist allies of the USSR. "The proletariat of a capitalist country that finds itself in an alliance with the USSR must retain fully and completely its irreconcilable hostility to the imperialist government of its own country" (War and the Fourth International, Theses of the International Secretariat of the International Communist League, Bolshevik-Leninists, point 44). "Intransigent proletarian opposition to the imperialist ally must develop, on the one hand, on the basis of international class policy, on the other, on the
basis of the imperialist aims of the given government, the treacherous character of this ‘alliance,’ its speculation on capitalist overturn in the USSR, etc. The policy of a proletarian party in an ‘allied’ as well as an enemy imperialist country should therefore be directed towards the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of power. Only in this way can a real alliance with the USSR be created and the first workers’ state be saved from disaster” (ibid. point 45).

17. The fears of the “ultraleftists” that the victory of the USSR may lead to the further consolidation of the positions of the Bonapartist bureaucracy arise out of a false conception of international relationships as well as of the internal development of the USSR. The imperialists of all camps will not reconcile themselves with the Soviet Union until private property in the means of production has been reestablished. Whatever the grouping of states may be at the beginning of the war, the imperialists will, in the course of the war, know how to come to an understanding and to a regrouping among themselves, always at the expense of the USSR. The USSR will be able to emerge from a war without a defeat only under one condition, and that is if it is assisted by the revolution in the West or in the East. But the international revolution, the only way of saving the USSR, will at the same time signify the death-blow for the Soviet bureaucracy.

18. Is the USSR a workers’ state? The USSR is a state which bases itself upon the property relationships created by the proletarian revolution and which is administered by a labor bureaucracy in the interests of new privileged strata. The Soviet Union can be called a workers’ state in approximately the same sense—despite the vast difference in scale—in which a trade union, led and betrayed by opportunists, that is, by agents of capital, can be called a workers’ organization. Just as revolutionists defend every trade union, even the most thoroughly reformist, from the class enemy, combating intransigently the treacherous leaders at the same time, so the parties of the Fourth International defend the USSR against the blows of imperialism without for a single moment giving up the struggle against the reactionary Stalinist apparatus. In war as in peace, they guard their full freedom of criticism of the ruling Soviet caste and their full freedom of struggle against its agreements with the imperialists at the expense of the interests of the USSR and of the international revolution.
Dear Comrades:

The situation in Europe is becoming so serious that the British comrades of the three existing groups must search and find a way toward a common goal. The coming international conference opens up very important possibilities in this direction. Your participation in the conference seems to me to be an absolute necessity.

You have, I understand, certain hesitations concerning organizational obligations toward the International Secretariat, and so forth. But now a new organizational situation will be created. The conference has as its aim the constitution of a new directing body for all the parties, organizations, and groups adhering to the Fourth International. You have the opportunity to participate either as a regular member or as a sympathizing organization, should you find it impossible to assume all the obligations. It is excluded, I am sure, that the conference should attempt to impose upon the English comrades a rigid line of policy to be followed by them. But the participation of our best international comrades in a special British commission, including the delegates of the three British groups, can greatly accelerate the rapprochement and fructify their future activity with new points of view, new methods, and so forth.

I agree with you that the most important question is that of work in the trade unions, and that the ILP in this respect is becoming more of a handicap than an aid. But in the trade unions we must work not as freelancers but as an organized fraction (with all the necessary caution with respect to the trade union bureaucracy). Your participation in the international conference ought to facilitate the constitution of such a united fraction. I am sure you will send your representative.

With my best greetings,
Fraternally yours,
L. Trotsky
To the Central Committee of the RSAP

Dear Comrades:

I reply herewith to your letter of July 11, unfortunately with one day's delay caused by unfavorable circumstances.

1. You write that you are ready to send two delegates to the conference (“if the organizational affairs will be considered as the first point”). For my part, naturally, I am not opposed to dealing with the organizational affairs at any point, even the first, if that appears necessary. However the question can only be decided by the conference itself and I do not see how this matter could be decided in advance. Since I cannot consider your letter as an ultimatum to a not yet convened conference, I conceive the matter in this light, that you reserve the right to insist at the conference itself that the organizational question be advanced to the first point. Despite the fact that such a procedure seems to me quite irregular and conflicts with my whole experience, I would not make this matter a disputed question, and, as for myself, I would accept your proposal.

Unfortunately, I do not see any concrete proposals on your part. That our international organization reveals great defects is indisputable; many of these defects, I hope, can be remedied, especially if the Dutch party henceforth does what is necessary in international organizational work. The most important weaknesses, however, lie in the very nature of our organization, since it is persecuted by all governments. We have no freedom of movement. A part of our leading comrades are in the position of political emigres (I, for example, am among them). This is something that just cannot be talked away.

The Russian leadership was always distributed between two and often enough three centers. The bulk of the Central
Committee was in Russia. The emigrants, among them Lenin, were abroad. Despite that, however, they played a certain role in the movement, and often a not entirely bad role. Because of the spatial remoteness, however, there arose at all times difficulties and frictions, which often assumed threatening forms. This can now be very well followed with the aid of the published correspondence carried on for decades.

In Europe, under normal conditions, things were different. But the good old times are now gone for Europe too. We must adapt ourselves to very specific conditions, which constantly grow worse for us all. There is no recipe for this state of affairs to be found anywhere. If one puts great store in mutual collaboration, one must also take into consideration the negative sides of the certain organizational dispersal that exists.

The preconference in Berne was proposed precisely for the purpose of making the work of the conference in Geneva as profitable and smooth as possible. I waited a month and a half for this conference. Unfortunately, it did not take place. Also, neither I nor anyone else has, to this day, received any organizational proposals. It is always hard to treat proposals at a conference when they have not been brought to the attention of the conference participants in advance. For you will surely understand that it is not only your party that is interested in considering all the important questions beforehand, but also the other organizations. Yet you make the matter still harder by the fact that in your last letter you do not describe by a single word what you regard as organizational questions.

Nevertheless—as stated—I would be prepared, for my part, to devote half of the first day to organizational questions, at least in order to introduce the discussion and to acquaint those present with what the concrete proposals consist of. Then, if final decisions are not immediately arrived at, a commission could be formed to prepare proposals, which could then be brought to the latter half of the closing day of the conference for discussion and final decision. In any case, all these are only suggestions—not binding—on my part.

2. The most important question, however, is the French revolution. I greatly regret, dear comrades, that I find nothing about it in your letter, and unfortunately much too little in your paper. The fate of Europe, of Holland included and thereby also of your party, is being decided today not in Holland but in France.

I recall that about a year or a year and a half ago there was an
editorial comment in *De Nieuwe Fakkel* to an article by a comrade of the Bolshevik-Leninists, with approximately the following content (I do not have the paper at hand): We do not agree “that the French situation is more important than the German or English.” This way of putting the question is abstract and therefore incorrect. It is not a question of the comparison of the historical importance of the various countries, but of the correct evaluation of the revolutionary world conjuncture. *The fate of the European working class for decades to come is being decided today in France.* Our French section—despite all its difficulties and weaknesses, which I know very well—has become a historical factor which far overshadows all the other sections. To refuse to perceive this would be, at least in my eyes, a symptom of opportunistic blindness. *We must support our French section with all our forces,* more than our other national sections and organizations, for if we take a great step forward in France in the course of the coming months, it will be of immeasurable significance in all the other countries as well—for example, for the impending Dutch elections. If I might translate my thought into the language of commerce, 100 gulden invested now in France would, in the coming period, yield a greater interest than 1,000 gulden in Holland, Russia, or England. That is why I see with a certain apprehension the fact that you actually overlook the question, and even make your participation in the conference dependent, to a certain degree, upon general “organizational” questions which we shall settle and which we shall always have to settle over again in the course of years to come. I regarded the conference in the first place as the gathering of the international staff for the purpose of making the French question the international question, and that in every respect.

3. It seems to you superfluous to have to adopt a position toward the London Bureau at the conference. *Under no circumstances* can I express my agreement with this. The worst obstacle for us, the most malignant enemy, is the London Bureau and its affiliated organizations. Your cartoonist, whom I always admire, recently depicted the Second and Third Internationals as two dogs let loose upon the Fourth International by imperialism. Unfortunately, he forget to present the small, mangy cur who scampers around our legs, snarls at us, snaps at our heels and seeks by this to prevent us from finishing off the big dogs. This is no subordinate question. What the SAP-ILPists signify in a revolutionary period is shown again by Marceau Pivert and Godefroid in France and in Belgium. The ILPists are not one whit
better than the SAPists. This they have amply demonstrated by their evolution in the last two years. As the situation becomes more threatening and more filled with responsibility, the more reactionary and—to us—more inimical do all these old, slick, incorrigible opportunists and pacifists become. One does not fight for the Fourth International by flirting with them in a closed room, by attendance upon them, by parlor visits to them, etc.—for all this only gives them an exaggerated opinion of their own importance and incites them to further invasions into our own ranks; no, one fights for the Fourth International only by pitilessly exposing these little gentlemen and calling them by their right name.

4. Let us take the ILP question. I really cannot reproach myself with any precipitateness on this question. For years I followed the evolution of this party quite calmly and objectively. After Schmidt's and Paton's visit to me, from which I learned a great deal, I wrote a series of articles and letters of an entirely friendly kind to the ILP people, sought to enter into personal contact with them, and counseled our English friends to join the ILP in order, from within, to go through the experience systematically and to the very end. Since the last visit of Comrades R. and A., I formulated my observations in this sense: that there isn't much to be done with the ILP. The three of us worked out a definite proposal for our British comrades (a manifesto to the party, collection of signatures, etc.). Comrade Schmidt went to England and judged the plan to be incorrect. Naturally, this was not without its influence on the comrades, as well as on me. I immediately said to myself: Schmidt knows the situation in the ILP better than I do; perhaps he sees in the ILP such aspects as escape me; therefore the decision should perhaps be postponed in order to see the effect of the latest big events (the war in Ethiopia, etc.) at the coming party conference of the ILP. To lose two to three months in a critical period is always a great loss. But it seemed to me, after Comrade Schmidt's intervention, that it was necessary to go through this new experience.

Well, it is now already behind us. To continue now with an effort to revive an illusion which has been shattered to bits would be nothing less than to inflict a bad service on the cause. In times of calm, one can live on illusions for a long period; in a period of crisis, if one does not take into account the hard facts—that is, the actual policy of centrism and pacifism, and consequently their deeds—but considers one's own wishes and sentiments, one courts the danger of becoming the shadow of the centrists and
pacifists and of compromising and destroying one's own organization. That is why I deem it absolutely necessary for our comrades to break openly with the ILP and to transfer to the Labour Party where, as is shown especially by the experience in the youth, much more can be accomplished.

5. You complain in your letter that many parties have carried through tactical turns without preceding international discussion and decision. This complaint does not appear correct to me, especially to the extent that it refers to the American party. The discussion there was extended for more than a year, and moreover it was based upon the previous French discussion and experience. The discussion had an international character. All sections, without exception, took a position on it. The American friends knew quite well the sentiments that prevailed in the various sections. Naturally, they could not carry out an international referendum. At the last moment the leadership, considering the situation at the time as highly favorable, took the decision upon itself. It would not have been worthy of the name of a revolutionary leadership if it did not have the courage to make independent decisions. That this leadership is, however, permeated with a truly internationalist spirit is demonstrated by the fact that two of its representatives [Muste and Shachtman] have come in order to render an accounting and to take full responsibility for their conduct before the international forum. This seems to me to be genuine internationalism.

6. We cannot make any claim to leading our national sections directly from a center, even if this center were much more united than it is at present. Within the bounds of the united program and the common political line, every section must necessarily lay claim to a certain elbow room in which to act. I am a little surprised that I am obliged to say this to the Dutch friends, who, up to now, have carried on their policy absolutely independently and in many important questions in direct contradiction with the firm opinion of the international organization. In this respect, we have always showed the greatest caution and—if you permit—the greatest forbearance, especially toward the Dutch party. We shall, I hope, also do this in the future. But we retain the right to our opinion, if not publicly (as was the case with De Nieuwe Fakkel with reference to Belgium, and quite wrongly), then at least within the bounds of the organization.

Unfortunately—and this is a reproach that I must direct primarily at my dear friend Sneevliet—the Dutch leadership is impregnated with the spirit of the greatest intolerance toward
any criticism. The policy of our American or Belgian friends, to say nothing of the Germans, may be sharply criticized and rejected. But if one attempts to raise the trade union policy of the fraternal Dutch party, even if only in intimate circles, one is repulsed with the greatest sharpness.

Precisely this spirit, which is by no means the spirit of reciprocity, evoked dissatisfaction among very many comrades, and very good ones, in all sections, and this dissatisfaction is justified! It lies in the interest both of the general cause and of the Dutch leadership to dispel this long accumulating dissatisfaction by means of a calm and friendly exposition at the conference and to stop making a “taboo” out of Dutch questions. This also belongs among the “organizational” questions that you want to have dealt with as the first point.

I must unfortunately interrupt the letter in order to catch the airmail in time. You will get the second half of the letter tomorrow. I hasten, however, to say here that I have not the remotest desire or shadow of a desire to lose contact with you, to render the already difficult position of the Dutch party more difficult, or—parenthetically—to dim my friendship with Sneevliet; I need not assure you of that. I have urged a personal meeting since my arrival in Norway. If I were not bound hand and foot I would have visited Holland two or three times this year, for I put the greatest stock in personal discussions, especially with older and experienced comrades, in these fateful times. It was a holiday at our house when I received the letter that Comrades Schmidt and Stien de Zeeuw wanted to take a trip here. I immediately expressed my joy over this prospect in a letter to Schmidt. Unfortunately, nothing came of it. Sneevliet too promised me a visit, but unfortunately did not keep his promise. I do not want to level reproaches on this score, despite the fact that Comrade Schmidt visited the ILP two, if not three, times during this period. In the letter to Shachtman I only wanted to emphasize that a subsequent personal meeting could not replace the official conference and that your nonparticipation in the conference at a time like this would inevitably be interpreted by the whole public as a political rupture with all our organizations. Fortunately, your participation now seems to me to be assured and therewith we can calmly discuss the “official” and the personal matters.

With fraternal greetings,
Crux [L. Trotsky]
July 16, 1936

7. I now come to Spain. In one of his most recent letters, Comrade Sneevliet in the name of the Central Committee of the party took up the defense of the Maurin-Nin party against my allegedly exaggerated or too sharp attacks. This appears to me to be not only unjustified but also incomprehensible. The struggle with Maurin does not date from yesterday. His *entire* policy during the revolution was nationalistic-provincial and petty bourgeois; reactionary in its entire essence. I recorded this fact publicly more than once from the beginning of the revolution on. Nin too, with the vacillations typical of him, acknowledged this. The program of the "democratic socialist" revolution is a legitimate child of the Maurinist spirit; it corresponds essentially to the program of a Blum and not of a Lenin.

As for Nin, during the whole revolution he proved to be a completely passive dilettante who does not in the slightest degree think of actually participating in the mass struggle, of winning the masses, of leading them to the revolution, etc. He contented himself with hypercritical little articles on Stalinists, on Socialists, etc. This is now a very cheap commodity! During the series of general strikes in Barcelona he wrote me letters on all conceivable questions but did not so much as mention the general strikes and his own role in them. In the course of those years we exchanged hundreds of letters. I always tried to elicit from him not empty literary observations on everything and nothing, but practical suggestions for the revolutionary struggle. To my concrete questions, he always replied: "as to that, I shall write in my next letter." This "next letter," however, never arrived—for years.

The greatest misfortune for the Spanish section was the fact that a man with a name, with a certain past and the halo of a martyr of Stalinism, stood at its head and all the while led it incorrectly and paralyzed it.

The splendid Socialist Youth came spontaneously to the idea of the Fourth International. To all our urgings that all attention be devoted to the Socialist Youth, we received only hollow evasions. Nin was concerned with the "independence" of the Spanish section, that is, with his own passivity, with his own petty political comfort; he didn’t want his captious dilettantism to be disturbed by great events. The Socialist Youth then passed over almost completely into the Stalinist camp. The lads who called themselves Bolshevik-Leninists and who permitted this, or better yet, who caused this, have to be stigmatized forever as criminals against the revolution.
At the moment when Nin's bankruptcy became clear even to his own supporters, he united with the nationalist-Catalonian philistine Maurin, breaking off all relations with us by the declaration that "the IS understands nothing of Spanish affairs." In reality Nin understands nothing of revolutionary policy or of Marxism.

The new party soon found itself in the tow of Azana. But to say about this fact, "it is only a small, temporary technical electoral agreement," seems to me to be absolutely inadmissible. The party undersigned the most miserable of all People's Front programs of Azana and simultaneously also its death sentence for years to come. For at every attempt at criticism of the People's Front (and Maurin-Nin are now making such desperate attempts) they will always receive the stereotyped reply from the Radical bourgeois, from the Social Democrats, and from the Communists: But didn't you yourselves take part in the creation of the People's Front and sign its program? And if these gentlemen then try to make use of the rotten subterfuge, "it was only a technical maneuver of our party"—they will only make themselves ridiculous.

These people have completely paralyzed themselves, even if they were now unexpectedly to display a revolutionary will, which is not, however, the case. Small crimes and betrayals, which remain almost unobserved in normal times, find a mighty repercussion in time of revolution. It should never be forgotten that the revolution creates special acoustic conditions. All in all, I cannot understand how it is that extenuating circumstances are sought for the Spanish betrayers, while at the same time our Belgian friends, who are fighting with preeminent courage against the enormous POB machine and the Stalinists, and who have quite substantial successes to show, are publicly disparaged in De Nieuwe Fakkel.

8. In the latest number of La Batalla [newspaper of the POUM] there is an appeal of the Maurin-Nin party to our South American sections, which represents an attempt to group the latter around the so-called "Party of Marxist Unification" on a purely national basis. Like every section of the London Bureau, the Spanish "Marxist" party of confusion tries to penetrate into the ranks of the Fourth International, to split them, etc. There you have the little cur who snaps at our heels. Must we not say openly to our South American organizations, which still have in their ranks SAPist parliamentarians, etc., what the difference is between us and the London Bureau and why Nin breaks with us in Europe and wants to appear in South America as the pious unifier of all the revolutionary forces? This contemptible hypocrisy, which
always characterized centrism, must be mercilessly exposed. This alone would suffice to prove the absolute necessity of our theses on the London Bureau.

9. The question of questions at present is the People's Front. The left centrists seek to present this question as a tactical or even as a technical maneuver, so as to be able to peddle their wares in the shadow of the People's Front. In reality, the People's Front is the main question of proletarian class strategy for this epoch. It also offers the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism. For it is often forgotten that the greatest historical example of the People's Front is the February 1917 revolution. From February to October, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, who represent a very good parallel to the "Communists" and Social Democrats, were in the closest alliance and in a permanent coalition with the bourgeois party of the Cadets, together with whom they formed a series of coalition governments. Under the sign of this People's Front stood the whole mass of the people, including the workers', peasants', and soldiers' councils. To be sure, the Bolsheviks participated in the councils. But they did not make the slightest concession to the People's Front. Their demand was to break this People's Front, to destroy the alliance with the Cadets, and to create a genuine workers' and peasants' government.

All the People's Fronts in Europe are only a pale copy and often a caricature of the Russian People's Front of 1917, which could after all lay claim to a much greater justification for its existence, for it was still a question of the struggle against czarism and the remnants of feudalism. If Maslow and Dubois now flirt with the People's Front,\textsuperscript{374} with all their ultraleftist "intransigence," then they only prove thereby that they have not understood the real strategic antagonism between Bolshevism and Menshevism. They demanded that we raise the slogan "People's Front to power," that is, demand power for the coalition of workers and capitalists. At the same time they made merry over our demand "Bourgeoisie out of the People's Front!" Hemmed in somewhat with reservations, these thoughts are also to be found in an article of Maslow's in the theoretical journal of the Dutch party. For my part I can only regret this, for this fact makes the most painful impression on all of us. Do we have differences of opinion on this question, where it is a matter of choice between Bolshevism and Menshevism? Yes or no? I hope not! Then whence this inexplicable tolerance for Maslow's thoroughly opportunistic conceptions?
The position of our French section on all the important questions is incomparably more correct and Marxian, even though there is no sparing of criticism of the French section in our own ranks, as you may see from the pamphlet of Nicolle Braun. Yet I must say that the text of the French Central Committee, “Where is the Blum government going?” is an excellent piece of work, which is worth translating into all the languages of the Fourth International. As for me personally, I learned a good deal from this pamphlet. Yet our French comrades are so poor (for which they themselves bear the blame in large measure) that they were unable to publish the pamphlet in printed, but only in mimeographed, form.

10. Permit me now to pass over to the Dutch party. I do not read Dutch. I only halfway decipher the titles, a few sentences, and if the matter appears important to me other comrades come to my aid. I can therefore lay no claim at all to competence on the Dutch question. Nevertheless, I follow as much as possible, by means of the European press, the life of Holland, and I am in correspondence with my friend Sneevliet (insofar as he replies to my letters, which is not the rule, unfortunately), etc. What I say about the Dutch party can therefore only be incomplete and fragmentary:

(a) The great weakness of the Dutch party seems to me to be the lack of a program of action. For more than a year we have had an exchange of opinions with Sneevliet on this score. Insofar as I may permit myself a judgment, the agitation of the party seems to me to rest far too much upon personal improvisations, upon impressions of the day or week, and therefore bears a dispersed, diluted, and not a concentrated character. A reformist party can easily reconcile itself to such a situation, but not a revolutionary party like the RSAP, for it can fight successfully against and finally triumph over the large parties only by means of the clarity and concentratedness of the slogans it has elaborated for the whole present epoch.

Several months ago the Dutch party formed a commission to elaborate a program of action. The commission laid out, so at least it appeared to me, too extensive and too comprehensive a plan. For my part I proposed to separate the plan into two parts: first to work out a brief but conclusive program of action for Holland, and then to elaborate the large program in connection with other sections as the program of the Fourth International. Comrade Sneevliet—if I remember rightly—was also of this opinion. Unfortunately it does not appear that this commission
has yet produced a single draft. At any rate, I have received none, as was promised me. It is highly regrettable that, among other things, for the impending elections, we have not armed ourselves in good enough time with a sharp program of action.

(b) On the trade union question too I cannot share the policy of our fraternal Dutch party. The reasons for that I have often set forth in writing and especially verbally. The policy toward the NAS continues to be carried out only on the basis of the law of inertia. There is no deeper strategic motivation for it. Developments in Holland, just as is now the case in France, will have to strike out either on the revolutionary or on the fascist road. In either case I see no place for the NAS. When the great strike wave begins in Holland, which should be regarded as highly probable if not certain, the reformist trade unions will grow mightily and absorb fresh elements into their ranks, and in such a period the NAS will appear to the masses as an incomprehensible splinter organization. In consequence, the masses will also become unreceptive to the correct slogans of the RSAP and the leadership of the NAS. But if all the members of the RSAP and the best NAS elements were inside the reformist trade unions, then during the impending upsurge they could become the axis of crystallization of the left wing and later on the decisive force in the labor movement. I must say quite openly: systematic, solicitously arranged agitation inside the reformist trade unions seems to me the only means not only of preserving the RSAP as a genuinely independent party (for by itself this hasn’t any historical value), but also of carrying it to victory, that is, to power.

If we take a much less probable alternative, namely, that developments in Holland, without passing through a revolutionary upsurge, go directly, in the coming period, into the reactionary military-bureaucratic and then into the fascist phase, we nevertheless come to the same conclusion: the NAS policy must become an obstacle to the party. The first assault of reaction has already been directed at the NAS and cost it half its membership. The second assault will cost it its life. The excellent workers united within it will then have to seek the road into the reformist trade unions in a dispersed manner, everyone for himself, or else remain passive and indifferent. The trade union cannot lead the illegal existence that the party can. But by means of this blow the party will be terribly hit, for an illegal revolutionary party must have a legal or semilegal mass cover. If the bulk of the membership of the RSAP is active in the reformist trade unions, then these mass organizations mean for the party
too a hiding place, a cover, and at the same time an arena. The coherence of the present NAS workers is thereby preserved. All other points will be conditioned by the course of developments and by the policy of the party.

(c) On the youth question, the policy of the party does not seem to me to be sufficiently clear. I know that at the head of the Dutch youth we have very good and very promising elements. They must, however, find their field of activity so as not to persist and to wither away in the abstract-sectarian existence of “would-be know-it-all.” This field of work can be found only in the trade unions and among the reformist youth. If we continue to waste time, the Dutch youth will fall victim to Stalinism, as is the case in Spain and to a substantial degree also in England. In Belgium, despite the tardiness and despite the much too irresolute, vacillating policy, certain successes were nevertheless achieved against Godefroid among the youth. In America, the Socialist youth, which certainly does not represent a strong organization, has, thanks to the correct policy of our American cothinkers, received a good anti-Stalinist inoculation and now finds itself on the right road. It would really be disastrous if our Dutch youth section were not to understand that it must immediately devote all its forces to work within the reformist youth!

I know, dear comrades, that with many of these observations I come into sharp conflict with the views of certain leading circles of the RSAP. Nor do I lay the slightest claim, not only for myself (that would be altogether out of the question) but also not for the impending international conference, to the right to alter, in a trice, the position of the RSAP on the decisive questions. As in all of our sections, the necessary change can only mature from within. The other sections can only be of assistance therein, by means of responsible criticism. This letter has no other aim. What we now need is an open discussion on these questions with the Dutch friends in order to promote mutual understanding. For example, I put no concrete proposals to the conference on the Dutch trade union questions and would advise against adopting any binding decision. Our general line in the trade union question must be put clearly. I sought to do this in a few lines in the draft on the Franco-Belgian situation. Perhaps, too, independent trade union theses will be submitted. At all events it would be false to make an organizational ultimatum to the Dutch party out of this question. As unanimously and unambiguously as possible we state our opinion on the trade union question in general and fix this opinion in writing. We discuss openly with
the Dutch comrades as to their perspectives. But we respect the special situation in Holland and leave to the Dutch comrades the working out of the necessary methods in the trade union question. *This is the formal proposal that I put to the conference.*

11. In conclusion, I should still like to say what is necessary on my letter to Shachtman: how and why did I write this letter? The initiative for the conference came from Berne on April 11. The correspondence developed in the course of April and the convocation was planned for the month of June. Thus, nobody can talk of any “precipitation” whatsoever. The fisherman’s strike, I believe, did not begin in April or even in May. In any case, every country now has its strikes and its mass movements and if we were to wait with the international conference until complete calm prevails in every country, we would never be able to hold a conference. Financial and personal difficulties exist everywhere also. All the larger sections were agreed on the necessity of convoking the conference. Only the Dutch section gave evasive answers. In that connection it did not refer so much to the fishermen’s strike as it did to the—in its eyes—wrong policy of the American section, to the deficiencies of the IS, to the weaknesses of the French section, etc., etc. Just at the time when we were taking part with the greatest ardor in the work of preparing the conference, of elaborating the theses, etc., there appeared in *De Nieuwe Fakkel* a deplorable note on the Belgian section; also, the report on the persecution of the French section was written in such a manner as to give the appearance of wanting to deprecate the importance of the French section. I received a letter in which Comrade Sneevliet, in the name of the Dutch Central Committee, censured me for my article against Maurin-Nin.

Although the Dutch Central Committee did not give a definite answer to the question of its participation in the conference, it proposed to us to take part “in a few months” in a conference planned by the London Bureau. Everyone who thinks politically will have to admit that these facts give sufficient cause for concern. The whole enterprise hung in midair for weeks and we were unable to send the American friends the promised telegram announcing the date. Finally, they came to Europe on their own initiative without awaiting the telegram. This fact created a *force majeure*, so to speak, for the organizers of the conference. After all, we could not let the American comrades return home empty-handed. Right after Comrade Erik [Muste] arrived here, I promptly sent Sneevliet a telegram. For more than forty-eight hours we received no reply to it. So I sent a second, still more
urgent telegram. This was finally answered with the promise of a communication by mail. I communicated my disquiet and my apprehension to Comrade Erik in a most moderate and reserved manner and asked him to plead emphatically before the Dutch comrades for their participation in the conference.

Comrade Erik had to leave us before the planned preconference could be held. After his departure, a letter from Comrade Shachtman arrived from Amsterdam, the contents of which boiled down to the fact that even now, after the arrival of the Americans, the Dutch comrades were still unable to decide in favor of participation in the conference, that they proposed a personal meeting with me for the second half of August, and that they made their participation in some eventual conference in the autumn more or less dependent upon the results of this conversation. Naturally, it would have been more advantageous to wait for the report of Comrade Erik on his conversations. And that was my first thought. But then I said to myself: if Comrade Erik gets the same answer as Shachtman, then, after receiving his reports, there will no longer be any possibility of saving the cause of the conference. I had to say that to myself.

In the light of the present situation, especially in France, and considering the arrival of the Americans, I cannot of course explain to myself the attitude of the Dutch comrades on the grounds of lack of funds or of the fishermen’s strike, but on much deeper political grounds: many leading Dutch comrades believe they can be of service to the Fourth International by contact with the London Bureau, that is, by collaboration with the latter and not by means of unremitting struggle against it. For a great number of comrades, however, contact with the London Bureau signifies nothing but a break with the Fourth International. I considered it absolutely necessary to bring to the attention of the Dutch comrades this deepgoing difference of opinion before they adopt their final decision.

The sense of my letter was: If, despite the experience already acquired, you put stock in sitting down at one table with the SAP-ILP, etc., then you should at least take a seat at one table with us before that, in order to confer with us on this question, which—for us—is so important and decisive. Let us hope that after all we can come to a common decision. But if you come neither to the preconference nor to the conference itself, and further develop your connections with the London Bureau, then we cannot evaluate the consequences of such a procedure in any other way than as an inevitable break with us.

In this critical situation I deemed it necessary to express my
opinion, quite openly and without embellishment, on the possible consequences of the nonparticipation of the Dutch friends in the conference. This I did in the letter to Shachtman and I also sent a copy of the letter to Sneevliet. And I said to myself: if the Dutch comrades have finally come to the decision to seek an entirely different road to the new International than ours, then my letter will no longer hurt. But if their way of action is to be explained only by the fact that they do not ascribe sufficient importance to the thing (which I also already grasped as a disquieting symptom), then my letter will call their attention to the fact that for us the matter is of decisive importance. The Dutch comrades will then surely utter many a strong word about the letter; but their positions will be determined not by the question of etiquette but by the deep essence of the situation created. In addition I said to myself: Erik is fortunately still in Amsterdam. He will surely do everything to neutralize the negative psychological consequences of my intervention. But his intervention will have all the more positive results the more clearly, openly, and brusquely the whole situation is disclosed.

For my letter, therefore, I and I alone bear responsibility. I am quite ready to take any censure for it, regardless of whom it comes from, and let it fall on my shoulders. To “insult” anyone was, obviously, not my intention. It was not a question of moral charges, but of apprehensions arising out of the existence of two contrary lines. If an “insult” can be read out of my letter, I am prepared to withdraw an expression that may give any cause for it and to apologize, for it is really not a question of etiquette but of the French revolution and the Fourth International.

These are my explanations, dear comrades. I greatly regret that I cannot meet with you in Geneva, for I am certain that a personal discussion would eliminate every shadow of discord between us. But even without my presence, the conference will surely eliminate the accumulated misunderstandings and create better conditions for further collaboration.

In this spirit I extend you my hand in all friendship and wish you the best of success.

Yours,
Crux [Leon Trotsky]
INTERVIEW ON BRITISH PROBLEMS

Summer 1936

Question: Should the Marxist Group oppose or favor CP affiliation to the Labour Party?

Answer: The question becomes sheerly pedantic and completely meaningless in view of the smallness, the weakness, and the lack of clear perspective in the group itself. However, whatever the position of the group, it is essential to support critically the affiliation of the CP—for two reasons: (1) If we refuse support, we shall be riding against the mass desire for unity; (2) The mistakes of the CP in the Labour Party and their inevitable alliance with the bureaucracy will give us the opportunity to win their best elements. But only if we are inside the Labour Party ourselves. The whole question revolves around the italicized sentence. If that is ignored, all speculation is metaphysical and has nothing in common with Marxism.

Question: Who do you think is correct—Cooper or Matlow—on the question of the group perspective?

A: In my opinion, Matlow is 100 percent correct. In view of the international situation, England must inevitably develop in common with the rest of Europe. That must give rise to a strike wave in the near future, which will drive the last nail into the coffin of the ILP. The ILP is not a mass but a propaganda organization, and since their propaganda is centrist and not revolutionary, this dying corpse must be completely swept away during a working class resurgence. I consider that the rigid, formalistic position of the Cooper paper has no relationship to Marxism at all. It shows a complete lack of comprehension of the class struggle. The idea of remaining inside the ILP for a further period in order to win a few more wavering elements, while the CP is rapidly penetrating into the mass organizations, is
ridiculous. We can only win these wavering elements in the ILP by our entry into the Labour Party and the effective work we will do in there. The waverers remaining in the ILP will inevitably leave in disgust as the ILP disintegrates further, and in their attempt to find a new orientation must inevitably come to us in the Labour Party, if we adopt a correct line at once. The argument that it is still possible to win a few more of the waverers in the ILP is sheer formalism, as for every one that we might win in the ILP there are hundreds in the Labour Party. The argument that we may be able to capture the apparatus of the ILP is at best hypothetical, and even if successful must mean a struggle of years in view of the strength of the bureaucracy. We do not have eternity before us. We are too generous with our time, which is very precious; and we are not rich enough to spend it at such a rate. The experience of the Belgian and French sections demonstrates conclusively the tremendous possibilities that are unfolding inside the mass reformist organizations. Unless we accept that perspective we can play no significant revolutionary role in the history of Great Britain.

Q: Since we have already missed the opportunity of the plebiscite issue, what issue can we raise in order to split from the ILP?

A: It is essential to choose a political issue comprehensible to the broad mass of workers. To raise a fight on the existence of legal groups within the ILP would be completely useless. I can only offer some suggestions from this distance. A struggle raised to commit the ILP on our theses at our recent conference is one possibility, particularly the thesis on the revolutionary upsurge, already printed in the French paper. Possibly, however, a better example would be the question of the ILP's affiliation to the Labour Party. That question we must pose immediately, and as strongly as possible.

Q: Should the group place any conditions upon the entry of the ILP into the Labour Party?

A: That kind of knightly courtesy has no place in politics. Since the ILP bureaucracy has made our group illegal and suppressed our paper, it would be ridiculous for us to fight for privileges on behalf of the ILP. Our duty is to get into the Labour Party with or without the ILP, as rapidly as possible. It is not
possible for me from this distance to choose either the precise issue or the time to be taken in the struggle for the split. If we remember that time is precious and the matter is extremely urgent, we will not go far wrong. In any event, the suggestion of a time limit such as the next annual conference of the ILP in April is incomprehensible to me. The European situation is developing so rapidly that history will not wait for the ILP conference.

Q: How shall we enter the Labour Party and how shall we work within it?

A: In view of the weakness of the Marxist Group, it may be necessary to enter as individuals first and spend one, two, or three months exploring avenues of work. The important thing is to get in. Once in, opportunities will rapidly unfold. It is understood that regardless of how we enter, we will have a secret faction from the very beginning. Our subsequent actions will depend on our progress within the Labour Party. It is very important that we do not lay ourselves open at the beginning to attacks from the Labour Party bureaucracy, which will result in our expulsion without our having gained any appreciable strength. Our first attacks must be directed against the inconsistency of the centrists, and not the bureaucracy. That again must be determined by what we find once we are inside. Obviously, we will not be able to raise the issue of the Fourth International immediately. History will provide the opportunity for raising that issue. The question of the Fourth International is not a burning issue to the masses of Great Britain today. If we take a revolutionary position on the popular issues that concern the masses today, then inevitably we will be able to develop toward the question of the Fourth International. At all costs we must be very careful to avoid either sectarianism or opportunism—we must continually have our fingers on the pulse of the masses. It is well to remember that as the political situation develops, revolutionary work will become increasingly dangerous, and we will be better protected within the broad masses of the Labour Party than in the isolated and rotting corpse of the ILP, if even a corpse remains by then. It will undoubtedly be correct to leave a few capable comrades within the ILP to do fraction work. As regards the Marxist Group, when we enter the Labour Party a situation may rapidly arise requiring one or two of our best speakers to bring forth our complete revolutionary position thus deliberately inviting expulsion for themselves, as martyrs are
useful to every movement. Such expelled comrades will find useful avenues of work, e.g., in the Lenin Club.\(^{379}\)

**Q.** Do you think that the idea of the Lenin Club, as developed by the ILP group, will be useful in our future work within the Labour Party?

**A:** That will also depend on the concrete conditions that we find in the Labour Party, but from this distance it would appear that it could serve a useful function. But if it is to be of any use, it must be democratically controlled, with representatives from all the Bolshevik-Leninists and not merely the ILP group. Anything else would be pure sectarianism.

**Q:** Should the paper proposed by James be run as an independent organ of the acknowledged Trotskyists within the political organizations such as the Labour Party or as the organ of the Lenin Club without party affiliation?\(^{380}\)

**A:** That is difficult to say, as it must obviously depend on objective conditions. In any case, we must first make every effort to merge with the Groves-Dewar group in order to utilize *Red Flag*.\(^{381}\) I understand from Comrade Collins that previous approaches to Groves-Dewar have met with rebuffs. Even if that remains true, once we are inside the Labour Party, the supporters of Groves-Dewar must realize that we are 100 percent with them and further rebuffs from their two leaders should result in their coming over to us. In the event of our failure to secure *Red Flag* as the organ of our tendency, then we will have to decide which is better for our work—an independent Lenin Club organ, or a group paper within the Labour Party. To me this question is not of first-rate importance, as in any case the Stalinists would expose our connection with a Lenin Club paper. This development on the part of the Stalinists we can anticipate without any question. Just as the Labour bureaucracy serves as the police of capitalism within the ranks of the working class, so the Stalinist leaders will act as the police of the Labour Party bureaucracy. This identification of the Labour Party and the CP bureaucracies will afford us an excellent opportunity to win over the rank and file of the CP. The entire question of a paper and of a Lenin Club becomes formalistic and unreal while we remain outside the Labour Party and isolated from the masses.
Q: What should our attitude be toward Peace Councils?

A: The question of the Peace Council bears a certain resemblance to that of the People's Front. For example, in France we tell the workers that we know the People's Front is all wrong. While the workers support it, we say to them that we are perfectly willing to collaborate loyally with the working class organizations, the CP and SP, but we refuse under any circumstances to have anything to do with the bourgeois participants in the People's Front. We raise the slogan "Down with the Radical ministers!" We do not shout "Down with the People's Front!" at present because we have nothing to replace it as yet. In the same manner, we cannot turn our backs on the Peace Councils and say "Down with the Peace Councils!" because as yet there is no revolutionary party to give a clear lead on the question of war and peace. In the analogy, however, there is this fundamental difference. One is a question of state power in a revolutionary situation. The other is a question of utilizing existing committees as long as they are supported by mass workers' organizations. Therefore, it is necessary to get representatives wherever possible on the Peace Councils and to direct our attacks in the beginning against certain of the bourgeois participants (who these will be depends on the reaction of the workers to our propaganda).

It is understood, of course, that the very first task of revolutionaries in any mass organization is to demand that it be democratically controlled by the workers. That agitation will give us our first opportunity of attacking the private invitations given out by the CP bureaucrats to so-called progressive bourgeois figures. By attacking the leading bourgeois pacifists and subsequently the participation of all bourgeois elements, we will inevitably run counter to the class-collaborationist policies of the Labour Party-CP bureaucrats. We can then say to the workers: "We have our differences with Comrades Morrison, Pollitt, and Lansbury, but we are perfectly willing to work loyally with them. They, however, wish to expel us because we refuse to work with open class enemies." This will have the effect of making the Labour Party-CP bureaucrats bear the responsibility for open class collaboration before the workers. This situation correctly used will discredit not only the bureaucrats but also the entire idea of Peace Councils. But it is first necessary to get on to them.

Q: How can we best deal with the very important colonial
question, a fundamental question which we have so far almost entirely ignored?

A: A study of the first four congresses of the Comintern is essential. In addition, the general theses of the Fourth International on the colonial question will serve to indicate the general line, but the concrete application will be determined by the special situation.

Q: Is it even possible to consider at this stage an independent existence outside the mass organizations?

A: The fact that Lenin was not afraid to split from Plekhanov in 1905 and to remain as a small isolated group bears no weight, because the same Lenin remained inside the Social Democracy until 1912 and in 1920 urged the affiliation of the British CP to the Labour Party. While it is necessary for the revolutionary party to maintain its independence at all times, a revolutionary group of a few hundred comrades is not a revolutionary party and can work most effectively at present by opposition to the social patriots within the mass parties. In view of the increasing acuteness of the international situation, it is absolutely essential to be within the mass organizations while there is the possibility of doing revolutionary work within them. Any such sectarian, sterile, and formalistic interpretation of Marxism in the present situation would disgrace an intelligent child of ten.
LET US KNOW THE FACTS

August 15, 1936

At the moment I am preparing this statement, I do not have available the original text of the sensational Tass report. I am familiar with it only through a secondary source. But the main features of it, which have been transmitted to me, are sufficient to brand this report immediately as one of the greatest falsifications in the history of politics.

The Tass agency speaks of a conspiracy of the so-called Trotsky-Zinoviev group. The ruling bureaucracy calls every criticism directed against it a conspiracy. I assume that criticism is spreading to wider and wider circles in the Soviet Union. This phenomenon I can only greet with joy. It is quite possible that many, and quite diverse, elements who represent this critical feeling have referred to my name—i.e., to my ideas and my writings. But the Tass report also declares that the charges concern a terrorist plot against the leaders of the regime, and that this conspiracy is directed by me from Norway.

I herewith declare that this contention does not contain an iota of truth. To everyone who is acquainted with recent political history, it is indubitable that the report circulated by Tass stands in sharpest contradiction to my ideas and to the whole of my activities, which at the present time are devoted exclusively to writing.

Ever since my entry into the revolutionary movement in 1897, I have been, as have all Russian Marxists, an uncompromising opponent of individual terror as a method of struggle, a method which in the final analysis can only serve the interests of absolutism and Bonapartism.

I emphatically assert that since I have been in Norway I have had no connections with the Soviet Union—nor have I received a single letter from the Soviet Union; neither have I written a single letter to anybody there either directly or through other persons.

My sole activity in connection with the Soviet Union has been
Fishing outside Kristiansand with friends, August 1936.
restricted to the writing of articles which were published in the world press and to a book which will be published in the near future in several countries. My wife and I have not been able even once to exchange a single line with our son, who has been employed in the Soviet Union in a scientific capacity and who has had no political connections whatsoever.\(^{384}\)

Because I am a man without a country and am now utilizing the right of asylum in Norway, I believe that the accuracy of the contention that has been advanced that I have directed a terrorist conspiracy from Norway can be best determined by the appointment of a competent government commission which would investigate the charges contained in the documents. On my part, I am prepared to furnish such a commission a full accounting of my activities in Norway—day by day, and hour by hour. It is also my opinion that this measure could be made more complete by the nomination of an impartial international commission by the labor organizations of the entire world, or better still of its international leaders, to investigate the charges made in the Soviet Union. This commission could make a public report of its investigation. I maintain that its report would expose the charges in all their falsity. I am also prepared to accept any other method of investigation that would give public opinion a better explanation of the principal motives which have prompted the charges against the others and myself. In this matter I have nothing to fear and nothing to hide. As for myself, I am only concerned with establishing the truth.

Leon Trotsky
OPEN LETTER TO
THE OSLO CHIEF OF POLICE

August 19, 1936

Sir:

Without waiting any longer for the copy of my testimony which I was promised, I have the honor: (1) to send you the copy of the Nation in question, containing my article, which has been the subject of accusations from a certain quarter; (2) to supplement my testimony with the following declaration.

In certain quarters, it is still said that I violated the commitments to which I freely agreed. I must reject this malicious accusation most energetically.

The conditions which were proposed to me and which I accepted can only have the following meaning: on the one hand, that I renounce political activity in Norway and, on the other hand, that I do no illegal, secret, conspiratorial work affecting states friendly to Norway. But these conditions in no way signified or signify that I should renounce open literary activity in the economic, social, and political field. Literary activity is my profession, and in my articles and books I can only express opinions which are my own. I have never hidden my opinions from anyone. My collaboration with the major world press, and with magazines (most of which now adhere to the Fourth International), dates not from my arrival in Norway, but from the beginning of 1929, that is, the first day I was expelled to Turkey. I have carried on this literary activity for almost eight years, in Prinkipo, in France, and recently in Norway, without encountering any objections. I could not and cannot suppose, even for an instant, that the conditions which I signed are an exceptional measure applied to me. The same is true for “suspicious visits.” I cannot change the fact that knowing my past causes many people to wish to see me, some for superficial curiosity, others to hear my opinions on questions which seem important to them, not to mention the large proportion of journalists, publishers, etc.
The very idea that the conditions forbid my receiving visitors is hardly imaginable. In that case, my stay in Norway would mean not the exercise of the democratic right of asylum, but imprisonment, pure and simple.

Such intentions may be attributed to the Norwegian government by the fascist "accusers"; but they have nothing in common with my concept of the right of asylum.

In the August 15 issue of *Arbeiderbladet* I find the following statement by the minister of foreign affairs: "But we had, of course, a clear understanding that he (i.e., Trotsky) intended to continue his activities as an author and write expository feature articles about what was happening in the outside world. That sort of thing the government did not count as political activity."

In view of this authoritative and perfectly clear statement, allow me to stress the following fact: Some months after my arrival, my autobiography was published by the Tiden Norsk publishing house. Yesterday, after returning to Weksal, I received from the same publisher a proposal concerning my biography of Lenin. These books contain the same ideas as my recent articles in the international press. These distinguished "accusers" could cite from my books—for example, from my autobiography—hundreds of pages to prove that I am a Marxist and a revolutionary. But these revelations and discoveries do not in the least change the fact that I have not participated at all in the political life of Norway and that my literary activity is conducted completely in public.

The charge made against me by the Tass agency of Moscow a few days ago is quite a different matter. If this charge contained even a tiny kernel of truth, it would naturally mean a criminal violation of the conditions of the right of asylum on my part. But this charge is a separate question. In the coming days, I will communicate to public opinion all the clarifications at my disposal on this subject, and I hope to prove that if there is a crime in this case, it is not one by me against the Soviet government, but one against me by the GPU and its mentors. On this subject I will only say, briefly: the trial which is beginning today in Moscow is not a new trial, but a new and corrected version of the January 1935 trial [on the Kirov assassination]. Then too, my name was brought up, though indirectly. The provocative role of the Latvian consul, a direct agent of the GPU, who had allegedly financed the terrorist act and allegedly asked the assassin for a letter to me, was exposed so clearly that this part of the judicial amalgam was dropped completely and
Medved, head of the Leningrad GPU, who had carried out the task assigned to him so poorly, was sentenced to three years in prison. After that, it took the GPU almost two years to correct the errors which had been committed, to find new "witnesses," to forge new "confessions" from those who had already been sentenced. This work seems to have reached a point today where it can be presented publicly. It is possible that the new presentation will be superficially more impressive than the first. The great efforts of the bureaucracy are explained by its discontent with my literary activity, which finds a response among the Russian population, as one can see from reading the Soviet newspapers. But no politically advanced person can take seriously the idea that I am organizing terrorist acts against Soviet leaders or that I collaborate with the Gestapo.

To summarize, I wish to draw the following conclusion: the allegations of a section of the Norwegian press that I collaborated on the agrarian program of the NAP, participated in meetings of the NAP, etc., do not need to be refuted. The minister of justice has stated publicly that the views of Trotsky are not those of the Norwegian Labor Party. I can only associate myself with this statement and consider the accusation to be dealt with on this point, in all of its absurdity. As for the rest of the allegations, I am accused, on the one hand, of directing the revolutionary movement in France, Spain, Belgium, Greece, etc., together with Stalin, and, on the other, of working with the Gestapo to organize terrorist acts against the Soviet leaders. Certain newspapers are even able to make both accusations simultaneously on the same page. But each cancels the other. They are both false and I find it necessary to use strong terms: they are deceitfully fabricated.

Yours,
Leon Trotsky
WORSE THAN DREYFUS AND REICHSTAG CASES$^{388}$

August 19, 1936

... For political vengeance the trial puts the Dreyfus scandal and the Reichstag fire trial in the shadow.

The trial is all fraudulent. The confessions were forced by the GPU, which gives the accused a choice between confessing according to the GPU's desires and taking lesser penalties, or death.

If I were in Russia I could easily disprove the accusations. But I have copies of every letter I sent in the past seven years, and granted time I shall prove that provocateurs have been active in the Moscow trial for political revenge.

I will make the accusers the accused.
WHO IS V. OLBERG?389

August 20, 1936

According to the indictment, V. Olberg declared that he entered the Soviet Union under Trotsky's instructions for the purpose of committing counterrevolutionary activity and especially the assassination of Stalin. A person who undertakes such an extraordinary mission must be not only well known to Trotsky but also the recipient of his greatest confidence (accepting for the moment the hypothesis that Trotsky is looking for people to commit terrorist acts). However, the testimony of Olberg himself reveals that Olberg never met Trotsky! And not because he did not wish it.

By happy accident, I found today among a file of my old papers two letters concerning V. Olberg; and they revived an episode which was absolutely insignificant at the time, but which today is of the greatest political importance.

In the beginning of 1930, I was looking for a secretary who understood Russian. My German friends, Franz Pfemfert (a well-known radical editor) and his wife (the translator of my autobiography), received a proposal from a Lettish citizen, V. Olberg, to come to Prinkipo as my secretary. The Pfemferts invited Olberg to their home in order to find out what kind of a person he was. On April 1, 1930, Franz Pfemfert wrote to me: "Olberg produces the most unfavorable and the most untrustworthy impression." The letter explains that Olberg, a former Stalinist, had pretended overnight to have changed his ideas in favor of the Opposition, and had immediately asked certain very indiscreet questions about the Russian Opposition, Trotsky, the conditions of his life, etc. "We must not underestimate the Stalin clique," continued Pfemfert. "They will stop at nothing in order to penetrate our ranks with spies. . . . It is possible that Olberg is merely a journalist and not yet a direct agent of Stalin. But he is . . . a hysterical, arrogant, and tactless type. . . . Your home is no place for Olberg, because he will become in twenty-four hours
an insufferable burden for you. Possibly—no, surely even for the future. He will use his visit to you for his ‘writings’—if not for reports to the GPU.”

A letter from Mrs. Pfemfert of April 2, 1930, said: “When we heard that there was a possibility of Olberg visiting you, we were horror-struck.” This letter characterizes Olberg as a degenerate and corrupt type.

After such “recommendations,” there was no longer any question of engaging Olberg as my secretary. He disappeared totally from my notice. Now this man claims—or more accurately, his instructors make him claim—that he was sent by me to the Soviet Union in order to assassinate Stalin.

I repeat—I never met Olberg and he, himself, does not dare to affirm the contrary. The only thing I know about him is from the two above-quoted letters from friends who have my full confidence. The fact that the GPU cannot find a better witness against me throws a great light on the entire trial. I have no doubt that the other witnesses are of the same character. I hope to have the opportunity to prove this in the next day or so.

P.S.—Mr. Franz Pfemfert is now in exile in Carlsbad, Czechoslovakia, working as a photographer. He will surely confirm the above.
INDIVIDUAL TERROR
AND MASS TERROR

August 20, 1936

We Russian Bolsheviks have been reproached a great deal for our terror. It does not exactly seem timely to me to enter once again into the details of this question. Suffice it to recall that the phase of terror in the Russian revolution did not begin until after the intervention of the Entente powers, who with the aid of money and arms organized insurrections against Soviet power, just as Hitler and Mussolini prepared and support the rebellion of Franco today. In this sense revolutionary "terror" is nothing but the use of armed force against the armed force of the oppressors and exploiters. Napoleon understood well after the experience of the Great French Revolution that no large social upheaval can come about without civil war and, as a consequence, mass terror. But a revolution cannot be provoked at will. It breaks out—as Engels once expressed it—like a natural cataclysm in human history. And once you are in labor, you cannot argue about the advantages or inconveniences of childbirth pains. A revolutionary party seeks to alleviate the revolution's childbirth pains and thus to reduce to a minimum its concomitant bloodletting. If there had been a revolutionary party in Spain, the popular victory would today be assured, and furthermore paid for with far smaller sacrifices. In this historical sense one can no more reject terror than reject history itself.

However, the word "terror" is often used to designate attempted individual political assassinations, which is something altogether different. In the history of Russia individual terror played a significant role as the political instrument of the narrow layer of intelligentsia in its struggle against czarism. The Marxist tendency grew up in permanent head-on conflict with the individual terrorist method. The Marxists—not by chance—sought to lean on social evolution, that is, on the movement coming into being, whereas the intellectuals, isolated from the
masses, tried to provoke "their" revolution artificially, and on their own authority, with bombs.

I grew from political immaturity in an atmosphere of struggle against adventurist and terrorist illusions. During the years from 1897 to 1908 I published numerous articles and made many speeches against individual terrorism and for the struggle of the revolutionary class. In 1911, when terrorist tendencies arose among the Viennese proletariat, Friedrich Adler, the present secretary of the Second International, asked me to write an article on terrorism, which appeared in Der Kampf, published by Adler, in November 1911. This article, which to this day I consider quite correct, counterposes the organized class struggle to terrorist adventurism. The principal argument is summarized as follows: Individual terrorism is particularly inadmissible in our view because it reduces the masses' importance in their own consciousness, because it reconciles them to powerlessness and orients their attention and hope toward a great avenger and liberator.

As the irony of history would have it, Friedrich Adler, who in 1911 declared himself in full agreement with my article, five years later, during the war, committed a terrorist act against Austrian Prime Minister Stuergkh. Even though all my sympathies were with Friedrich Adler, I counterposed to his individualist act, which was above all an act of despair, the method of Liebknecht, who, during the war, went to a public square in Berlin to distribute an appeal against the war. Our method is Liebknecht's and not Friedrich Adler's.

By the same token I do not see the slightest reason to alter this position on individual terrorism today. If in the struggle against czarism we criticized the assassination of this or that minister or general, or even of the czar himself (and certainly not out of sympathy for them) in favor of mass insurrection against czarism, then no serious person will believe that today we could recommend or use that method against the Soviet bureaucracy. The Soviet bureaucracy, which could also be called the Soviet aristocracy, has certainly become the greatest social danger to the country's development. But it can only be replaced by the conscious vanguard of the working class in a mass political struggle in the country. Kirov, who fell victim to assassination by the young bureaucrat Nikolaev, was immediately replaced by another bureaucrat, Zhdanov. There are hundreds and thousands of aspirants, always ready to step into the breach.

The press of Moscow speaks in every case of the alleged
preparation of an attempt against Stalin. But Stalin himself is only a *primus inter pares* (first among equals). The gentlemen in charge think of themselves as the creators of History and as the irreplaceable benefactors of Humanity. In reality Stalin is only the representative of the ruling caste. Its strength makes him strong; its intelligence makes him intelligent (or rather, its cunning makes him cunning). The elimination of Stalin would not change much. Molotov, or someone else, would fulfill the same function with just about the same success if the masses remained passive and dispersed.

The isolated bureaucrat fears terrorism. The bureaucracy as a caste exploits to its advantage every terrorist act. We see this in the most clear and shocking manner in the USSR itself. The ruling clique, since the assassination of Kirov, has shot hundreds of people and has sent tens of thousands to prison, exile, or concentration camps. The struggle against terrorism serves the bureaucracy as a pretext for strangling the slightest movement toward opposition, all critical thought in the country and in particular within the ruling party itself. Under these conditions the use of terrorism by anyone would signify the most glaring form of political and physical suicide. If those in power in Moscow attribute such methods to me it only proves how low the political level has fallen in the Soviet Union. The unheard-of grossness of this falsification is in the first place a reflection on the ruling layer itself. This is why it is especially significant to see the tenacity with which the bureaucracy revives the Kirov assassination. This fact proves, on the one hand, that attempted assassinations, at least against the highest-level figures, are only rare exceptions; but on the other hand it proves that the bureaucracy needs these attempts to justify and reinforce its own authority. This need explains the strange fact that after an interval of a year and a half, the same trial has been launched once again in an expanded “edition,” which, for example, even Hitler did not dare to do with the Reichstag fire trial.
August 21, 1936

It has now become a matter of the lives of many people living in the USSR and of my honor as a man who takes part in political affairs. I hold my own opinions and I have always defended them. I am still of the same opinions as previously. I am a revolutionary, not a terrorist. When Friedrich Adler assassinated Austrian Prime Minister Stuergkh in 1916, I declared that my policy was not that of Adler, but that of Karl Liebknecht. Karl Liebknecht went into the Berlin streets to distribute leaflets against the war.

Had I wished to hide my opinions I need never have gone into exile for the third time. But I am a revolutionary. If I could go to Spain today, I would do so. I would fight for the revolution against the fascist rebels—I say this openly and frankly—but I cannot go to Spain and it is absurd to say now that I am taking part in something that is going on there.

In what follows, chronology plays an important role. This is why I ask you to pay particular attention to the development of the events. The GPU has a great deal of talent, but it does not know the art of scientific chronology. I arrived in Turkey in February 1929, after my expulsion from the USSR. By March 4, I had written the following in the Russian review Biulleten Oppozitsii, which appeared in July 1929 in Paris: “There remains only one thing for Stalin: to try to draw a line of blood between the official party and the Opposition. He absolutely must connect the Opposition with terrorist crimes, preparation of armed insurrection, etc. But precisely that road has been blocked by the leadership of the Opposition. . . . Hence Stalin’s plan . . . to exile the Opposition [leadership]” (at this time the expulsion of a number of people was being prepared) “and thereby free his own hands for criminal work against the young rank-and-file Oppositionists whose names are not yet known to the masses,
especially abroad. . . . That is why after the exile of the leaders of the Opposition we must expect with certainty an attempt by the Stalin clique in one way or another to provoke one or another so-called oppositional group to an adventure, and in case of failure—to fabricate and plant on the Opposition a 'terrorist act' or a 'military plot'” ["What Is the Immediate Aim of Exiling Trotsky?" in Writings 29].

Every individual, no matter which party he belongs to, will recognize the great importance of this quotation. If you can read Russian, you can see from the Biulleten—in which all my articles have been published for seven and a half years—that I have always been an opponent of individual terror, and that even at that time I warned of what would be coming.

The first attack that came was the assassination of Kirov, in December 1934. Kirov was an administrator of average ability; in my view, of no political importance. After the assassination the government gave two explanations. First they said that the assassination was the work of White terrorists from Poland, Rumania, and other countries around the Soviet borders. Suddenly, on December 17, it was announced that the assassin, Nikolaev, was a member of the Leningrad Opposition. Perhaps Nikolaev really was a member of the Leningrad Opposition, but that was in 1926 and not in 1934. The chapter of the Leningrad Opposition was closed in 1926.

Two weeks later Zinoviev was drawn into the affair and accused, along with his partisans, of being an assassin. In 1926 Zinoviev collaborated with me within the framework of the party and was considered an Oppositionist. When, in 1928, the bureaucracy became stronger, Zinoviev capitulated. From 1929 to 1934 Zinoviev and Kamenev were considered to be traitors to the Opposition—the Biulleten Oppozitsii pointed this out with all the necessary clarity.

When I learned that these two had been linked up with the attack, I said that something extraordinary had happened. I had no knowledge that they had once more rejoined the Opposition. I did not doubt for a moment that they had nothing to do with the assassination. These two were brought before a tribunal in January 1935 and up until then my name had not been mentioned in connection with the affair. This was only done in the charges.

Look. These are my own books. Some of them are slightly scorched. This was due to the fire we had in Constantinople. These books are the result of forty years of literary activity, and
in all of them you will notice that I have been an opponent of individual terror—in the Soviet Union as well as in the rest of the world.

In 1935 I was not accused, but only mentioned. It was said that Nikolaev had declared that before the attack he had had relations with the consul of a foreign country. He had received 5000 rubles from this consul to make the attempt. In exchange Nikolaev had to render a service to the consul: procure him a letter from Trotsky.

Gentlemen, this was all that was said about me in the charges. But the judge neglected to question Nikolaev about this letter!

When the consul was drawn into the affair, all the other consuls protested and demanded the publication of the name of this shameful colleague. Following this, it was learned after a long delay that the name was Skujeneck and that he was from Latvia. A demand was made that the Soviet government address a diplomatic note to Latvia, but the reply was: “No, the consul has fled safe and sound to Finland.” Certainly he had not acted at that time as a consul but as a private individual. I demanded many times: “Why was he not brought forward? Why was he not placed before a tribunal? Is it not because he is a GPU agent?”

In my opinion the attack on Kirov was arranged in order to crush the Opposition—however, there had been no intention of killing Kirov; the attack was to have been prevented at the last moment. When the matter took the wrong turn the GPU chief in Leningrad, Medved, was called to account. This was the third trial in connection with the attack!

Medved and several other GPU functionaries were accused of knowing of the attack, but of having done nothing to prevent it. Medved confessed and was sentenced to three years in prison.

I know Medved. He is not a man of independent politics—it was Stalin himself who directed this affair in order to strike at the Opposition. I do not know today whether Nikolaev himself was a GPU agent. The fact that he succeeded in getting into Kirov’s office—Kirov had lofty functions and by no means everybody had access to him—is an indication that seems to prove it. Medved, in any case, found Nikolaev through the intermediary of his GPU agents. Nikolaev was a desperate young bureaucrat. What psychological factors drove him to murder I do not know.

But the persecution of the Oppositionists began. I was not on the wrong track when I foresaw that events would take this turn. The trial now being held is a new edition of the January 1935
trial. At that time we had a general rehearsal. Now we have the premiere.

This affair has been in preparation for the last year and a half. I am now not only the organizer of the attack, but I am also linked with the Gestapo, gentlemen. And my name was mentioned only in passing in the 1935 charges.

I am linked up with the Gestapo? And with so powerful an ally I could achieve only the assassination of Kirov?

New witnesses are being brought into the trial today. I have heard a large number of the names for the first time now. I do not know these people. And no more talk is heard of the consul who disappeared. These witnesses were obtained during the year and a half that has just passed. If I were in the USSR today, I would be lost. I am, however, abroad, and I will call hundreds of witnesses who will prove that I had nothing to do with the Kirov assassination.

Q: It is claimed that you met Berman-Yurin at a rendezvous in Copenhagen and Oslo, on the subject of the Kirov assassination.396

A: From Constantinople I visited Copenhagen to give an address to a student organization. During my stay in Copenhagen, some forty or so persons visited me. I remember them all, but there was no Berman among them—if he has not changed his name since then—nor was there any other Soviet citizen. There was a Russian-speaking Lithuanian with whom I talked.

Among my papers I have found the following facts, which throw some light. In 1930, a certain Olberg tried to become my secretary. Franz Pfemfert, at that time editor of Die Aktion, warned me by a letter dated April 1, 1930, in the most resolute fashion, that Olberg was a suspicious character and probably a GPU agent. When Olberg seemed to be the basis of the whole accusation, I volunteered the material characterizing him to the press [see “Who is V. Olberg?”]. It is simply absurd to state that I have given terrorist missions to a man whom I do not know and against whom a good friend warned me.

During my stay in Norway I have not received any visitors from the USSR. Nor have I written to the USSR, directly or indirectly. Until two years ago my wife was in contact with our son. At that time he was a teacher in the Higher Technical School. I do not know where he is today. By accident we learned that he has been exiled to Siberia. He has never occupied himself
with politics, but it is enough that he is a son of Trotsky. The letters we received from him up until twenty months ago consisted only of short greetings, like my wife's letters to him. She also has endeavored to learn where he is through an Oslo bank, but the Soviet authorities simply reply: "address unknown."

Our other son, on the other hand, has participated in political life. In 1928 he followed us to Asia of his own free will and then came on to Turkey. He has just finished his studies in the Sorbonne.

In a dispatch sent out by Moscow on the subject of the trial, a letter is cited which I sent to Smirnov through my son. In this letter I asked for three things: (1) that Stalin and Voroshilov be killed; (2) that cells be organized in the army; and (3) that in case of war all shortcomings be taken advantage of in order to seize power. The whole letter comprises five lines! Five lines for these three tasks. That is a little too concise.

This is all gross falsification, a lie; it is an infamous lie which is aimed against me. But in the USSR there is no opportunity to raise a critical voice. Criticism is muffled there and absurd accusations are uncontested for the moment. Here there is an opportunity to criticize, and, gentlemen, I criticize!
A MINIATURE EDITION OF THE MOSCOW INDICTMENT

August 21, 1936

To the editors of Arbeiderbladet

L’Humanite, the Paris organ which represents Stalin’s policies, reports in its August 19 number the Norwegian government’s Trotsky investigation under the incredible title: “A meeting between fascist agents and Trotsky.” Literally, the note says the following: “The investigation will focus around a supposed visit to Trotsky’s residence by members of a fascist organization.”

Therefore—according to the Stalinist press—my interference in Norwegian matters consists in maintaining active political connections with fascists. The French Stalinists are not in power. Therefore they cannot stage a trial against me. However, the method is the same: The short note in l’Humanite is only a miniature edition of the Moscow indictment.

Leon Trotsky
To the editors of the Copenhagen Social-Demokraten

Dear Editors:

In the August 20 Oslo Dagbladet, I find an excerpt from one of your articles on the Moscow trials which concerns the speech I delivered during my brief sojourn in Copenhagen [November 1932]. I attribute the greatest importance to this article, or at least to the part which I have chanced to come upon. When I learned through the Norwegian newspapers about the first Tass report on the Moscow indictments, I said something to the following effect in the midst of the family of the editor Knudsen (Norwegian Labor Party):

Berman-Yurin, who seems to be one of the principal witnesses against me, is entirely unknown to me. He is probably one of the GPU’s agents provocateurs. However, the man made an extremely poor selection in the time and place of his alleged contact with me. For I happened to be in Copenhagen in the house of my friend Boeggild, who has since died, when I heard a report that Zinoviev had died, which, however, later proved to be false. At that time, in the presence of several friends, I immediately gave a short character sketch of Zinoviev, in which I pointed out that from 1923 to 1926 he sharply opposed me and my friends, from 1926 to 1928 he drew closer to our position, and from 1928 until his (ostensible) death he once again became our enemy. I said that, nevertheless, we were the only ones qualified to defend his memory against the slanders of the Stalinist press. That same day or the day after I repeated these very same thoughts in the midst of a larger circle of friends.

Although your contributor had only second-hand knowledge of the whole affair, namely from the late Boeggild, he repeats it with outstanding accuracy. The conclusion drawn from this episode by the author of the article, who is unknown to me, destroys the
testimony of Berman-Yurin. In November 1932, I could not trust even a living Zinoviev with a confidential political mission, since I considered him a political opponent, and still less a Zinoviev who, at the very time of my brief visit to Copenhagen, I thought had just died. One can also add that all of my friends who were present at the two short eulogies I gave for Zinoviev are still living—with the exception of Boeggild—and are all certainly prepared to give their testimony.

I can only assure your readers and public opinion in general that all the rest of the testimony and confessions are in no case based on a more solid foundation.

I hope to establish this in the near future on the basis of the documents and with the aid of voluntary—not extorted—testimony, thus tearing the despicable amalgam of the GPU to shreds, down to the last detail.

Thanking you in advance for the publication of this letter, I am, very respectfully,

Yours,
Leon Trotsky
STATEMENT ON THE TRIAL

August 23, 1936

The Confessions

The "confessions" made by Zinoviev, Kamenev, etc.—politicians known to the whole world—by virtue of their content and tone are a crude confirmation of my first statement of August 19 to the effect that the accused will be the real accusers. During the first judicial proceeding, on January 15, 1935, Zinoviev and Kamenev were accused of being morally responsible for Kirov's murder, and at the time they stated only that they were morally responsible for Kirov's murder. Now they are accused of having directly organized that same terrorist act and of having prepared still others; and with the same forced goodwill, they declare this to be so. But neither one of them has said a single word about whether he had any concrete relations whatsoever with the assassin Nikolaev, and if so, in what manner, with which intermediaries, in what place, at what time and with whom the meetings took place, etc. For his part, the prosecutor has carefully avoided inconveniencing the defendants and witnesses by such questions.

The statements of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others resemble the lead articles in Pravda and Izvestia, whose chief editors, incidentally, are accused of complicity in terrorist acts (Bukharin, Radek). One may easily appreciate the convenience of these self-accusations, consciously false, which fundamentally represent accusations against someone else, namely, the undersigned. Nevertheless, one must not lose sight of the fact that these confessions—which are 100 percent form, without any concrete content—in the mouths of these unfortunate defendants are a way of telling the public: All is lies and falsifications.

The Circumstances of My Stay in Copenhagen

Besides Berman-Yurin, who is unknown to me, Fritz David, whom I do not know either, claims to have received orders from me from Copenhagen with a view toward terrorist acts. The
statements of these witnesses prove that they do not have the faintest idea about my stay in Copenhagen. I came straight from Prinkipo to Copenhagen with four young friends. Since this was my first trip to Western Europe in sixteen years, some friends from Germany, Holland, Belgium, France, Norway, and other countries came immediately; no fewer than thirty to forty persons, not counting, on the one hand, my Danish hosts, and on the other hand many journalists, photographers, film-makers, etc. The young people, rightly or wrongly, had fears for my safety. Anyone who wanted to get to my office had to go through another room where there were always four, five, six, or more friends. Therefore, it is out of the question that anyone might have seen me without being known to several friends who are now living in Western Europe. Thus any regular tribunal would have a perfect opportunity to verify by means of their testimony the assertions of the two GPU agents who supposedly received terrorist orders from me in Copenhagen, and to become convinced of the complete absurdity of these assertions.

**My Son Leon Sedov**

All of the terrorists supposedly sent abroad by me make references to my son Leon Sedov, at the time a student in Berlin, now living in Paris, where he has just taken his examinations at the Sorbonne. What emerges clearly from these statements, carefully screened by the Tass agency, is that the “terrorists” are supposed to have been selected by my son and that only two of them were put in contact with me in Copenhagen. It would follow from this that I supposedly transmitted incitements to terrorist acts to persons I did not know, through a young student who acted as intermediary, which in itself is an absurdity. I can only explain the need to resort to such nonsense by the fact that the GPU agents provocateurs would naturally have had greater opportunity to approach a student at the University of Berlin or Paris, to speak to him, or at least to watch him, than would have been the case with me. They furthermore are attempting, in passing, to compromise the young man in the eyes of the French authorities. Anyone capable of thinking politically will reach his own judgment in the matter.

**The Gestapo**

The charges relative to my supposed relationship with the
Gestapo are so stupid and vulgar, in all their impudence, that they do not need to be refuted.

**An Independent Trial Procedure**

These notes have only a hasty character. I am now in the process of studying all the material, in pamphlet form, from the legal and political point of view. In the meantime I am ready to reply to any questions which the world press might wish to ask. In my opinion, it would be best if the proposal made by the conservative newspaper *Morgenbladet* in its August 21 edition could be carried out as soon as possible—to have the Soviet authorities’ charges against me examined by an independent Norwegian tribunal. I am willing, naturally, to appear before a Danish tribunal to account for my activities on Danish soil. A free and open proceeding would be of historic importance, not for me personally but for the trial.
TOMSKY’S SUICIDE

August 23, 1936

Tomsky’s suicide seems to be a logical link in the chain of the Moscow trial. Tomsky was one of the strongest personalities in the Soviet Union, the greatest figure the Russian proletariat has produced from its own ranks in thirty years. In Lenin’s day he was a member of the Political Bureau and later he was secretary of the powerful all-Russian trade union federation. In the last years of disgrace and persecution he was still the head of the state publishing house.

Yesterday’s news reads that Bukharin and Rykov, with whom Tomsky had formed a political alliance, were summoned for an examination by the head of the GPU, Yagoda. The result is said to be unsatisfactory. That means that on the basis of the “revelations,” Yagoda requested the leaders of the former Right Opposition to confess their alleged terrorist connections. Tomsky is a totally different type of man from Zinoviev and Kamenev; he has a strong will, self-respect, and pride. He has answered Yagoda’s demand to participate in an outrageous political falsification with suicide, and this suicide is irrefutable evidence of the falseness of the indictment and the whole trial.

It must be remembered that the Political Bureau of the Bolshevik Party had the following composition: Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Tomsky, and Stalin. Lenin has died. Among the others, five have been indicted as terrorists and conspirators against the Soviet state they built. The political objective of this trial is the complete extermination of the old Bolshevik Party, its traditions, and its program. Tomsky’s suicide closes one whole historical epoch and opens a new one.
August 23, 1936

1. I was deprived of my citizenship on February 20, 1932, by a ruling of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR. I answered it with my “Open Letter to the CEC Presidium.” This letter (dated March 1, 1932) was published for the first time in Russian in the *Biulleten Oppozitsii*, in March 1932 in Berlin. This “Open Letter” says: “It is time to carry out Lenin’s final and insistent advice: remove Stalin” [see “On Being Deprived of Soviet Citizenship” in *Writings* 32].

This letter—which, at the time, was published in all the languages of the civilized world—was viewed during the [present] trial as a “secret document” and was interpreted as a directive to assassinate Stalin. This sounds incredible, but it is true!

2. I personally knew all of the sixteen executed, except for Olberg, Berman-Yurin, Fritz David, M. Lurie, and N. Lurie. Like a lot of young and old Marxists who were unknown to me, and even non-Marxists from every continent, Olberg wrote to me from Berlin in 1930 (from January until July). I always answer all the letters that are sent to me, even the insignificant ones. (I only make an exception of the lunatics, the autograph collectors, and all the pious people who are worried about my soul.)

I have now *found* all the letters Olberg sent me, as well as the copies of my answers. They deal almost exclusively with the German Communist Party, the Hitlerite danger, the Left Opposition, etc. (This correspondence can be submitted in full to any court at any time.)

The originals of Mr. Pfemfert and his wife’s kind letters (April 1 and 2, 1930) are at my home.

Since that time, I had forgotten all about Olberg, even his name. It was only during the Moscow trial that a young friend of mine, while sorting my old papers, let me know that he had noticed this name. In this way, I came across the above-mentioned letters.
I never knew anything about Berman-Yurin, David, or the two Luries before the trial, much less ever met them. As for the so-called Copenhagen visits, it will be essential to write about that again in detail, because the whole Copenhagen episode (the most important one!) was a very unfortunate idea for the GPU forgers: every single detail can be refuted.

As far as Dreitser is concerned, his name did not mean anything to me, at first. But my wife remembered that, indeed, an officer by that name was among the officers who, after my departure from the Kremlin in 1927, spontaneously guarded my private apartment for a few weeks. In 1928 Dreitser “capitulated” with a very hostile stab at me. Ever since, he completely disappeared from my horizon and even from my memory. I never wrote to him from abroad, not one line, and I had no relations with him at all.

3. It goes without saying that my son would be ready to appear before a court as a witness. His potential testimony is of the utmost importance. It is enough to say that my son has never been to Copenhagen. It can be irrefutably proven that in November 1932, while my wife and I were in Copenhagen (we were there for nine days!), he was in Berlin.

4. Among the executed I knew the following ones well, or pretty well: Zinoviev, Kamenev, Yevdokimov, Bakaev (all “Zinovievists”), Smirnov, Ter-Vaganian, Mrachkovsky (former “Trotskyists” who capitulated as early as 1928-29 and publicly took positions against me).

5. Reingold (a “Zinovievist”) was less well known to me. Pikel and Goltsman, I have seen a few times. Pikel was a “Zinovievist” for a while. Nobody trusted him. I did not have any relations with him. Goltsman did not belong to the Opposition at all. If I remember correctly, he “sympathized” with it, as did many petty and middle-level state functionaries of those years. I saw him two or three times in my life. It is possible and even probable that in January 1928 he came to our home, as did hundreds of other “liberal” Soviet functionaries, to take leave of my wife and me before our deportation to Central Asia.

Since then, in any case, I have never seen him, nor have I corresponded with him. I cannot say anything about his stay in Berlin.

During those years (1930-33)—years of the “collectivization”—there were plenty of dissatisfied Soviet functionaries who while they were abroad gave free expression to their critical opinions—at least between the four walls of a room. My cothinkers in
diverse European countries used to assemble such “critical depositions” and put them at my disposal. I made articles from this material for the Russian Biulleten, etc. My son sent me such communications several times during his stay in Berlin: all of them will be found in the Russian Biulleten. They are of the utmost interest if one wants to know my political state of mind, as well as that of my son and of his incidental visitors from the USSR. Did my son mention Goltsman’s name at the time? I do not remember, nor does my wife. It is possible that my son did not mention his source in that case, as in others, since my correspondence is never secure and “critical” people from the USSR risk a lot. Anyway, the name would not have meant much to me.

6. I remember rather well that my son met Smirnov once in a Berlin street in a manner totally unexpected for both of them. Smirnov was quite close to me until 1929, closer than any of the other accused. He was honest, sincere, devoted to our ideas, but not independent and a little frivolous. He needed someone to rely upon. After my expulsion he made his mea culpa (vigorously against me) and I declared him in the press to be politically dead. During the collectivization years he seemed, like many others, to have again come into a semi-oppositional state of mind. It was in that state of mind that he ran into my son. He told him various things about friends in the Opposition, about the tendencies in the USSR, about the contradictions in the bureaucracy and other things. (Details of all this can be found in the Russian Biulleten.) It is the clumsiest absurdity to think that my son, who was twenty-four at the time, could have given “terrorist directives” to this broken old man.
I was already rejoicing to be able to quietly continue my work on Lenin's biography. Now I have to spend time on the most disgusting slanders and false accusations. There is nothing to be done about it. The old Wilhelm Liebknecht used to say: "Whoever has to deal with politics must have a thick skin."

One may rightly wonder, why did Stalin start this miserable affair, which does damage to the whole working class movement? For very different—and to some extent contradictory—reasons:

1. To politically kill the Opposition he tried to use the Kirov assassination. But he thought that case would be easier than it actually was. As far as I am concerned, the business with the Latvian consul was a pitiful fiasco. As for Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the others, there is not one serious and honest person who believed that they had any link whatsoever with the assassin. Everyone—even in the Soviet Union—whispered that all this was an infamous GPU plot. In order to back up the first trial, Stalin had to start another one, this time better prepared.

2. The Comintern exists and, despite the turn toward opportunism and chauvinism, in the eyes of bourgeois public opinion it bears responsibility for the whole revolutionary movement. The Fourth International has often been described as an offshoot of the Third International. Stalin tried with all his might—remember his interview with Laval—to prove that the Comintern was no longer a revolutionary instrument. But his word was not always so easily believed. To strengthen his credit with the French bourgeoisie he thought it useful to take bloody measures against the Left Opposition.

3. But neither will he be able to renounce the Comintern. So-called "Trotskyism," i.e., the development and the continuity of Marx and Lenin's ideas, is spreading more and more, even in the ranks of the Comintern. Very important phenomena of this kind have been noted in France, in Czechoslovakia, and in other
countries. That is why it is a matter of life and death for Stalin, for his political authority before the workers, to destroy "Trotskyism." With words? That is not his way. He has the apparatus, which makes it possible for him to stage frame-up trials. . . . In this way the accusation must strengthen Stalin's authority simultaneously among the Allied bourgeoisie and among the revolutionary workers.

This contradictory double game is a sign of the internal inconsistency of the entire politics of Stalinism as a national ruling caste, on the one hand, and as an international working class organization (the Comintern), on the other.

If one passes from the political aspect to the personal one, there is another motive to be mentioned: that of desire for revenge, which is very pronounced in Stalin. One evening in 1924, Stalin, Dzerzhinsky, and Kamenev were sitting around a bottle of wine (I do not know if it was the first one) and chatting about this and that, when they came to wonder during the conversation about what each of them loved best in life. I do not recall the reply of Dzerzhinsky or of Kamenev, from whom I got the story. But Stalin said: "What is best in life is to choose your victim, prepare your blow well, take pitiless revenge, and then to go to bed."

You may remember that in 1921 Lenin had strongly advised the party against electing Stalin to the post of general secretary. "This cook"—Lenin literally said—"will prepare only spicy dishes." In any case, Lenin could not at that moment have had the slightest idea of just how spicy this cook's dishes would be.

You certainly have not forgotten that in his "testament" Lenin advised the party to remove Stalin from the post of general secretary because of his rudeness and disloyalty. This characterization, set down in an official letter, did not give Lenin's full thought. In the fall of 1926 Krupskaya told me, in the presence of Zinoviev and Kamenev: "Volodya (that is what she used to call Vladimir Lenin) said of Stalin: 'He lacks the most elementary sense of honor.'" And she repeated: "You understand? The most elementary human decency!" So far, I have never published those words because I did not want to bring grief to Krupskaya. But now that she is moving hopelessly down official channels and cannot raise the slightest protest against the infamous crimes of the ruling clique, I consider it correct to give publicity to those words of Lenin.

The defendants, who at the same time were used as witnesses for the prosecution, have justified their so-called terrorist intentions against Stalin by the fact that in the Soviet Union
everything depends on him. This conception suits the bureaucracy as well as the adventuristic terrorists. The almighty bureaucrat thinks: I am everything. The terrorists say of the almighty bureaucrat: he is everything. I say it once again: the terrorist is only the red shadow of bureaucratic absolutism. As for me, I am far from believing that Stalin is everything. On this point I have already said enough. Stalin's victory over the Opposition was a *social* act, not a personal one. It means the victory of a new ruling caste over the proletariat. Profound economic reasons in the USSR and profound political reasons in Western Europe were decisive in this victory. Stalin is only the head of a new ruling caste. In his brutal and ignorant mediocrity he best expresses the main features of the new parvenu ruling layer.

It would be pitiful stupidity to believe that with a gun or a bomb it would be possible to stop or avoid the great social and political reaction in the Soviet Union. The real way out can only be opened to the Russian people by the world proletariat. If the Spanish revolution is victorious today, if the French proletariat truly reaches power, if a new wind blows across Europe, then the Russian proletariat will begin to move and will become conscious again of its own great tradition. And then the bureaucratic heroes who think they are the center of the world will be swept into the dustbin of history.

If those gentlemen in the Kremlin want to accuse me of serving, with my writings, the future victory of the Soviet people over the reactionary bureaucracy, I answer: “Yes, I admit to being guilty!”
Q: What is your reply to the categorical accusations made against yourself and your son at the Moscow trial?

A: My preliminary judgment of the Moscow case has been expressed in several declarations. The case is one of the biggest, clumsiest, and most criminal plots of the secret police against world opinion.

There are so many elements in the case—by the way, there seem to be a series of new supplementary cases in preparation—that I think it certain that the criminal net will tear in several places, thereby allowing the truth to escape sooner or later.

The suicides of Tomsky and Sokolnikov already provide two tragic denials of the accusations.413

Q: Are you sure that Sokolnikov has committed suicide?

A: I hope not, but the report was broadcast in Norway.

The GPU gave these former opponents the choice either of slandering themselves, thus committing political suicide, or of being executed by the authorities; but they have preferred to reply to the formidable blackmail of the police by killing themselves.

I consider it possible that letters from those driven to death will yet reach the public.

Q: Do you suggest that the Soviet government has an ulterior motive in holding this prosecution at this moment?

A: From a political point of view, the case has been directed against all opposition in general, and against me personally, in particular. It proves the colossal political tension in the country, the discontent of the bureaucracy, and the antagonisms that exist within the bureaucracy up to the highest spheres.
The case will inevitably be followed by important political consequences which may develop into open mass struggles and violent repercussions.

Q: Do you think that the Soviet government considered it necessary to carry out a purge before the introduction of the new regime?

A: The capitalist press of the world doubts the sincerity of the conservative and nationalist tendencies of the Soviet bureaucracy.

The Stalin clique has tried by this case to prove that they have broken finally and ruthlessly with the revolutionary traditions of the Bolshevik Party.

But it should not be forgotten that the Politburo, which directed the fate of the Russian revolution as well as of the Comintern when Lenin was still alive, was composed as follows: Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Tomsky, Rykov, Stalin, with Bukharin as a candidate.

Lenin is dead. All the other members of the Politburo except Stalin have now been charged as plotters against the Soviet state, as terrorists, and even as allies of the German secret police! Anybody who is able to think politically will not, of course, place the slightest reliance on these accusations, but on the contrary, will recognize them as the unmistakable signs of the great political change that has taken place in the country.

The new conservative leading stratum, the Soviet aristocracy personified by Stalin, is finally severing the umbilical cord that connected it with the October Revolution.

Q: What is your frank opinion of the new constitution which is to be established in the USSR?

A: The new constitution means the official destruction of political activity by the people. All power is being concentrated in the hands of the bureaucracy, which calls itself the party.

The people are being atomized politically and in return acquire the right to reply "secretly" to the question, "For or against the Leader?" from time to time. The answer that results has been sufficiently demonstrated in Hitlerite Germany.

Q: I have seen your statement that your activities now are confined solely to writing. Would it be right to assume that you
still believe in the necessity for a worldwide rising by the proletariat? If so, can it be possible that you have abandoned your share in the fight to bring this about?

A: Not by one hair's breadth have I altered my views on the fate of the historical mission of the proletariat. On the contrary! The most recent events in the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and in France, Spain, and Belgium, on the other, increase my conviction that only the social revolution can save humanity from economic and cultural ruin.

Q: Is it not common knowledge that what is called a Trotsky movement has widespread ramifications outside the USSR?

A: You are completely right in maintaining that a movement relying on my ideas is pushing itself forward now in nearly every country.

The ideas I am defending, however, are not really my ideas, but those of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

I have made it my task to protect these ideas from complete discredit by the Soviet bureaucracy and to analyze the newest developments by the methods of Marx. The books and articles I have written in this connection have appeared and still appear in different countries and in different languages.

It is more than absurd to conclude from that fact that I am inspiring or directing revolutionary events in Spain, Greece, or other countries from Norway.

Q: What, briefly, is your opinion of the League of Nations?

A: The League of Nations does not need to be "discredited" by Marxists any longer; it has itself done everything necessary to that end.

Let those who dare not face brutal reality go on comforting themselves in the future with the empty idea of the League.

These people will have to pay for these illusions with tremendous sacrifices.

Q: What is your opinion of the attitude of the powers, including Russia, to the civil war in Spain?

A: It is one of the biggest blots on the records of the so-called democratic governments, and chiefly of the French, that
Mussolini and Hitler were allowed the opportunity to stage a fascist counterrevolution, to support it militarily, and then to wash their hands in the innocence of neutrality.

The attitude of the Soviet government is, as always, conservative, nationalist, and narrow. They try to justify themselves by saying "We won't provoke war." Thus they allow Europe to become fascist and then retire. In the end they will have war after all, but they will have to face it under much more unfavorable conditions.

Q: What in your view is the probable outcome of the Spanish war?

A: 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.

Q: As a now detached observer, do you not think that the peaceful and comparatively comfortable life of the British workman, even under capitalism, with the prospect of a steady improvement of his lot by methods of democratic evolution, is preferable to the alternative of becoming cannon fodder in the interests of either a Communist or a fascist revolution?

A: The question whether one should prefer progressive reforms and step-by-step improvements of the people's lot to revolution is, in my opinion, purely academic and has no historic meaning at all.

The people are not allowed to make their choice. What has happened and is happening in Europe is no accident, but a result of the fact that capitalism as an economic system is completely outdated, and of the additional fact that the ruling class will not consent to its abolition and thus has called into being revolutionary and counterrevolutionary convulsions.

Humanitarian arguments will never succeed in overcoming powerful social interests.
AN ANSWER
TO MR. SCHARFFENBERG

August 24, 1936

Mr. Scharffenberg’s suggestion that I appear at the Moscow trial—which by the way has already come to a fatal end—to reveal the truth in the same way Dimitrov did in the Reichstag fire trial, seems to me more idealistic than realistic. Dimitrov did not go to Germany in order to expose the lie. He was arrested in Germany. Not Dimitrov but Torgler voluntarily put himself at the disposal of the authorities. And everybody branded him a coward even before he turned out to be a traitor. Dimitrov’s courage was impressive, but not his false testimony. Since he could contribute very little to exposing the Nazi conspiracy while in prison, considerably more was done from abroad: the accused were backed by the Soviet government.

In the Moscow trial the Soviet government refused any intervention of Socialist or trade union representatives. They had to bring the matter to a conclusion as quickly and radically as possible. My “appearance” in the courtroom—if that were possible—would only mean under these conditions that I give myself up, bound hand and foot, to the conspirators against world public opinion.

What do my proofs against the outrageous Moscow amalgam consist of? They consist of the fact that my whole work, my literary activity, my correspondence, and my personal connections are clearly reflected in my archives; that every lawyer, every psychologist, and every politically thinking person would have to come to the inescapable conclusion—because of the cohesion of my ideas, expressed in public as well as in private—that not only a connection with the Gestapo but any kind of individual terrorism is incompatible with my nature. Hundreds of old and young, Central and West European friends were in close contact with me during this time. Many of them lived in my home.
for weeks, months, or years. Their testimony would be of crucial importance for unmasking the criminal amalgam.

Does Mr. Scharffenberg believe that I would have the opportunity in Moscow to summon these witnesses and to present my documents to the public eye? In their deal with the public prosecutor, the hapless defendants had to commit themselves, concerning their behavior in court, to give up all claim to a legal adviser, since any even halfway independent defense attorney would become an insurmountable calamity for the accusers as well as the self-accusers.

How can one believe that under these conditions in Moscow I could help to clarify these matters in the slightest? However, in my opinion it is the duty of the ministries of justice of those countries from where I supposedly instigated the crimes to summon me before the courts. I ask nothing else. The Soviet government has all the means to convict me of a crime—if it does not fear the light of public opinion.

Mr. Scharffenberg thinks that honor is more important than life. It was never necessary for anyone to remind me of that. The political honor of those affected—including mine, insofar as anyone considers me to be affected—can only be saved by the truth. But now, as every politically thinking person will admit, it is totally out of the question to help the truth win in Moscow. Those concerned about the truth may help me to unmask the real character of the Moscow amalgam right down to the bottom. Not for my sake, but for the sake of the truth!
THE DEATH SENTENCES

August 24, 1936

The death sentences were inevitable. The second Kirov trial involving Zinoviev and the others was arranged because no politically thinking person believed in the authenticity of the accusations in the first trial in January 1935. Furthermore, the seriousness of the accusations against me can only be demonstrated to the world in this manner. By foregoing defense attorneys the accused themselves acknowledged that the proclamation of the death sentences was unavoidable.

There is a contradiction here, in that the so-called confessions were extorted from the accused with the promise that their lives would be spared. The government will certainly not feel impeded by this contradiction. No one can verify whether the GPU's obscure spies, Berman-Yurin, Olberg, David, and their cohorts, were really shot or whether they continue their profession under other names.

No one knows even now whether the fourteen who were condemned to death along with the assassin Nikolaev were really all shot, for as the subsequent trial of the Leningrad police chief Medved demonstrated, among them were probably a significant number of provocateurs. Perhaps they shot the provocateurs to rid themselves of embarrassing accomplices.

But I think that by far the most important question from a political point of view is that of the fate of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the other Old Bolsheviks. In their case, the government will hardly consider itself bound by the GPU's promises. At least they will not be guided by these alone. In the well-known Menshevik trial a few years ago, the renowned author Zukhanov and the scientist Gromann recited confessions dictated to them by the GPU in return for the promise that they would be freed after a short term of conventional imprisonment. But both of them were sentenced to long prison terms on the basis of their own false admissions. They demanded to be released. Zukhanov
resorted to a hunger strike and now no one knows what has become of either of them.

There are only two things the government can do with Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the others: either really shoot them, thereby furnishing proof for the authenticity of the accusations they directed against themselves, or else commute their sentences to life imprisonment and later release them. In making its decision the government will certainly take into account what sort of impression the trial and the verdict are making around the world.

The suicides of Tomsky and Sokolnikov, demonstrating that they did not wish to defame themselves or drag themselves through the mud, must certainly have had a deep effect in the Soviet Union, even in the ruling circles, and will thus be an important factor in the final decision reached by the government. By the time these lines are published, the differences of opinion among the ruling heads, which are unavoidable in such a situation, may have already been resolved and the balance sheet of this elaborate juridical amalgam drawn.
REGULAR TRIAL DEMANDED

August 25, 1936

All sixteen who were condemned in the Moscow trial have been executed. There was nothing else for their accusers to do. If their lives had been spared, one or another of them could have torn to pieces the whole fabric woven by the GPU. Now both the self-accused and the agents have been silenced forever. The undersigned, whom they attempted to single out as the leader, is, however, alive. I have a right to a trial. According to the prosecution, my terrorist activities were directed in particular from Denmark, France, and Norway. The crimes I am accused of are punishable in these countries. Therefore I have a right to a trial. It is also my duty to unmask one of the greatest crimes in history and thereby to avenge it.
August 26, 1936

Sir:

I have always endeavored to comply with the conditions governing my stay in Norway, both with the letter and with the spirit, at least as I understand them. It develops, however, that the chief of the Central Passport Bureau has interpreted these conditions in quite a different manner and, as far as I am aware, his interpretation is approved by you, the minister. As I am deeply concerned in further enjoying for myself and my wife the favor of Norwegian institutions, I would be prepared to accept the interpretation of the conditions, of which I was not made aware before my coming to Norway, if I could gain the conviction that this new interpretation could be reconciled with my dignity as a human being and as a writer. I can only sign what I have clearly understood and what I can really undertake to fulfill. According to the chief of the Central Passport Bureau—who, incidentally, when I came into the country, gave me a somewhat hostile interview without waiting for any action of any kind on my part—my activities are to be confined solely to "historical works and general theoretical essays which are not directed against any country."

How am I to interpret this limitation? Is, for example, my autobiography a general theoretical essay or a topical political work? Three weeks ago I wrote a detailed analysis of the development of the Soviet Union. I myself am compelled to pass judgment now: I have the impression that this work contributes no small service to social science.

On the other hand, this work, by the mere concrete analysis of facts, is directed against the ruling bureaucratic caste, which is continuing to exploit the people economically and suppress it politically. Is it really possible in a democratic country to accept the stricture that the chief of the Passport Bureau may decide whether this work is only scientific or also politically topical?
I could quote an incomparably greater and more worthy example. My great teacher and master, Karl Marx, wrote a book called *Capital*. I try to imagine for a moment that the chief of the Passport Bureau had to decide whether this elaborate work was only scientific or whether it also had a topical political character. The decision would not be so easy to make, for this work, built upon the granite foundation of science, is illustrated by thousands of topical examples and has as a whole today far greater political importance than on the day of its first appearance. It is not a coincidence that the whole struggle of reaction, of the official and unofficial type, is directed against Marxism and Marxists.

The chief of the Passport Bureau reproaches me for an article in which I took the position that the struggle in France could only end with a victory for military reaction or with the building of soviets. Perhaps I am mistaken in my analysis. In any case I attribute to this analysis a thoroughly scientific character. The article in question appeared in the universally known bourgeois democratic journal, the *Nation*. If I had written an article in which I explained theoretically the general advantages of an autocratic regime over democracy, would this article have been disapproved by the chief of the Passport Bureau? Unfortunately, this question is not yet clear to me, especially after the visit I had today from the chief of the Passport Bureau.

The declaration demanded of me includes also the promise “not to allow myself to be interviewed by any Norwegian or foreign journalist.” During the whole of my stay in Norway up to the last days I have given only one single interview, that is, to the editor of *Arbeiderbladet*, and this, sir, in your own presence, and even with you kindly taking part, which even now I appreciate. You may perhaps recall that I personally tried to avoid even this single interview in order to provoke as little noise and sensation as possible in connection with my name.

But now the question is different. I have been accused by the judicial authorities in Moscow of being the organizer of terrorist acts. The entire world press is dealing with this historic trial. If you, as minister of justice, or the authorities controlled by you, or the Norwegian government, deem it possible or likely that I have misused my sojourn in Norway or anywhere else for this kind of activity, I expect immediately a warrant for my arrest. I desire nothing else than to have the opportunity to bring into the light of day, before an open juridical forum, this monstrous crime of the GPU and of the powers behind it. But if the Norwegian
authorities deem it impossible to interfere in this affair, they have the duty—I repeat, the elementary duty, which is not necessarily even a democratic one—to allow me complete liberty to tell the truth to the whole world by the means at my individual disposal. The principal means of informing public opinion is through the press. To refrain from bringing me to trial before a Norwegian court and at the same time to rob me of the opportunity to appeal to public opinion on a question that concerns myself, my son, my whole political past, and my political honor, would mean to transform the right of asylum into a trap and to allow free passage to the executioners and slanderers of the GPU.

These are the reasons which make it impossible for me to fulfill the demand of the chief of the Central Passport Bureau to sign the declaration which he has presented to me without drawing the attention of the government and of public opinion in advance to the unforeseeable consequences of such action for the moral existence of myself and my family.

L. Trotsky
I am in the process of reading the accounts of the trial in Pravda. They make me choke with disgust. To imagine such shamelessness, such stupidity, such perfidy, is not an easy task, even for a politician. Anyone who could take this affair for good coin would be forever dead in my eyes.

This trial, however, is not the last one. At the end of the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial in January 1935, I wrote: “Since the amalgam, mainly in regard to me, came to a pitiful failure, Stalin will inevitably try to stage another, better prepared, trial.” After the latest trial, this forecast must be applied in a still larger sense. Sixteen men have been executed only to identify the word “Trotskyism” with “terrorism.” There lay the whole meaning of the trial. Now new secret courts will be convoked, where anyone branded as a “Trotkyist” could at once be shot as a terrorist. Stalin turned the sixteen unfortunate and miserable men—some exhausted, emptied, stupefied—and the young informers who had hoped to make careers—into bloody pulps, only the better to reach me personally.

The defendants tried to help Stalin with all their might. All the testimony, all the threads, all the denunciations led, it was said, to me. And the more you read this denunciation, the more you have a feeling of a vacuum. The public trial was only possible after a previous compromise between the GPU and the defendants. But Stalin did not stick to this compromise. He closed the account with them through summary executions.

In March 1923, while Lenin was preparing a decisive attack against Stalin for the Twelfth Party Congress, when sending me a series of letters and documents on that question from his bedside, he had his secretary Fotieva say to me: “But do not negotiate with Stalin, because he will make a rotten compromise, and then he will betray.”

Stalin has greatly developed this
quality ever since. Thus, he made a "rotten compromise" (against me) with the pitiful defendants of the trial, and then he betrayed his partners, who were tied hand and foot. And how he betrayed them!

As I said, there were only sixteen men on the defendants' bench. But the defendants, who were simultaneously accusers and self-accusers, incidentally mentioned scores of other names. Safonova, Smirnov's former wife, was called from jail as a witness for the prosecution against her former husband. She was supposedly a Red Army officer and supposedly fomented a "Trotskyist" plot among the Red officers. Like Reingold in the trial of the sixteen, Safonova apparently will have to play a role in the coming trial as the main GPU agent. But she will have to pay for that role the way Reingold did, i.e., with her own life.

I find strange words in Reingold's statement. He claims to have been in charge of covering up the traces of terrorist acts after the seizure of power by the conspirators. How? "Through the physical annihilation of the functionaries of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs (GPU), who could have had some knowledge of the preparation of the terrorist acts, as well as of those who had executed those acts in practice." In other words: the wretched rascals thrust onto the defendants the idea of the very same bloody job that tomorrow the GPU will carry out on the defendants themselves.

Another fact that sheds a horrible light on the Bonapartist clique: Pravda's commentaries on the trial are written by Zaslavsky, who in every line takes it for granted that my link to the Gestapo and that of others are proven. In 1917 the same Zaslavsky, in Dyen (The Day)—a bank newspaper—was the most rabid enemy of the Bolsheviks. He accused Lenin, myself, and others of serving the German general staff. In a series of articles written in 1917, Lenin characteristically repeated: "Zaslavsky and other rascals..." This rascal now supports Stalin's "Bolshevism" against us, the agents of the Gestapo. No theoretical or poetic fantasy, neither that of a Marx nor that of a Shakespeare, could invent such an arrangement. But life knows how to do so.

I still hope to see this unprecedented crime exposed. I want, through this letter, to contribute a little to it. The rest will come with time.
LETTER TO MR. PUNTERVOLD

September 15, 1936

Dear Mr. Puntervold:

In connection with the exchange of diplomatic notes between the Soviet and Norwegian governments threatening my person, I would like to state my opinion and note the following points as concisely as possible:

1. The Soviet government does not consider it possible to demand my extradition. Why? What is at issue here is murder and attempted murder. The existence of a terrorist conspiracy in which I am supposed to have taken part—nay, which I am supposed to have led—has now been "established." The evidence must have been completely incontestable; otherwise they could not have shot sixteen men. Why didn't they demand my extradition before the trial began? Why was the trial announced and carried out at such a feverish tempo? Why do they refuse to present evidence of my guilt either to foreign attorneys or to the Norwegian courts? If they had done this they would have gained two very important advantages: (1) With a single sweep they could have dispelled the doubts about the trial held by the entire civilized world; (2) I, the alleged principal conspirator, would have been delivered to justice and punished. But in fact they did not do this. Why? Because they have no proof, not even a shred of such proof. Because the whole thing is a deliberate, cold-blooded frame-up, which would not hold up under even the most remote contact with independent criticism. Moscow's diplomatic stance—demanding my expulsion, not my extradition—is proof of bankruptcy which Soviet justice renders against itself. World public opinion must be enlightened by this.

2. Like me, my son has been found guilty without having been formally indicted. It is my son who is supposed to have selected the remarkable Gestapo terrorists and who is supposed to have sent them to Moscow. At the present time my son is in France. But the Soviet government addresses its "hostile" notes only to
the Norwegian government, not to the French government. Why? Because France—with its colonies—is bigger? Should justice be measured in square miles? Or is it because they fear a more energetic rebuff from France? I won’t go into this here. I merely wish to establish a very important fact: Moscow has attempted to put pressure on the Norwegian government alone.

3. I will, of course, take up the Norwegian government’s answer here from a purely legal and not a political point of view. Moscow says in essence the following: Trotsky organizes acts of terrorism; we call upon you to expel him. The Norwegian government answers: But we have in fact interned him. Interpreters, of whom there will be no lack, can interpret this to mean that the Norwegian government interned me because of my “terrorist” activities. But the real circumstances are quite different.

The Norwegian authorities’ action against me began before the first Tass dispatch concerning the projected trial was made public. Neither the chief of police, nor the hearing judge, nor the minister of justice ever mentioned a single word about “terrorist” acts. The Central Passport Bureau’s report (complaint?), which was approved as the basis for interning my wife and me, only mentions my political-literary activities, namely, as follows:

“The Central Passport Bureau takes it that Trotsky’s activities do not overstep the conditions of his visa insofar as they are confined to historical or for the most part scientific treatments of social, economic, or political questions. . . .

“If, however, these observations touch upon current political situations or indicate courses of action in such situations, then the Central Passport Bureau takes it that his literary activities are political activities of the sort that are at variance with the conditions set in his residence visa.”

And further:

“The Central Passport Bureau believes that there is reason to assume that Trotsky’s activities while residing in Norway do include such statements and advice concerning current political situations and that this may be characterized as a violation of conditions set for residence. This is evident from, inter alia, a newspaper article that advises the building of soviets in France in order to further a continued revolutionary movement in France.”

Hence the Central Passport Bureau does not accuse me of attempting to topple Russian soviets in alliance with the Gestapo, but rather of attempting to aid the establishment of soviets in
France through my articles and letters. In other words, I was interned because, as an author, I write in the spirit of the Fourth International; that is, I have remained true to my former world view. It seems to me that establishing this is of the utmost importance for avoiding any sort of false, dishonest presentation of the reasons for our internment.

4. The Soviet government's last note says that the Norwegian government "bears full responsibility for the consequences of Trotsky's continued stay in Norway." This phrase might easily be considered a diplomatic formula in order to cover a retreat. In my opinion this would be rash and foolish.

Viewed in the mirror of world opinion, the Moscow trial has been a terrible fiasco. Nevertheless, sixteen men have been executed. The "leaders" cannot quietly let the matter rest here. Just as the GPU was forced, after the miserable failure of the first Kirov trial in January 1935, to prepare the second trial (as I publicly predicted in due course), they now have no other choice than to discover new "assassination attempts," new "conspiracies," etc., in order to bolster the accusations against me. In addition, they must attempt to transfer my "terrorist" base of operations from Copenhagen to Oslo. A new chapter in the book of amalgams is beginning.

5. In this connection, the following question must be raised: Why, in this whole affair, did the GPU seize upon the unfortunate device of dragging in Copenhagen, where I spent a mere eight or nine days? It would have been much smarter to set these "terrorist" meetings in Turkey, where I spent four and a half years. The answer is obvious: they need Copenhagen as a parallel or prelude to Oslo, i.e., as a device for pressuring the Norwegian government. But as you well know, they have made total fools of themselves with this parallel. In order to extricate themselves they have no other choice than to invent a new amalgam. New trials are called for. New provocateurs are at work. That is the meaning of this sentence concerning the Norwegian government's reply.

6. But how can the GPU conjure up an Oslo amalgam? I must admit, I do not know. Perhaps the GPU does not yet know itself. In any case, it will not be easy. But it must be done because there is too much at stake for the leaders.

I can only suggest some hypotheses about what possible courses of action the GPU may follow:

a. Among the sixteen who were executed there was not one single "Trotskyist": all of them—leaving aside the provocateurs—
were individuals who had already capitulated in 1928-29, and were my bitterest opponents from that time on. I, for my part, for eight years continually treated these capitulators in the press as traitors and individuals without character. These people, who had prostrated themselves before the ruling bureaucracy for years, were wax in the hands of the GPU. But there are real Trotskyists in the Soviet Union. Many thousands of them have been in prison since 1928. Until now, these people have not been suitable for the GPU’s amalgams. That is the explanation for this monstrous “paradox” (to avoid calling it by its right name—nonsense) that I should have carried out my terrorist activities not hand-in-hand with my real friends and supporters, but with open capitulators and sullen opponents. That all of them were my enemies, they proved well enough during the trial.

The real Trotskyists have not, as I have said, been suitable for the GPU’s amalgams up till now. But now, after the trial, they will face an ultimatum with a gun at their heads: “confess” or die. It is possible that some of them will surrender under this hellish pressure and will thereafter be used for a new show trial. For which one? I have no way of knowing.

b. The shooting of the sixteen, the suicides, the imprisonment of more thousands, the starvation of more tens of thousands, the intolerable campaign of provocations—all this can give rise to real terrorist tendencies among part of the youth. This has always been the case in Russia, and it can be so this time too. As in the Nikolaev affair, the GPU tries to fan the flames of terrorism with all its might. In this way it can rid itself of an outstanding official who has become uncomfortable in his role and at the same time initiate a whole new trial against the “Trotskyists.”

The GPU’s art will consist in finding new Olbergs, Berman-Yurins, etc., who will have received their orders direct from Oslo. Who knows, Mr. Puntervold, a GPU agent might approach you, in the most cordial way, to ask you about my health, and then later this scoundrel may testify that the reason he visited Puntervold was to receive instructions from Trotsky written in invisible ink concerning acts of terrorism. “For security reasons” he will naturally have burned the instructions at a later time. In order to make his testimony more complete, he might also steal a few addressed envelopes from your desk (the GPU’s techniques are in any case not inferior to those of the Norwegian Nazis). The last Moscow trial could not produce such “evidence,” but that did not prevent them from carrying out sixteen death sentences.
Someone might say that after the experience with the sixteen who paid for their false confessions with their lives, no one else will cooperate in staging a similar trial. An illusion. The trial of the sixteen was not the first of that genre and is not the last. People who are in the hands of the GPU don’t have much choice, and in the bargain the GPU will tell the vacillators: “We shot those people because they really were terrorists, but you are innocent, so you have nothing to fear.” And so it goes.

Thus I say that from the point of view of diplomacy, the Stalin clique has made a tactical retreat (for the moment there was nothing else they could do) but only in order to be in a better position to make a strategic attack. That is the meaning of the impudent threat about the Norwegian government’s “full responsibility” for my “terrorist” activities. Sapienti sat [To know is enough].

With best greetings,

Leon Trotsky
I did not participate in any plan for insurrection, either in Spain or in Belgium. However, now, as well as before, I have always expressed my historical opinions and my experience, that is, that the working class must prepare itself militarily in order to repulse armed attacks from fascists or from any other side.

Take Spain, for instance. It is possible that they might have hesitated too long there. This must not be repeated. The working class must understand that it is the workers who make the weapons and that, consequently, they must also get some, and this before the bourgeois counteraction could be carried out, as happened in Spain.

It is not at all necessary to search for so-called secret letters of mine. I only expressed my general, theoretical, and practical opinions, such as can be drawn from my articles, which have appeared for a long time and still appear in the international press. Let me also point out to you my pamphlets. The latest one is called Whither France? and I only finished it on June 10 of this year; it was published in German, French, and English.

Here is a letter which I just received through the Central Passport Bureau from Walter Dauge, who was named by the newspapers. If he and I were preparing a clandestine insurrection, he would certainly not send me letters through the Central Passport Bureau. Actually, it is Spaak who, together with Dauge, visited me in France in 1934. We discussed at the time the possibility of uniting the opposition groups which were fighting among themselves within the Belgian workers’ movement.

Spaak is currently minister of foreign affairs in Belgium and, consequently, the Belgian representative at the League of Nations. If a search for letters of mine is of any interest, it would be at the ministry of foreign affairs that the Belgian police should carry it out.
Jean Delvin, who, to judge from the dispatches, allegedly conspired with me to send arms to Spain, is a person I have never seen. He is totally unknown to me, except that I just found out he is secretary of the Belgian Labor Party—I am not a member of this party.
September 28, 1936

Dear Friend:

You have been informed about the suit that we have undertaken with Mr. Michael Puntervold against the slanderers (unfortunately, those of the second order . . . for the time being). I beg you to accord us your aid in this matter by all the means at your disposal, the most precious of which are your friendship and loyalty.

My warmest greetings.

October 1936

Dear Friend:

I am sending my letter for the IFTU to Lyova [Leon Sedov] at the same time. I hope that the letter will be transmitted immediately and that all the necessary pressure will be exerted to elicit an immediate decision.

I propose—as an example—that they send an IFTU lawyer here, so I can go over the matter with him. That would be a beginning.

My best wishes for you and our friends.
Attached is my power of attorney.

October 1936

March 21, 1935

My Dear Friend:

I ask you to continue publishing my works and to add this care
to defending the general interests that I have entrusted to your charge.

I will be happy to receive your visit soon, in order to pursue these matters with you further.

Very truly yours,

Leon Sedov [Trotsky]

October 1936

Q: How is it possible that the extravagance and the immoderation of the accusations of terrorism and of collusion with the Gestapo have not provoked an outbreak in public opinion?

A: The lies were so unusual, so cynical, so incredible, that public opinion reacted to them as though stupefied.

Q: It is hard for us to realize how these leaders of the revolution could lower themselves to such idiotic and abject confessions—these people whom we considered men of steel.

A: You know, Kamenev and Zinoviev have been on the path of confessions for seven years. Seven years ago, at the time of the Fifteenth Congress, they renounced their agreement with the Opposition so as to avoid being kicked out of the party; that capitulation was the first confession. After that decapitation there was nothing to do but go step by step down the road of confessions, of disavowals, of humiliation. The GPU took care of it.

October 9, 1936

The authorities just this minute returned my letter to the IFTU. I don’t know whether it is simply a matter of excessive zeal on the part of the Passport Bureau or whether it was a political decision. I do not want to believe that a “workers’” government would want to prevent me from addressing myself to the IFTU on the question of my defense and the defense of many others. The scandal would surely be too loud and full of consequences. No
matter: you know my ideas on the subject. You are my lawyer. You are invested with full powers on my behalf. Please address yourself directly and immediately to the IFTU with the proposal to delegate a responsible representative.

My best wishes.

October 22, 1936

Dear Friend:

I completely approve of your letter to the secretariat of the IFTU. You should send a copy to Fenner Brockway and one to Thadder. Walter Dauge writes: "On the matter of the trial, you should address yourself only to the organizations that have already expressed themselves in favor of an international commission." This formal intransigence is not correct. If we didn’t address ourselves to the Comintern, such an appeal would be only a futile gesture and even a little stupid. But if the Comintern, under pressure from below, feels itself forced to send delegates to the international commission of inquiry, so much the better. We will be the beneficiaries.

I heard through the TSF [French radio] that your father made an important presentation on questions of public health at the Radical congress. From that I conclude with satisfaction that his own health is at least satisfactory.

And you? Are you quite recovered? When you visited us, you had a rather fatigued air. Moreover, you had all the bother with the Central Passport Bureau. . . .

Please establish permanent contact with my Czech attorneys, Fr. Bill and Mr. Adler. I have decided on a similar trial in Prague.429 I am even inclined in favor of a trial in Paris, if it is possible. Maybe also in Switzerland. In the matter of the German journalist B. Jacob, the Berne government has shown that it knows how to defend its independence and dignity against a big state. Hitler had to give in. Brutal pressure on the judges by the Berne government cannot be expected. Think about it. In such cases, it is sometimes preferable to deal with a "conservative" government that knows what it wants than with a "socialist" government that is afraid of its own shadow. . . .

If a trial in Paris is virtually impossible, because of the legislation itself, then from now on we must study the situation in
Switzerland, in Holland, and in Belgium, even in Catalonia, where Andres Nin is minister of justice.

Think about it, my friend, consult your friends, let me know your opinion, and above all begin making arrangements right away, without wasting any time.

My warmest greeting.
My Dear Lyova:

I am sending the final draft of the manuscript of the book on the USSR [The Revolution Betrayed]. I have sent the Bureau its copies from here.

Did you keep your passport with the French visa (1932)?

Who is Vyshinsky? The Mensheviks write that he came out of their ranks. All the same, this fact should be given a well-deserved popularity, with all the necessary details. As for me, I know nothing about him.

Are you aware that some people want to put on a parallel trial in Prague (Sonne, Keller, etc.)? I have some doubts on that score, but perhaps it would be good to accept the proposition. What is your thinking on this matter? Here things are going very slowly...

Did you receive my letter to the IFTU?

Did you receive my letter to Mr. Puntervold concerning the diplomatic correspondence between the USSR and Norway? Please inform me when you receive each document; otherwise I haven’t the slightest control over my own correspondence.

I have received from Van* Muste’s document (as far as I can tell). There is nothing to be done... Many people have asked: How could Zinoviev and the others have capitulated so miserably? They don’t take into consideration the amount of continuous pressure. The Mustes, the Schmidts, etc., have shown themselves incapable of withstanding one-thousandth the amount of pressure. All in all, the power of moral resistance of Zinoviev, Kamenev, etc., was much greater than average, but it was demonstrated to be insufficient under these quite exceptional circumstances. That’s all.

*Inform Van about this; he requested confirmation.
The two documents from S. Schwartz about the trial are quite substantive and serious, especially for someone who had only the official documents.434

*Have my archives in France been put in order?* I greatly doubt it. However, it is a very important matter. The fact that the letter from Spaak (1934) has still not been found is extremely bad. The copies of my 1933-34 letters have a supreme importance. The archives must be put in order.

My health has not been very good lately; a change for the worse in the past two weeks. . . .

I embrace you,

Your Papa
THE SAFETY OF THE ARCHIVES

October 10, 1936

My Dear Lyova:

Enclosed is my letter to Pfemfert, so that I won’t have to write the same thing twice.

In my preceding letters, I asked you several questions. But I am afraid that the work is not going well; everyone is either acting individually, or else waiting for someone else to do something (that is, absolutely nothing is happening). What I have received up till now seems to be very sparse.

1. Where is your passport with the French visa from 1932 for your trip from Germany to France?

2. Has anyone in France taken steps to find Mama’s telegram to Herriot about your visa in the French Foreign Ministry (or the office of the premier)?

On these two questions, which are decisive, I have still received no answer.

I have worked out instructions for searching for some documents of the highest importance in Copenhagen. I will send them tomorrow through Puntervold.

The GPU is going to do everything in its power to get its hands on my archives. It would be best to deposit them with an established scientific institution. Professor Posthumus wanted to buy them for the Dutch institute. It would be even better perhaps to find an American institute. You can write to our American friends as a preliminary measure. This question can become very pressing.

Your Old Man

P.S.—Pfemfert appears to have a new address, which I do not have.

Enclosure: Letter to Pfemfert.

Please, let me know exactly the number of letters that you receive from me and the questions they contain. Copy them and send me the copies; otherwise I will have no control over my own correspondence.

T.
LETTER TO THE IFTU

October 22, 1936

To the Permanent Administrative Committee of the IFTU

Dear Sirs:

As legal attorney and Norwegian representative of the interests of Leon Trotsky, I am addressing you on the following matter.

As you have been able to learn from the newspapers, I have filed suit on behalf of my client against the Norwegian Communist paper *Arbeideren* and against the Norwegian fascist newspaper *Vrit Volk*, for accusing my client of being an "individual terrorist," "cowardly assassin," "author of the [assassination] attempt," etc., charges that have their origins in the Moscow trial against Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others. However, while the results of such a proceeding will be sufficient to absolve my client and his son from the most outrageous of the accusations, they will be completely insufficient to fully illuminate the Moscow trial and its underpinnings.

Since, during the Moscow trial, you sought to intervene by telegram on behalf of the accused, and in light of the fate of Mikhail Tomsky—the eminent leader of the trade union movement who was driven to suicide by the accusations brought against him—I propose on behalf of my client the formation of an international commission of inquiry, composed of trade unionists, political figures, and renowned jurists. If you could appoint a competent jurist who had your complete confidence to serve on it, my client would be very pleased. Leon Trotsky is ready to submit to the most detailed examination by such a jurist, and to study the materials from the Moscow trial with him. In my client’s opinion, the fact that he has lived abroad for the last seven and one-half years will extraordinarily simplify the work of such a commission of inquiry, even in the event that the leadership of the Third International and of the Soviet government should refuse to collaborate with such a commission. Their refusal to
participate in the inquiry could not, in our opinion, constitute a reason for failing to undertake this work. In the Moscow trial, Leon Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov were accused and convicted "in absentia," without having the opportunity to defend themselves. Now the Soviet government declines to prove the truth of its accusations before an international forum. But the principal defendant in the Moscow trial of terrorists, my client Leon Trotsky, must have the full right to prove the falseness of the accusations against him before an international commission of inquiry, even in the event that the Soviet authorities fail to attend because of bad faith.

In view of the urgency of the matter; in view of the preparations, already announced, for a new "terrorists' trial" in the USSR (involving, among others, even Radek, the writer who was even yesterday praised as an authority in the Soviet press and in the press of the entire Comintern); in view of the possibility of new steps by the Soviet government in Norway against Leon Trotsky; and above all, in view of the damage that all this does to the prestige of the entire workers' movement, I ask that you take this letter under advisement as soon as possible and acquaint me with your decision.

I ought to point out, moreover, that my client, because of measures that have been taken, is unfortunately prevented from addressing himself to you in person, which he would certainly do under other circumstances.

Very truly yours,
Michael Puntervold

P.S.—I am sending copies of this letter to the Secretariat of the Second International, in Brussels; to the Secretariat of the International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Parties, in London; to the International Secretariat for the Fourth International, in Geneva. For reasons that are easy to understand, I am not addressing myself to the leadership of the Comintern. If, however, the Comintern, under the pressure of public opinion, should decide to participate in the work of the commission, then in the interests of my client and of our case I will only be able to rejoice.
LETTER TO
THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

October 22, 1936

The statutes of the future international tribunal against terrorists are at present being examined by a commission of jurists. The tribunal must assume the task of protecting the interests of governments against terrorist attacks that are prepared or even executed outside the given state. It appears self-evident that the same tribunal must have the opportunity to safeguard the interests of individuals against whom, for purely political reasons, false accusations of terrorism are made, to jeopardize their activities, which have nothing to do with terrorism, and even their existence on this planet.

That is the situation of Leon Trotsky today. I am certain that the Soviet government, which has demanded his expulsion from Norway and which has thereby created great difficulties for him and his family, will in no case bring this matter before the international tribunal, after its creation, since a public judgment could only expose the criminal machinations of the GPU. Under these circumstances, Leon Trotsky must have the right to address himself to the international tribunal, since that government has done him harm. If the government in question should refuse to take part in the tribunal's deliberations, the official accusations brought by it, with all their international consequences, must be declared null and void.

The necessary details and rules, in my opinion, should be introduced in the statutes of the future tribunal.
LETTERS TO AN ATTORNEY
Late October 1936

October 30, 1936

Schevenels's arguments are inconsistent... but unfortunately a new trial against "economic" sabotage by the "Trotskyists" is being prepared in Moscow (or in Kiev) right now. But isn't this "economic" falsification worthy of the attention of the "trade union" leaders? It would be necessary to have a commission of sages to classify this scum by categories: "Political scum," "trade union scum." But even in this case, it would be necessary to create a special category for the "combination scum." This gallery would unquestionably be the largest...

All the conditions indicate Switzerland as a country where it would be possible to have a trial without hindrance. Make inquiries, please. True, we are very handicapped. But no matter. We will have the last word, and it will be decisive.

Regards.

October 31, 1936

Dear Friend:

I am simultaneously sending an important letter on the trial, which is a severe critique of Rosenmark's report (without naming him). I believe that the letter will be quite useful to you in connection with the Red Book. You will receive Leon's letter.

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Dear Comrade:

Please excuse my silence. I wasn’t feeling well, but today I am somewhat better. Thanks for Kampf und Kultur. I really don’t know why you mention my annoyance in connection with your article. I assume it was just a joke. That you perhaps differentiate yourself from me politically? This is something that I consider both natural and necessary, and expedient in this matter as well.

In your essay you refer to an interview with me that was published in Arbeiderbladet on July 26, 1935. Now I must make the following remarks about this interview: Present were the minister of justice, M. Tranmael, O. Kolbjørnsen, and the whole Knudsen family. Right at the outset, I said: “I would prefer not to give an interview, since I wish to avoid any controversy.” But then the minister of justice (!) replied: “No, since we have granted you asylum, we must also have a statement from you for our public.”

Kolbjørnsen’s questions were purely political. I refused comment on several of these questions because they would have required overly sharp answers from me, and I did not wish to deal with the Soviet bureaucracy too sharply in Arbeiderbladet. At that time, however, Kolbjørnsen was of quite another mind than he is today: he made my statements sharper. Therefore, I requested that the text be sent to me for revision before publication—which was done. I thoroughly softened the tone of Kolbjørnsen’s text and even completely deleted some things. I hope that the two versions can still be found and compared.

Since that time, the gentlemen have changed their opinion of the Soviet bureaucracy. That is their privilege. I cannot deny anyone the right to adopt better (or more comfortable) views. But in the process they accuse me of violating the “agreement”—and
that is not right. I hope I shall be able to prove this to the Storting [Norwegian parliament] with documents, facts, etc.

I wonder whether this letter will not be confiscated by the minister of justice? This sort of thing has already happened to me. But I am making this attempt just to see how far the abuse of authority will go in things which have nothing to do with the "interests of the state."

The French edition of my book on the USSR has already appeared. Unfortunately I have only one copy. As soon as I get some more, I will send you one. Have you read the Red Book and V. Serge's piece [Sixteen Executed in Moscow]? What kind of impression did these things make on you? Did you find them convincing enough?

Best greetings,

L. Trotsky
ON THE GPU’S THEFT OF ARCHIVES

November 10, 1936

Dear Comrade:

I just received your letter of November 7. . . .

I have also just now received the following telegram from my son in Paris: “Some archives of secondary importance, entrusted to Dutch Institute, Paris branch, ransacked (by) GPU. Am instituting civil action. Leon.” I now anticipate a burglary in Norway, for the GPU must take possession of my papers, especially since the publication of the Red Book. As for the letters that I am writing for my “defense” (i.e., the indictment of the true criminal), they have been confiscated, one after the other. Such is the face of “democracy”! . . .

My warmest greetings to your family, your dear wife, our friend Karin (we are glad that she is well again), and to Eli, little Eli.

Yours,
L. Trotsky
LETTERS TO AN ATTORNEY
November 1936

November 12, 1936

Dear Friend:

Thank you for the two letters that I have just received, along with the good news about your father.

I sent you perhaps three weeks ago a memorandum on the trial, designed for Mr. Rosenmark and others. You have not mentioned it. However, it would be absolutely incredible for the Passport Bureau to seize this document, which contains the essence of my "defense" (that is, of my accusation of the real criminals). I gave my expose the form of a critique of some of Pritt's statements. I draw your attention to this document in particular!

Please do not write to me from now on about your practical steps (research, telegrams, etc.) since this information can bring you additional difficulties.

On the other hand, please communicate to me everything you know about the "influence" of the Red Book, the Victor Serge pamphlet, and my Revolution Betrayed. Please write me about this (and invite others to write) in a detailed manner.

Don't you think that I ought to write directly to Victor Basch?

The signers of the appeal are not all known abroad. A list should be prepared with a description of each one.

Gide's preface shows, all in all, an honest effort to orient himself. It is not the sanctimonious and conformist senility of Romain Rolland, not at all.

And Jules Romains? Now he is the one who is "above the conflict."

My best wishes.
Gerard Rosenthal, Leon Sedov, and Maurice Delepine, at the office of the examining magistrate in the case of the theft of Trotsky's archives by the GPU.
November 13, 1936

I am very pleased with the signature of Jules Romain’s. I have great admiration for that artist. Aside from his gifts of creativity, he is incomparably perspicacious: if he were interested in this matter, he could make an exceptional book of it. And not only a book.

November 18, 1936

Dear Friend:

This morning I sent you the following telegram: “Request you and Mr. Delepine institute civil action in matter theft my archives. Letter follows. L.T.”

Herewith is my official letter to you and Delepine.

Please correct my wretched French and have a new copy made of the text. To this end I attach a signed carte blanche.

I believe that I have understood you well and that my letter will be sufficient even for an attorney. My correspondence is submitted to a more and more restrictive censorship. Worst of all is that I never know whether the letter has been passed through or not. For example, I do not know if the three copies of the manuscript of my book on the USSR were sent or not. Nor do I know whether you have received my notes on Pritt, which are—it seems to me—of great importance for the counter-trial.

My best wishes.

November 22, 1936

My Dear Friend:

I have received your letter of November 17. I am awaiting a visit from Mr. Puntervold so he can explain to me the meaning of the most recent decision of the government concerning the trial abroad: does it mean that I cannot defend myself, even against the thieves? I do not believe that at all. I do not want at the same time to hide from you the fact that the same decision contains a scarcely veiled threat of extradition. If it were a matter of a legal
proceeding, that is, the verification by a Norwegian tribunal of a demand for extradition on Moscow's part, I could only rejoice. But no; the government decision alludes to extradition rather as a purely administrative measure, as a "punishment" for my bad attitude, the latter consisting of my insistent attempts to defend myself against the most infamous accusations in modern history.

It is true that by the same decision the government leaves me the right to seek asylum elsewhere. I am officially informing you of it at this time, as my attorney. But I do not have any grand illusions about this "right" in present-day Europe, of which the majority is in the hands of fascism and the minority is passing more or less through the prefascist stage.

Moreover, the attitude of the Norwegian government toward me gives all the other governments a powerful argument to refuse me the right of asylum: "If the Norwegian government, which is to the left of the Second International, etc., imprisoned Trotsky, he must have done something serious." But what does this "something" boil down to?

1. I want—like everyone else—to have the right to publish my articles and books within the framework of the laws of the respective countries.

2. I want—like everyone else—to have the right to defend myself against the most ignominious slanders that can be imagined.

Precisely because of these two crimes I am interned—and even threatened with still more rigorous measures. But this is incredible! Yes, I tell myself that ten times a day, but that is the reality.

Moreover, that is not all. The new government decision tells me that—for reasons of "economy"—I will be transferred to another place, with no details. The text does not even mention Natalia. You can easily imagine her terrible anxiety! What interest the government could have in leaving Natalia in this state of anguish, anticipating a possible separation, cannot even be explained. Perhaps it is only a simple oversight.

I am obliged to lay out thus our entire present situation so that you will be able to use this description in whatever steps you can take to win authorization for us to enter another country.

I have no need to tell you that we are more than ever allied with Natalia in moral firmness and in the certainty of the justice of our cause. I do what I must, come what may.

My best greetings to you and to all our friends.

When you let me know whom to address on the question of the
visa (if I should make a personal request), I will explain the factors that give me, in the present situation, the right to real asylum—asylum which will not be a trap.
LETTER TO THE LEAGUE
FOR THE RIGHTS OF MAN

December 3, 1936

Sir:

I am informed by my attorney and friend, Mr. G. Rosenthal, of the fact that a very important commission, presided over by you personally, is in the process of examining the Moscow trial.

Permit me to say that I consider it absolutely impossible for this commission to render an opinion on the “affair” without having attempted to interview me. Hearing my son’s testimony is very important. However, I am the only one who is familiar with all the workings of these “judiciary” machinations, unique in the history of the family of man (and for which it was none the poorer).

With my most sincere regards,

Trotsky
December 10, 1936

I regret having sent a letter to Victor Basch. After the publication of Rosenmark’s unworthy report, this letter must be considered null and void. Please inform Mr. Basch of that. As soon as I am free, I will give all these gentlemen the reply they deserve.

December 10, 1936

. . . As for our health, I had one very bad week, but the last 4-5 days have been better.

As for Mexico, I would be very pleased to leave for there as soon as possible, on the condition that I am given the opportunity to take all measures of security, etc. But this question is not taken care of even now. The authorities dawdle and lie and the situation can certainly change with regard to Mexico. Therefore, the arrangements must be continued elsewhere. You are doubtlessly doing it without my needing to ask you.

My warmest greetings.

December 10, 1936

Dear Friend:

It is now one week since I sent the text of my complaint about the theft of my archives. Yesterday I learned that this document has not yet been sent. It seems they find it reprehensible that I speak of the GPU. It appears I must find an administrative pseudonym for the thieves, who are incidentally agents of the GPU. I am expecting a new law on this subject. Let the examining magistrate proceed by the diplomatic path. . . .
IN CLOSED COURT

December 11, 1936

The government had at first planned that the group of fascists who had broken into my home would be tried two weeks before the elections: the trial might have been a trump card in the election campaign. The government press kept stating that the raiders could be sentenced to several years in jail. But when my wife and I were imprisoned, the government had the trial postponed until after the elections, and the minister of justice no longer saw anything more in the affair than a "childish prank." So much for the inviolability of the law, the sanctity of justice!

The case came up in the district court of Drammen. On December 11 I was called as a witness. The government, which knew it could expect to hear nothing favorable from me, either to itself or to its Moscow allies, insisted that the trial take place in closed court; understandably enough, it encountered no resistance on this score. The defendants, typical representatives of a declassed, petty-bourgeois youth, were at liberty. "Witness" and plaintiff, I arrived at the courthouse surrounded by an entourage of a dozen policemen.

The benches for the public were empty, and the police seated themselves there. The pitiful heroes of the nocturnal raid were seated at my right. They listened to me with unflagging attention. The benches at my left were occupied by eighteen jurors—workers and petty bourgeois. Finally, several high functionaries were seated at the rear.

The closed court enabled me to answer all questions with complete freedom. The president of the court did not once interrupt me in the course of my testimony which, with the translation from German, lasted almost four hours, although I gave him several opportunities to do so. I do not have a stenographic report of these proceedings, but I can vouch for the almost literal accuracy of the following, which was written immediately afterward, following an outline prepared in advance. I spoke under oath. I assume full responsibility for what I say. The Norwegian "Socialist" government insisted on a closed court; I intend to open doors and windows.
The Author of the Internment

After routine questions of identification, the attorney for the fascists, Mr. W., began the interrogation.

*Attorney W:* What conditions were imposed on the witness upon his arrival in Norway? Has the witness lived up to his agreement? What was the cause of his internment?

*Trotsky:* I agreed not to intervene in Norwegian politics and not to engage, in this country, in activities hostile to other countries. I have irreprouably fulfilled these conditions. The Central Passport Bureau has had to admit that I did not mix into the affairs of the country. As to other countries, my activity has been that of a publicist. It is true that everything I write is of a Marxist nature and consequently revolutionary. But the government, which itself occasionally invokes Marx, was aware of my thinking when it granted me a visa. My works and my articles always appear under my signature and have not in any way been the object of any legal actions.

*Attorney W:* During his visit to Weksal, didn’t the minister of justice explain to the witness the exact meaning of the conditions he agreed to?

*Trotsky:* I did receive, shortly after my arrival, a visit from the minister of justice. He was accompanied by Martin Tranmael, the leader of the Norwegian Labor Party, and Mr. Kolbjornsen, editor of its newspaper. The minister told me, with a timid smile, that he hoped my activities would not include “thorns” (*Stachel*) directed against other states. The word “thorns” did not appear very clear to me, but since the minister spoke rather poor German, I did not pursue the matter. Basically, the situation can be summed up in this way: The reactionary philistines imagine that I am preparing to make Norway a base of operations for plots, for shipping arms, etc. On these points I can, with a clear conscience, reassure Messrs. Philistines and “Socialists,” as well as others. But I could not believe that the forbidden “thorns” could be applied to political critiques. I consider Norway a civilized and democratic country—and I would not like, even today, to have to change this opinion.

*Attorney W:* Didn’t the minister of justice warn the witness that he was not permitted to publish political questions?
Trotsky: An interpretation of that kind might have seemed improper to the minister himself. I have been a political writer for forty years now. That is my profession, gentlemen of the jury and judges, and this profession is the essence of my being. Perhaps the government demanded that I pay for my visa by renouncing my convictions and my right to express them? No, the government slanders itself after the event. Moreover, immediately after the minister of justice’s somewhat mysterious remark about “thorns,” Mr. Kolbjornsen asked me for an interview for Arbeiderbladet. Jokingly I asked the minister of justice: “But won’t this interview be viewed as mixing into Norwegian politics?” The minister replied in these exact words: “No. We have given you a visa; we have to make you known to our public.” It would seem that that was clear enough. I then revealed, in the presence of Martin Tranmael and the minister of justice, and with their tacit approval, that the Soviet government had extended criminal aid to Italy during the Italian-Ethiopian war; that the government in Moscow had, in general, become a conservative factor; that the ruling caste in Moscow systematically falsifies history to give itself a more attractive place therein; that a war in Europe is inevitable if the revolution does not prevent it—and many other things. I doubt if one could find any roses in this Arbeiderbladet interview, published July 26, 1935, but it contains no lack of thorns!

Permit me also to recall that my autobiography had been published a few months earlier by the Labor Party Publishers. The preface to this work unspARINGLY condemns the Byzantine cult of the infallible “chief,” the Bonapartist absolutism of Stalin and his clique, and exposes the necessity of overthrowing the bureaucratic caste. These pages go on to say that the struggle against Soviet Bonapartism is the cause of my third exile. In other words, if I agreed to renounce this struggle, I would have no need of Norway’s hospitality. And that isn’t all, gentlemen of the jury and judges! On August 21, one week before my internment, Arbeiderbladet ran, on its front page, a long interview with me entitled, “Trotsky Shows Moscow Charges to Be Concoction of Lies.” It is certainly believable that members of the government read my revelations on the Moscow forgery. The decision to intern me, made a week later, cited not this interview on current matters, composed entirely of “thorns,” but old articles of mine published in France and the United States.

The frame-up is unmistakable. I can further cite the testimony of Minister of Foreign Affairs Koht, who stated at an election meeting about ten days before my internment that “there is no
doubt that the government knew that Trotsky would continue to write his political articles, but thought it their duty to remain faithful to the democratic principle of the right of asylum." Mr. Koht's speech was published by the government's official organ. You have all read it. The public testimony of the minister of foreign affairs categorically refutes the minister of justice. In order to hide the truth from the public at the last moment, the minister of justice has confiscated (from the possession of my secretaries) the letter I wrote telling about the first political interview that, with his cooperation, I had accorded the press. He has brutally expelled my two collaborators from Norway. Why? They are not even emigres. Their passports are in order. And—what is of far greater importance—they are men of impeccable character.

Gentlemen of the jury, in offering me asylum the Norwegian government has set a trap for me. I cannot express myself otherwise. Is it not monstrous to see a bureau that is appointed to control passports—passports!—controlling my scientific and literary activities—and in other countries, to boot? If it had been up to Messrs. Trygve Lie and Konstad, neither the Communist Manifesto, nor Capital, nor other classics of revolutionary thought, would have ever seen the light of day, because these are works of political emigres. The government produces, as the most pernicious example of my lethal activity, an article published legally in France, and in a bourgeois weekly, the Nation, in the United States. I am convinced that neither Leon Blum nor the president of the United States has demanded the intervention of the director of the Passport Bureau against my articles. It is Moscow that has demanded that measures be taken against me, but the Norwegian government refuses to admit this in order not to acknowledge its dependence. And that is why it has justified its action by this sham.

Attorney W: What is the attitude of the witness regarding the Fourth International?

Trotsky: I support it. In a certain sense, I am the initiator of this international tendency, and I assume the responsibility for it.

Attorney W: Then the witness is dedicated to practical revolutionary work?

Trotsky: It is not easy to separate theory from practice, and
that is not at all my intention. But the conditions of my life in “democratic” Europe do not permit me, to my keen regret, to intervene in practical work. When the conference for the Fourth International, held last summer, elected me a member of its bureau in my absence (a title more honorary than practical, I must say), I declined this honor by letter—precisely in order not to give the Konstads of various countries the opportunity to spread police gossip.

As to the fairy tales in the reactionary press, which accuse me of having fomented insurrection in Spain, strikes in France and in Belgium, etc., I can only shrug my shoulders. If the truth is told, the initiative for the sedition in Spain belongs to the political coreligionists of the defendants and their attorney. To be sure, if it were possible for me to go to Spain to devote myself to practical work, I would do it immediately. I would gladly devote all my strength to help the workers of Spain vanquish and destroy fascism. It is my misfortune to be reduced to being content with writing articles and giving advice by mail when individuals or groups wish to ask it of me.

Concretely, what does the fascist lawyer want? We stand before a tribunal, before an institution created to punish infractions of the law. Have I broken the law? What law? You all know, gentlemen of the jury, that another fascist lawyer, Mr. H., invited the courts to open a judicial inquiry into my activities, whether literary or terroristic. That complaint has twice been denied. Public Prosecutor Sund, guardian of the laws of this country, stated to the press that the material in his possession permits him neither to accuse me of an infraction of the law nor to open a judicial inquiry against me. This statement dates from September 26, five weeks after the Moscow trial, almost a month after my internment. I must pay homage to the courage and firmness of Public Prosecutor Sund! His statement expresses distrust regarding the charges formulated in Moscow, and condemns the measures taken against me by the Norwegian government. And that is enough, I think.

Attorney W: Does the witness recognize this letter and know who wrote it?

Trotsky: That is a letter I dictated to one of my secretaries, and it was obviously stolen—excuse the word—by the defendants in the course of the uninvited visit they paid me. The text shows that, in answer to a question, I express my opinion on the confidence that a certain Mr. X., whom I know, may or may not
merit. I limit myself to giving advice—this time again.

Attorney W. (ironically): Nothing but advice? Wouldn’t there be a bit more than advice in it?

Trotsky: You mean, an order? (Sign of assent.) In Nazi parties, the “chief” makes decisions and gives orders—incontestable orders, even when the order concerns breaking into someone’s home during the night. The degenerated Communist International has adopted habits of this kind. Passive obedience and the cult that is made of it create slaves and lackeys, not revolutionists. I do not direct any institutions; I am not a chieftain anointed by the Lord. My advice is always extremely circumspect and relative—it is not easy to weigh all the factors at a distance—and it is accepted by interested persons in accordance with the capacity to convince that it bears. The young people who stole this letter from me were obviously hoping to find in my archives evidence of plots, revolutions, and other misdeeds. Ignorance in political matters is a bad counselor. My letters contain nothing that cannot be found in my articles. My archives complement my journalistic activities without contradicting them in any way. Even those who seek to accuse me—

President of the Court: You are accused of nothing. You are here in the capacity of witness.

Trotsky: I know that very well, Your Honor, but Mr. W—

Attorney W: We make no accusations; we are limiting ourselves to our defense.

Trotsky: Naturally. But you defend a nocturnal attack against me by exploiting and enlarging all kinds of slanders against me, whatever their source may be. I am defending myself against that “defense.”

President of the Court: That is your right. You may refuse to answer questions that can be prejudicial to your interests.

Trotsky: There aren’t any, Your Honor. I am ready to answer all questions that anyone would care to ask me, no matter what side they come from. I am not interested in a closed court. Far from it! I doubt that in all history a machine can be found for manufacturing slander comparable in power to that which is in
operation against me. The budget of that agency reaches millions. Messrs. Fascists and so-called Communists draw their charges from the same source: the GPU. Their collaboration against me is a fact that can be observed at each step and especially at this trial. My archives give one of the best refutations of all the insinuations and slanders directed against me.

President of the Court: Please be specific.

Trotsky: Permit me to go into detail a little. The archives concerning my activities since January 1928 are in another country. The older documents are relatively small in number. But all the letters I have received and copies of all my answers for the last nine years (and this is a matter of thousands of letters) are available to me. I can at any time whatsoever place these documents at the disposition of any impartial commission whatsoever, of any tribunal whatsoever. There are no gaps in this correspondence, nor are there any blank spaces. It unfolds from one day to the next, irreproachably complete, and by its continuous character conveys all my thinking and all my activity. It leaves no room for any slander.

Perhaps you will permit me to give an example borrowed from an area familiar to the gentlemen of the jury. Imagine a pious man who all his life strives to live according to the Bible. At a certain point it happens that his enemies, using false documents or false testimony, accuse him of engaging clandestinely in the spreading of antireligious propaganda. What would this maligned man say? “Here is my family, here are my friends, here is my library, my correspondence over many years, here is my entire life. Read all my letters, written to the most diverse people on the most varied subjects; question the hundreds of people with whom I have had connections for many years, and you will be convinced that I could not have engaged in an activity contrary to my entire personality, contrary to my entire moral code.” This argument would be a convincing one for any honest and reasonable man. (Signs of assent from president of the court and several jurors.) My situation is analogous to the one I have just described.

For forty years I have defended, by word and deed, the ideas of revolutionary Marxism. My faithfulness to this philosophy has been proved, I dare say, by my entire life and more especially by the situation in which I am placed today. This fidelity to my beliefs has won me many enemies. In order to weaken the
influence of the ideas I uphold, which are more and more being confirmed by the events of our era, my enemies seek to besmirch my character: they would impute individual terrorism to me or, what is even worse, dealings with the Gestapo. Here, envenomed malice becomes stupidity. Anyone capable of thinking for himself, who is familiar with my past and my present, has no need of any inquiry to dismiss these filthy charges. For those who wonder or doubt, I proposed that they hear numerous witnesses, study the most important of the political documents, especially my archives for that period of my activity which the GPU is trying to besmirch. The GPU very well knows the importance of my archives and has no scruples about ways and means of getting hold of them.

President of the Court: What is the GPU? The gentlemen of the jury may not know the meaning of this word.

Trotsky: The GPU is the political police of the USSR. In its day it was a defensive arm of the people's revolution, but it has become the defensive arm of the Soviet bureaucracy against the people. The hatred the bureaucracy bears me stems from my struggle against its monstrous privileges and its criminal absolutism. And that struggle is the very heart of what is called "Trotckyism." In order to render me powerless in the face of slander, the GPU is trying to get its hands on my archives, whether by theft, housebreaking, or assassination.

President of the Court: What proof do you have of this?

Trotsky: Last October 10, for the second or third time, I wrote to my son in Paris: "I have no doubt that the GPU will do anything, even the impossible, to seize my archives. I ask you immediately to place the documents now in Paris with some scientific institute, perhaps the [Paris branch of the] Dutch Institute of Social History or, better yet, with some American institution."*

No sooner did my son entrust part of these papers to the

*My son’s written deposition, made to the judicial inquiry of November 19, 1936, informed me that he had entrusted part of my archives to the Institute of Social History before receiving my letter of October 10. My son had taken this action as a result of my previous letters, in which I had several times (though less categorically, it is true) expressed the same fears.
Institute of Social History than this institute was ransacked. The criminals used a blowtorch to cut through a door, worked right on the premises most of the night, went through all the shelves, and took nothing—nothing, not even some money that had been left there—except 187 pounds of papers belonging to me. Their method of operation is as revealing as if the head of the GPU had left his calling card at the scene. All the French papers—except, of course, *l'Humanité*, which is the official organ of the GPU—expressed the conviction (either openly or in a veiled fashion) that this burglary had been carried out at Moscow's orders. Paying tribute to the GPU's technique, the Paris police declared that French burglars do not have such sophisticated tools at their disposal. By accident, the Paris GPU agents were in too great a hurry: the first shipment of papers to the Institute of Social History included only about one-twentieth of the documents in Paris, and these were mostly old newspapers of historical interest only. Fortunately, the thieves did not get more than a few letters. But they won't stop there. I expect other, more energetic attacks, perhaps even here in Norway. In any case, I should like to call the attention of the judges to the fact that the GPU broke into and ransacked places containing my archives a short time after I named the Institute of Social History in a letter that passed through the Passport Bureau. Am I not right in supposing that the GPU has agents in the Norwegian bureaus that control my correspondence? If that is the case, the control becomes direct complicity with the burglars. The Paris exploit of Stalin's agents has for the first time suggested to me that these gentlemen (*gesturing toward the defendants*) might also belong to the GPU . . .

*President of the Court:* On what do you base this suspicion?

*Trotsky:* I have only formulated a hypothesis. I have wondered more than once: Who suggested the idea of raiding my house to these young men? Who supplied them with a highly technical device, used by the army, to monitor my telephone conversations? Norwegian Nazis are still, as the recent elections have proved, only an insignificant group. At first I thought that it was the Gestapo looking for something, that the Gestapo was trying, by this means, to locate my political friends in Germany. I still consider its involvement in this affair almost a certainty.

*President of the Court:* And what are your reasons?
Trotsky: Several weeks before the raid, Messrs. Fascists frequently visited our yard and even our apartment, posing as possible purchasers of the house. The attitude of these purchasers attracted my attention several times: meeting me in the yard or in the house, they made believe that they didn’t see me, not having the nerve to greet me. Generally speaking, the courage of these young people did not measure up to their evil designs, and that is what made them abandon their task in the face of resistance from a brave young girl, Hjordis Knudsen. A few days before the raid, a stranger in Tyrolean costume appeared in our yard and, upon seeing me, made an about-face. Asked what he was looking for, he answered stupidly: “I want to buy some bread,” and presented himself as an Austrian tourist. But an Austrian who happened to be our guest, having politely gotten rid of him, later told me, “That so-called Austrian speaks with a North German accent.” I have no doubt, gentlemen of the jury, that this suspicious-looking tourist played a role in making preparations for the raid.

The principal defendant, R.H: He was a tourist from Mecklenburg, wearing Tyrolean breeches. He was no more than eighteen years old. He had nothing to do with our plan. We ran into him by chance at the hotel . . .

Trotsky: Very well. The defendant acknowledges having had contact with the man from Mecklenburg who made believe, we don’t know why, that he was an Austrian. As for his age, this tourist was not under twenty-three. There was no reason for him to come to our house to buy bread when there are bakeries. You met him by chance at the hotel? I don’t believe that. I say that the only true words the defendant has spoken are “Tyrolean breeches.” Fascists, especially the German fascists, have sufficiently demonstrated their hatred for me. When the French press conducted its campaign against me, it received its most important material from Germany. When the Gestapo discovered, in Berlin, a packet of my old letters, predating the victory of Nazism, Goebbels had the whole country plastered with posters denouncing my criminal activities. My political friends in Germany have been sentenced to dozens of years in jail.

Attorney W: How long ago was this?

Trotsky: They are arrested and sentenced continually, and nothing has changed in this respect in the last few months. From
my very first years of exile, I had pointed out many a time in my writings that the Communist International’s policy in Germany would lead to a Nazi victory. The too-famous “third period” theory was then in fashion. Stalin had delivered himself of this formulation: “Social Democracy and fascism are twins, not antipodes.” Of the two, the Social Democracy was considered the more dangerous enemy. In their struggle against the Social Democracy, the Stalinists finally arrived at supporting Hitler (at the time of the referendum in Prussia). The entire policy of the Third International was nothing but a succession of crimes. I kept calling for a united front with the Social Democracy, creation of workers’ militias, serious, not theatrical, action against the armed bands of reaction. The Hitler movement could very well have been checkmated in 1929-32. But this would have necessitated a policy of revolutionary defense, not bureaucratic stupidity and empty bluster. The Nazis very closely followed the dissension within the working class and clearly realized the danger that a strong united front policy would confront them with. It is easily understandable, in this connection, that the Gestapo might attempt to lay its hands, with the aid of its political friends in Norway, on my correspondence.

But another explanation is also possible. The GPU, in preparation for the Moscow trial, would not lack interest in my archives. To organize a raid with “Communists” might have meant coming out in the open too much. It was more convenient to use fascists. Moreover, the GPU has its agents in the Gestapo, just as the Gestapo has its agents in the GPU. Either one or the other could have used these young people to carry out their plans.

Defendant R.H. (heatedly): We weren’t in contact with either the Gestapo or the GPU!

Trotsky: I am not stating that the accused knew who was making use of them. Fascist youth are fated to serve as cannon fodder for forces they know nothing about.

Attorney W. (holding up issues of the Biulleten Oppozitsii published in Russian): Is the witness editor of this publication?

Trotsky: Editor in the formal sense, no. But the main contributor. At any rate, I assume complete responsibility for this publication.

Attorney W. (after the court had heard, at his request, various
excerpts from the Biulleten containing sharp criticism of the Soviet bureaucracy): I draw the attention of the court to the fact that the witness wrote these articles during his stay in Norway, thus trying to bring about the downfall of the established government of a country with which Norway has friendly relations.

_Trotzky:_ I note with interest the fact that Norwegian fascists defend Stalin’s regime against me. They also, together with the director of the Passport Bureau, reproach me with having criticized the policy of Leon Blum in France. Obviously, they defend all existing governments except their own, here reserving for themselves the right of forceful overthrow. Their attack on me might seem a rather insignificant episode, if it is considered in isolation. But if we reflect on it a little, we can see in it the first skirmish of a civil war. _(Attorney W. lifts his arms with an expression of demonstrative stupefaction.)_ Oh, I very well know that all this is done in the name of “order.” General Franco mutinied in the name of “order.” Hitler is preparing a world war to save “order” against Bolshevism. Fascists save order by instituting bloody disorder. As a start, the Norwegian fascists tried to disorder my papers. But that is because they are still too weak to commit other crimes.

_Attorney W:_ Is the _Biulleten_ banned in Russia?

_Trotzky:_ Obviously.

_Attorney W:_ Nevertheless, it says its ideas have numerous supporters in the USSR. Thus the witness has been engaged, during his stay in Norway, in illegally sending the _Biulleten_ to Russia.

_Trotzky:_ I am not at all engaged in that, personally. However, I do not doubt that the _Biulleten_ and its ideas do reach the USSR. How? In the most varied ways. There are always hundreds, if not thousands, of Soviet citizens abroad—diplomats, commercial representatives, sailors, businessmen, technicians, students, artists, athletes. A number of them read the _Biulleten_, secretly to be sure, but more willingly than they read the official Soviet press. I have even heard that Litvinov always carries the latest issue of the _Biulleten_ in his pocket. However, I wouldn’t swear to this under oath, inasmuch as I have no desire to make trouble for this Soviet diplomat. _(Smiles in the courtroom.)_ The dignitaries of
With Erwin Wolf at the Oslo court, August 28, 1936.
the Kremlin are the most faithful subscribers to the *Biulleten*, with which they have often polemicized in their speeches. Whether or not they are happy about it is another matter. Finding these speeches in the press, Soviet citizens try to read between the lines. All in all, a small thing, but still something.

I take this opportunity to observe that the *Biulleten* has been appearing for eight years, a period of time that I spent principally in Turkey and France. Until 1933, the *Biulleten* appeared in Germany; Hitler banned it when he came to power. At the moment, the *Biulleten* appears in France, in conformity with French laws governing the press. The Turkish government, although maintaining the most friendly relations with the Kremlin, never attempted to interfere with my literary activity. The honor of starting this belongs, after Hitler, to the Norwegian fascists and then to the Norwegian government.

_Attorney W. (handing the witness no. 48 of the Biulleten):_ Is the witness the author of the unsigned editorial in this issue ["On the Soviet Section of the Fourth International"]?

_Trotsky:_ Is the attorney for the defense interested in this article, too? I am indeed obliged to point out that there is a rather striking coincidence here. The chief of the Norwegian police, Mr. Askvig, who is present here, came to Sundby (where I am interned) a few weeks ago to ask me this same question concerning the editorial in the February 1936 *Biulleten*—on behalf of the Passport Bureau. I asked him if Mr. Konstad were going to hold a judicial inquiry. If so, on what grounds? By virtue of what law? I found Mr. Konstad's question insolent and refused to answer it. The very same issue of the *Biulleten* is now in the hands of Attorney W. . . .

_President of the Court:_ Attorney for the defense has the right to know all the material connected with the preliminary investigation.

_Trotsky:_ I know that very well. But who introduced this issue of the *Biulleten* into the preliminary investigation?

_Public prosecutor:_ The defense requested that it be added to the record. I was opposed, since I did not see any connection between this document and the case.

_Trotsky:_ So, gentlemen of the jury and judges, the director of
the Passport Bureau illegally tried to get from me, using the police as intermediary, information that might be useful in the defense of those who broke into my home. Isn’t that scandalous? And it is to this gentleman that the “Socialist” government entrusts the surveillance of my correspondence!

As for the article in question, I do not have the slightest reason to deny before this court that I wrote it. Besides, it has been published under my signature in various papers in Europe and America. The entire article deals with the persecution of Trotskyists in the USSR. I have written dozens of articles of this nature. It would appear that the attorney for the defense does not want to permit me, come what may, to criticize the Stalinist police. I am not surprised: The fascists steal my papers in Norway, the GPU steals them in Paris, and this unity of action engenders a solidarity of interest.

(After reading excerpts from the offending article, Attorney W. shows the witness a book published in Paris in 1936—Terrorism and Communism, by Leon Trotsky.)

Attorney W: Is the preface to this book, dated 1936 and consequently written in Norway, the work of the witness?

Trotsky: The question is unnecessary. The preface is signed and dated. The book was written in 1919, and it then appeared in several languages. The origin of this work is as follows. The theoretician of the Second International, Karl Kautsky, had written a book against the “terrorism” of the Bolsheviks. I went to the defense of my party. It does not, of course, deal with individual terrorism, which, as Marxists, we have always rejected, but with revolutionary action by the masses. I do not know if this book is criminal or not from the point of view of the Passport Bureau, but the present minister of justice, the president of the council, and other members of the Norwegian government belonged to the Communist International in precisely the same period in which this work was published. They have certainly all read it. To know how much of it they retained or how much of it they understood would be another matter . . .

(At the request of Attorney W., several passages from the preface to the book are read.)

Trotsky: One can see that the defendants made a mistake in stealing my papers—my books express the revolutionary nature
of my program at greater length and with far greater force. Even the Norwegian Passport Bureau’s medicine will not cure me of my subversive ideas.


Trotsky: Yes, and I had the good fortune to finish it and forward two manuscripts for translation, one to France and one to the United States, before being interned. The other copies of the manuscript fell into the hands of the Passport Bureau, which, with the assistance of scholars and diplomats, spent two months wondering if I had written a scientific or a political work. Only since receiving copies of the French edition has Mr. Konstad realized that his enlightened efforts were in vain—not, however, without causing me considerable mental anguish and material loss. Nevertheless, it never occurred to anyone, other than in Norway, to protest the publication of this work. On the contrary I have been able to ascertain, with satisfaction, that it has been very well received by the French public.

Attorney W: By “well received” does the witness mean that it has been widely read?

Trotsky: Not merely that. I am thinking of the articles this book has given rise to in all kinds of newspapers, of the most diverse tendencies. Naturally, my political conclusions are unspARINGLY condemned by most of the publications. But almost all the critics call my book to the attention of the reading public. Mr. Caillaux, former president of the [French] Council [of Deputies], who beyond any doubt is no political friend of mine, was one of the first to express himself to that effect. I could cite many other opinions. But isn’t it astonishing, isn’t it laughable, gentlemen of the jury, that I am in some way obliged to defend my right, before a Norwegian court, to publish books in France? The Norwegian government has placed itself in a position from which it can no longer extricate itself with dignity.

(At the invitation of the attorney, the witness translates from French to German a few passages of the book, in which the inevitable overthrow of the Bonapartist bureaucracy by the toiling masses of the USSR is discussed.)
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Attorney W: I emphasize that these pages were written in Norway.

Trotsky: And I emphasize that the Soviet oligarchy finds vigilant defenders—disinterested ones, I hope—in the Norwegian fascists. In any event, Stalin and Mr. Quisling have collaborated to have me interned.462

The Moscow Trial

(After a half-hour recess, Defense Attorney W. asks the witness a question about the trial of the sixteen, an account of which he reads to the court in German. The prosecuting attorney objects to the question as irrelevant, all the more so since the fascist raid on Trotsky's home had taken place before the Moscow trial had been announced. The president of the court sustains the objection.

Trotsky: I strongly urge the court to give the defense attorney the opportunity to ask me any question he considers of use to him, especially about the Moscow trial. It is true that that trial took place after the attack on my home. But it is possible that the attack had been only an episode in preparing the trial of the sixteen, in the same way that the theft of my papers in Paris is certainly part of the preparation of a new trial. The court, moreover, has an interest in knowing the moral and political character of a witness.

President of the Court: Since the witness is disposed to answer questions, the court does not object.

Attorney W: What can the witness say about the causes of that trial?

Trotsky: The question is phrased too vaguely. We stand before a bar of justice. The attorney for the defense is a jurist. We are not dealing with "causes." The question should have been formulated with greater precision: Are the charges against me in the Moscow trial true? I answer: No, they are false. They contain not one word of truth! And it is not a matter of legal or judicial error but of deliberate frame-up. The GPU has been preparing this trial for at least ten years. That is, they began its preparation well before the Kirov assassination, which was only an "accident" in the course of this preparation. I had no more part in Kirov's assassination than anyone in this room. No more, gentlemen of the jury. The
chief organizer of Moscow’s legal forgery, this greatest political crime of our time and perhaps of all time, is Stalin. *(All listen with complete attention.)* I am fully conscious of the gravity of my words and of the responsibility I assume. I weigh each word, gentlemen of the jury.

One continually finds newspaper articles that reduce the matter to personal enmity between Stalin and Trotsky. “Struggle for power,” “rivalry,” they say. These explanations must be rejected as superficial, foolish, and even absurd. So-called Trotskyists, by tens of thousands, have been harshly persecuted in the USSR during the past thirteen years, snatched from their work and their families, deprived of their homes and of everything else, often of their lives—would this be on account of personal rivalry between Stalin and Trotsky? *The Revolution Betrayed,* the book that has so upset the attorney for the defense, was written before the Moscow trial; it gives, as the press acknowledges, the true political and historical explanation of that trial. I shall be able to speak of it here only very briefly. I can understand the embarrassment that an outsider, a jurist especially, would feel in face of the Moscow trial. It is, of course, impossible to believe that the entire Bolshevik Old Guard became fascist. Even the course that the trial took seems like a nightmare. What need the Soviet government had for this phantasmagoria and how it got the defendants to accuse themselves falsely is also not understood.

Permit me to say that it is not possible to approach the Moscow trial with the ordinary criteria of common sense. Common sense is based on the everyday experience of normal, peaceful life. Now, Russia has had a social revolution of immense breadth. It is still very far from having acquired a new internal equilibrium. Social relations as well as ideas are still extremely volatile in that country. The first thing to be taken into consideration is the fundamental contradiction that is today tearing Soviet society apart.

The aim of the revolution was to establish a society without classes, that is, without the privileged few and the wretched many. A society of this kind would have no need of the coercive power of the state. The founders of the regime assumed that all social functions would be accomplished by the citizens themselves, without a professional bureaucracy dominating the citizenry as a whole. Various historical causes, of which I shall not speak here, have acted to make the real structure of Soviet society today in flagrant contradiction with this ideal. An absolutist bureaucracy has placed itself above the people. It has
the power, and it controls the wealth of the country. It enjoys unheard-of privileges, privileges that increase each year.

The position of the caste in power is basically a false one. This caste is obliged to hide its privileges, to lie to the people, to use Communist formulations to justify relationships and facts that have nothing to do with communism. The bureaucratic apparatus permits no one to call things by their right name. On the contrary it requires that in all circumstances conventional "Communist" language be used—which serves to camouflage the truth. The traditions of the party and its fundamental documents are in absolute contradiction with the existing reality. The ruling oligarchy consequently obliges historians, economists, sociologists, professors, teachers, propagandists, judges, to interpret the documents and the reality, the past and the present, in such a way as to make them agree, at least in appearance. The obligatory lie permeates the entire official ideology. People think one thing and write and say another. The gap between the word and the reality grows continually; the most sacred formulations have to be revised each year. Examine the various editions of the same book, an encyclopedia, for example, and you will see that each new edition contains a different evaluation of the same people, the same facts—sometimes more and more laudatory, sometimes more and more abusive. Under the knout of the bureaucracy, thousands of men systematically accomplish a work of "scientific" falsification. The slightest hint of criticism or of objection, the slightest disagreement, are treated as the worst of crimes.

Without fear of exaggeration, it can be said that the bureaucracy has saturated the entire political atmosphere of the USSR with the spirit of the Inquisition. Lies, slander, forgery are not occasional weapons against political adversaries but are organically derived from the bureaucracy's false position in Soviet society. The press of the Communist International, like the newspaper you know, is only a pale reflection of the Soviet press in this respect. But reality makes itself felt at every step, exposes the official lie, and verifies the criticism of the Opposition—whence the necessity for the bureaucracy to have recourse to ever stronger methods for proving its infallibility. They began by relieving opponents of their functions, went on to deport them to outlying areas, and ended by refusing them work of any kind. They were the objects of increasingly venomous vilification. Since the public was weary of polemical articles, in which they no longer placed any credence, it became necessary to stage
sensational trials. There was really nothing left to do but to accuse opponents of crimes, not against the privileges of the new aristocracy, but against the interests of the people. At each new stage, accusations of this kind took on a more monstrous character. Such is the political atmosphere, such is the social psychology, that have made possible the weird spectacle of the Moscow trial. At Zinoviev's trial, the bureaucracy reached its highest—or rather, fell to its lowest—point.

If in a general way this trial was a long time in preparation, a good many things lead one to believe that it was staged a few weeks, perhaps even a few months, sooner than the producers wished. The impression created by the raid of these gentlemen here, the defendants, ran counter to Moscow's plans. The press everywhere was talking, and not without reason, about the Norwegian Nazis' connections with the Gestapo. A trial was to take place here, in the course of which would be revealed, in all their gravity, the antagonisms between me and the fascists. At all costs it was necessary to erase the impression created by an unfortunate venture. In all likelihood Stalin demanded of the GPU that the Moscow trial be hastened. Official data show that the most important "confessions" were obtained from the accused during the last week of the preliminary inquiry, on the very eve of the trial, between the seventh and the fourteenth of August. It was difficult in such great haste to make the depositions agree with each other and with the facts. Besides, the stage directors were depending on the confessions of the accused to fill the holes in the charges. From the moment that the sixteen defendants confessed that they were guilty of the Kirov assassination or of plotting other murders—some even adding that they had been connected with the Gestapo—why should the prosecutor bother with superfluous proofs or even bother to get rid of flagrant contradictions, anachronisms, absurdities? The absence of accountability to the people lessens attention to detail; not being responsible to an electorate engenders carelessness. Prosecutor Vyshinsky is not only without scruple; he is also devoid of any talent. He substitutes invective for evidence. His statement of charges, his demand for punishment, heap contradiction upon contradiction.

I cannot, as is self-evident, analyze or even enumerate these contradictions at this time. My older son, Leon Sedov, whom the Borgia of Moscow has dragged into this case to get at me (doubtless he thought it would be harder for my son to establish alibis than for me), recently published a Red Book in Paris,
devoted to the Moscow trial. The 120 pages of this document fully bring out the total inconsistency of the charges from the standpoint of facts, psychology, and politics. My son has not, however, been able to put to advantage one-tenth of the documents at my disposition (letters, articles, testimony of witnesses, personal souvenirs). Before any tribunal whatsoever, Moscow’s accusers would have been unmasked as falsifiers who stop at nothing when it comes to defending the interests of the new privileged caste.

Some Western jurists have been found (in England, Mr. Pritt; in France, Mr. Rosenmark) who, basing themselves on the “full” confessions of the accused, would present the GPU with a certificate of morality. These legal defenders of Stalin will some day regret their hasty and ill-considered zeal; truth, battling its way through every obstacle, will sweep away many a reputation. The Pritts deceive the public by presenting things as though sixteen people, suspected of belonging to a gang of criminals, had wound up by handing over confessions that paint, despite the absence of any material evidence, a convincing picture of preparations for the Kirov assassination and other crimes. In reality the defendants and the groups of defendants in the trial of the sixteen were not connected with each other, either by the Kirov case or by any other case. The official documents tell us that, in the aftermath of the Kirov assassination, at first 104 unknown “White Guards” (among whom there were not a few Oppositionists) were shot, after which fourteen people, falsely accused or accused by reason of association with the Nikolaev group which had killed Kirov, were also shot. Although these fourteen had made “complete confessions,” not one of them had named a single future defendant in the trial of the sixteen. The Zinoviev-Kamenev affair is Stalin’s enterprise, constructed without relation to the earlier Kirov trial. The “confessions” of the sixteen, obtained in several successive stages, in no way give a picture of terrorist activity carried on by the particular person in question. On the contrary one sees the accused, guided by the accusers, carefully evade concrete questions of time and place. I have just been shown the official report of the Moscow trial. Why, this little book really indicts the perpetrators of the judicial fraud! For page after page the defendants, prey to a kind of hysteria, denounce their own crimes without being able to say anything definite about them! They have nothing to say about them, gentlemen of the jury, because they have not committed any crimes. Their confessions were to have enabled the clique in
power to put an end to its opponents—including me, its “enemy number one.”

“But why, for what reasons, would the defendants charge themselves with crimes they never committed and thus rush toward their own destruction?” ask the GPU’s advocates. A profoundly dishonest objection. Did the accused make these confessions of their own accord, of their own free will?

Over many years, the vise that held them had been made tighter and tighter, so that in the end they could have no hope for salvation other than absolute submission, total prostration, hysterical servility in the presence of the executioner, whose every word and gesture they henceforth repeated. The human nervous system has a limited capacity for resistance. The GPU had no need of physical torture or of special drugs to bring the accused to the point where they could no longer look for deliverance, in an intolerable situation, except through unlimited compliance with their own vilification. Humiliation, suffering, mental torture over a ten-year period (for some, thirteen years), inflicted on the most prominent of the accused and their families, were all that was needed to bring them to this point.

The nightmare of the “confessions” can only be explained if one does not for a single instant lose sight of the fact that these defendants had many a time through the years abjured their beliefs: before the party’s control commission; before meetings; again before commissions; and finally before a tribunal. Each time it was required, they admitted to exactly what they were obliged to admit to. At first this was on questions of program. The Opposition had long fought for the industrialization and collectivization of agriculture. Reduced to taking the road pointed out by the Opposition after having resisted it for a long time, the bureaucracy accused the Opposition of having stood in the way of industrialization and collectivization! That’s the Stalinist method in a nutshell! It was then demanded of Oppositionists who wanted to get back into the party that they acknowledge having committed an “error” that was really committed by the bureaucracy. The opportunity for this jesuitical maneuver stemmed from the fact that the Opposition’s ideas were known to only a few tens or hundreds of thousands of people, especially in the upper layers of society; the masses of the people remained in ignorance of these ideas because the bureaucracy unrelentingly prevented the spread of our writings.

Long and painful haggling went on behind the scenes between
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repentant Oppositionists and functionaries of the control commissions, which are really organs of the GPU: What mistake should be acknowledged and in what way? The jesuits of the control commissions always won out in the end. The party leaders knew perfectly well that these acts of abjuration did not have the slightest moral value and that their only object was to affirm to the masses the dogma of the infallibility of the chiefs. Later on the bureaucracy, in struggling for absolute power, exacted new and even more humiliating renunciations from the same opponent, who had long since repented (in other words, renounced all right to criticize). At the first sign of resistance, the Inquisitor responded: “So, all your previous statements of repentance have been insincere! You don’t want to help the party fight its enemies! You put yourself back on the other side of the barricades!”

What could the capitulators—these former Oppositionists who had already engaged in self-vilification—do now? Resist? Too late. They were trapped. Return to the Opposition was impossible for them—the Opposition would not have trusted them. Moreover, they no longer had any will for politics. Crushed by their previous self-denunciation, always in danger, threatened anew with reprisals to their families, under police blackmail, they bent their knee at every stage, sinking lower and lower.

At the first [1935] Zinoviev-Kamenev trial, the defendants, after having undergone the worst mental tortures, agreed to admit that the moral responsibility for terrorist acts devolved on them, in their capacity as ex-Oppositionists. That admission was soon to serve the GPU as a point of departure for new blackmail. The official press—at the signal from Stalin—from then on demanded the death sentence. The GPU organized demonstrations before the court where the cry was “Death to the assassins!” The condemned are thus prepared for new confessions. Kamenev resisted longer than Zinoviev. For him they staged, on July 27, 1935, a new trial, in closed court, so that he could be given to understand that his sole hope of salvation—rather the shadow of a hope—lay in absolute cooperation with those in power. Cut off from the outside world, without inner security, vulnerable, with nothing before him, without a ray of light, Kamenev was shattered. Those defendants who continued, despite nameless tortures, to defend their dignity, those the GPU shot without trial and without publicity. In this way Stalin “selected” and groomed the defendants in the recent Moscow trial. That is the reality, gentlemen of the jury. All the rest is but lie and hoax.
Why should these things happen?" you will ask. To smother all opposition, all criticism, to demoralize and smear anyone who resists the bureaucracy or who limits himself to not singing its praises. And it is not only here that this diabolical work has been aimed at me. But on this point I must again go back to an earlier date.

In 1928, after the first mass arrests in the party, the bureaucracy did not dare even dream of physically suppressing the Opposition. It could not, however, sit back and wait for the Opposition to capitulate. I kept directing the struggle from my place of deportation [Alma Ata]. Finally the clique in power could find no other solution but to banish me completely, to expel me from the country. At the meeting of the Political Bureau (a report of which I received through friends and which I immediately published), Stalin had said: "In a foreign country, Trotsky will be isolated. He will have to write for the bourgeois press, and that will give us a chance to smear him. The Social Democracy will go to his defense, and we will discredit him in the eyes of the world proletariat. If he makes any revelations, we will denounce him as a traitor."

That cunning calculation lacked perspicacity. Stalin did not take into consideration the strength and the significance of ideas. From abroad I published works that served to educate the youth. Groups sharing my ideas were organized in every country. Publications sprang up, based on the program I defend. An international conference under the aegis of the Fourth International was recently held. Under the blows of the enemy, this movement continues to grow—while the Communist International is in the grip of confusion and disarray. Now, without international authority, Stalin cannot retain command of the bureaucracy, and consequently his power over the people. The growth of the Fourth International, news of which more and more reaches into the Soviet Union, constitutes a serious danger for him. In short, the ruling clique fears more than anything else the still living traditions of the October Revolution, inexorably hostile to the new privileged caste.

All this explains why Stalin and his group never for an instant cease their struggle against me personally. Every capitulation made in the past thirteen years must invariably contain some statement against me. Tens of thousands of individual and collective statements of this kind can be counted. Without condemning Trotsky, without vilifying Trotsky, no ex-Oppositionist can think of getting himself back into the party, or even of getting a crust of bread. From year to year the
renunciations become more humiliating, the abuse against Trotsky more gross, the slanders more mendacious. Future defendants receive this training, as do their judges. It is by degrees that they arrive at their present demoralization. The organizer of this, the man responsible for this demoralization—and again I deplore the fact that I have to declare this in closed court—is Stalin. The recent trial did not come out of a clear blue sky. It consummates a long series of false renunciations directed against me. When Stalin understood the error he had committed in banishing me, he tried to repair it in his own unique way, with typical methods. The judicial frame-up that has stunned world opinion was in reality only an inevitable link in a long chain of actions. It was foreseen and publicly announced.

The recent trial was based on a charge of terrorism. As far as I am concerned, gentlemen of the jury, I would not stop at advocating and applying individual terrorism if I could believe it capable of contributing to the liberation of humanity. My enemies have often indicted and persecuted me for the ideas I express; that is what the Norwegian government has just done. But to this day no one has accused me of hiding my ideas. If I invariably take a stand against individual terrorism—and this stand dates not from yesterday but from the very first days of my revolutionary activity—it is because I consider it not only ineffective but, even worse, fatal to the working class movement. Two terrorist parties, known the world over, were active in Russia, People's Will [the Narodniki] and the Social Revolutionary Party. We Russian Marxists were organized as a mass party in the course of an intransigent struggle against individual terrorism. Our principal argument was that this method disorganizes the revolutionary party much more than it does the government. It is not without reason that the Bonapartist bureaucracy of the USSR avidly seeks out this kind of crime, and even invents it, in order later to impute it to their political adversaries. The assassination of Kirov could not for one moment shake the absolute power of the bureaucracy. On the contrary, it gave them the hoped-for opportunity to exterminate, by the hundreds, people they feared, to cover their adversaries with mud, and to sow confusion in the minds of the workers. The results of Nikolaev's adventure have completely confirmed—and could it be otherwise?—the traditional Marxist condemnation of terrorism, to which I have remained faithful for forty years and which I would not dream of changing today.

If terrorist tendencies are appearing in certain sections of
Soviet youth, it is not a result of the Opposition’s political activity but, on the contrary, of the Opposition’s defeat, of the smothering of all thought, all protest—such tendencies are a result of anger and desperation. The GPU eagerly seizes upon every desire for terrorism, cultivates it, soon creates a kind of clandestine organization in which the unfortunate terrorist is surrounded on all sides with agents provocateurs. This was so in Nikolaev’s case. Published official documents undeniably bring out, if one takes the trouble to examine them carefully, that Yagoda, Stalin, and Kirov himself were informed that an assassination attempt was in preparation in Leningrad. All that the GPU had to do was implicate leaders of the Opposition, then discover the plot on the eve of the act and reap the political profit from it. Was Nikolaev himself a member of the GPU? Did he wear two hats? I really don’t know. In any case, he pulled the trigger before Stalin and Yagoda had the time to implicate their political adversaries in the plot. From the early months of 1935 on, basing myself only on the official documents, I unmasked the police provocation in the Kirov affair. (I published a pamphlet entitled The Stalinist Bureaucracy and the Assassination of Kirov.) I wrote that the failure of this intrigue, which cost Kirov’s life, far from stopping Stalin would oblige him to stage another and larger affair. One didn’t need the gift of prophecy to foresee this: a knowledge of the circumstances, the facts, and the people was enough.

As I have indicated, the GPU was able to derive only one benefit from the Kirov assassination: the confession by all the accused—with a revolver at their heads—that the moral responsibility for Nikolaev’s crime rested with them. Neither the accused, nor public opinion, nor the judges were prepared for anything more. But all was not lost. Stalin was determined to make capital of Kirov’s corpse. The GPU began periodically to dig up the corpse for new charges, new confessions, new executions. After a new eighteen-month psychological preparation, during which all the most important defendants remained in jail, the GPU presented them with its ultimatum: they would have to help in tracing the charge of terrorism all the way back to Trotsky. At the preliminary inquiry preceding the trial of the sixteen, the question could have been posed only as follows:

“You are no longer dangerous to us,” Stalin’s agents said, in essence, to Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the other prisoners. “You know that. But Trotsky hasn’t given up. He’s fighting us on the international level. The war is getting closer” (because Bonapartists always play on patriotic feelings). “We must make an end of
Trotsky at any price—and without delay. Compromise him. Implicate him in the terrorist plots. Link him with the Gestapo."

“But,” the perpetual defendants would have replied, “nobody will believe us. We will only succeed in compromising ourselves without striking at him . . . .”

The haggling must have followed that line. Several candidates who would not go along with the job were shot without trial, so that the others might understand that they had no choice.

“Whether they believe you or not,” the examining magistrates must have replied, “is none of your business. Your business is to prove that all your previous statements were not just hypocrisy, that you are sincerely devoted to the party” (that is, to the ruling caste) “and ready to make any sacrifice for it.”

If the desire to be honest seized them—and jailed as they were, they had no reason to have scruples—the examining magistrates could have added:

“Those in the know won’t believe you? That’s not important. Mighty few of them will decide to protest! The fascists’ lies can only be useful to us. The democrats? They will keep their mouths shut. The French and Czechoslovakian democracies will be silent as the grave—for patriotic considerations. Leon Blum is dependent on the Communists, who will do anything we tell them to do. The ‘Friends of the Soviet Union’? They will swallow anything if only not to admit how blind they’ve been. The international bourgeoisie, which recognizes in Trotsky the theoretician of permanent revolution, cannot be interested in supporting him against us. The press of the Fourth International is still weak. The masses will thus hear only what we say, and not Trotsky’s answers.”

Such were Stalin’s calculations, and they were not far wrong. The defendants finally capitulated once again and consented to play the tragic and dishonorable roles forced on them.

They did not all agree to confess to everything demanded of them. The very gradation of the confessions attests to the kind of desperate struggles that took place behind the scene on the eve of the trial. I shall omit here the youthful suspects I was supposed to have sent into Russia—whom I have never heard of before. Among the old revolutionists, not one of them admitted to having been connected with the Gestapo: the GPU did not succeed in getting them to debase themselves to that point. Smirnov and Goltsman denied participating in any terrorist activities. But all the defendants, without exception, testified that Trotsky had, from abroad, addressed clandestine appeals for terrorism, had
given instructions for terrorist activity, and had even sent terrorists into the USSR. \textit{My participation in terrorism is thus a common denominator of all the confessions}. That was the minimum for which the GPU would settle. The only way its victims could save their lives was to give the GPU this minimum.

The real aim of this entire frame-up is thus revealed to us. The secretary of the Second International, Friedrich Adler, my old mortal enemy, wrote “The practical aim of this whole enterprise constitutes the most ignoble chapter of the trial. It is a question of depriving Trotsky of asylum in Norway, of organizing a veritable manhunt against him, of making it impossible for him to exist any place on earth.”

Let us consider, gentlemen of the jury, the common denominator of the confessions as it appears in the depositions of the defendant Goltsman, principal witness against me and my son. In November 1932, Goltsman arrived in Copenhagen, according to his story, to see me. In the lobby of the Hotel Bristol, he met my son, who brought him to me. In the course of a long conversation, I revealed the terrorist program to him. This is perhaps the sole testimony to contain particulars of time and place. And since Goltsman obstinately refuses to admit any liaison whatsoever with the Gestapo or any participation in terrorist activities, his depositions are supposed to appear the most trustworthy to us.

What is the truth of this? Goltsman never paid me a visit, in Copenhagen or anyplace else. My son did not come to Copenhagen when I was there nor, as a matter of fact, has he ever been in Denmark. Finally, the Hotel Bristol, where Goltsman was supposed to have met my son in 1932, had been demolished in 1917! A fortunate conjunction of circumstances (visas, witnesses, telegrams, etc.) permits all the material elements of the story of the defendant most miserly with his confessions to be reduced to nothing. Now, Goltsman is no exception. The other confessions are cut of the same cloth. My son’s \textit{Red Book} has unmasked them all. Other revelations will follow. For my part, I could have long ago submitted to the press, to public opinion, to an impartial commission of inquiry, or to an independent court, facts, documents, testimony of witnesses, political and psychological considerations, thoroughly refuting the Moscow amalgam. But my hands are tied. The Norwegian government has made a trap of the right of asylum. At the very moment the GPU is heaping extraordinarily infamous charges on my head, the government of
this country places me under lock and key and cuts me off from communicating with the outside world.

Here I must relate an incident that is not very important but that can, nevertheless, explain my present situation. Last summer, a few weeks before the Moscow trial, the Norwegian minister of foreign affairs, Mr. Koht, was invited to Moscow, where he received an exceptionally cordial welcome. I spoke of this to my host, the journalist Konrad Knudsen, whom you have already heard as a witness here. Despite profound differences in our political viewpoints, we are on very friendly terms. Other than to exchange some piece of news, we did not talk about politics, avoiding all discussions of principles.

"Do you know," I asked him in a half-joking voice, "why Koht is being so well received in Moscow?"

"Why?"

"They are bargaining over my head."

"How do you know that?"

"Moscow is hinting to Mr. Koht—or saying outright—'We will charter your ships, we will buy your herrings, but on one condition: that you sell us Trotsky.'"

Devoted to his party, Knudsen was annoyed to hear me talk this way. "So you think that our principles are for sale?"

"My dear Knudsen," I replied, "I am not saying that the Norwegian government is getting ready to sell me. I am only saying that the Kremlin would like to make such a deal."

I do not mean that out-and-out bargaining took place between Litvinov and Koht. I even insist on acknowledging that in connection with me, Minister Koht conducted himself with more dignity during the election campaign than other ministers. But various circumstances revealed that the Kremlin was carrying out in Norway, on a rather large scale, an action that was both economic and political. The reason for it came out clearly when the Moscow trial burst forth. Beyond a doubt, the campaign of the reactionary press against me had been fed from Moscow via circuitous routes. The GPU's go-betweens furnished my "subversive" articles to the right-wing journals. Its agents in the Norwegian section of the Communist International spread rumors and gossip. The aim was to confuse the country on the eve of the elections, to intimidate the government and thus prepare it to yield to an ultimatum. Norwegian shipbuilders, egged on by the Soviet legation, together with other capitalists who had a stake in the matter, demanded that the government settle the Trotsky affair without delay—otherwise unemployment was
likely to increase. For its part, the government wanted nothing more than to surrender to Moscow. All that it lacked was a pretext. To cover its capitulation, the government accused me, without the slightest basis, of violating the agreements I had signed on my arrival. The truth is that the government hoped, by interning me, to improve the country’s balance of payments!

The attitude of the minister of justice has been particularly dishonest. On the eve of my internment, he unexpectedly telephoned me. The police had already occupied our courtyard. The minister’s voice was suave.

“I have received your letter,” said he, “and I find that you are often in the right. I ask only one thing of you: don’t send your letter to the press; don’t reply to today’s official communique. The Council of Ministers meets this evening, and I hope that we will reconsider the decision taken.”

I answered that naturally I was expecting a definitive decision. The next day I was arrested, they searched my secretaries, seizing first of all five copies of my letter which were in their possession and in which I reminded the minister that he had been present at one of the interviews I had accorded the press. The honorable minister was afraid that disclosure of this fact would hurt him with the voters. So much for this guardian of the law!

As you know, the Soviet government did not dare demand my extradition, either before or during the trial. Could it have been otherwise? A demand for extradition would have had to be made before a Norwegian court; and for Moscow’s judges, this would have been putting their own head in the noose. All I could do was to take legal action against the so-called Communists and the Norwegian fascists, who were repeating Moscow’s slanders. The day of my internment the minister of justice had given me the assurance that I would have the opportunity to defend myself against the charges directed against me. But the minister of justice’s deeds are in flagrant contradiction with his words. In passing special laws against me, does not the Norwegian government give a go-ahead signal to all the hirelings who slander me? “From now on you can vilify Trotsky as much as you want and with impunity, anywhere in the world. We have him bound and gagged and we will not let him defend himself.”

Gentlemen of the jury, I have been called before this court as a witness in the case of the ransacking of my apartment. The government has been kind enough to have me accompanied to
the courthouse by a squad of policemen. Yet, in the case of my stolen archives in Paris, the Norwegian government seized the deposition I addressed to the examining magistrate there. Why this difference in treatment? Would it not be because, in the first case, the government is faced with Norwegian fascists, whom it considers its enemies; and in the second case, it is faced with GPU gangsters, whom it considers its friends? I accuse the Norwegian government of trampling underfoot the most elementary principles of law. The trial of the sixteen is the first of a series of similar trials in which not only my honor and my life and those of my family, but the honor and the lives of hundreds of people are at stake. Under these circumstances how can they forbid me—the main defendant and the most informed witness—how can they forbid me to make known what I know? To do that is consciously and deliberately to obstruct the march of truth. Whoever by threat or violence prevents a witness from telling the truth commits a grave crime, severely punishable by Norwegian law. Of this I am convinced. It is indeed possible that the minister of justice will take new measures against me—after my present deposition. The resources of arbitrary power are inexhaustible. But I promised to tell you the truth, the whole truth, and I have kept my word.

(The president of the court asks the parties if they have any more questions for the witness and, on receiving a negative response, asks the witness if he wishes to swear to his testimony under oath.)

Trotsky: Not belonging to any religion, I cannot take a religious oath. But knowing the importance of my testimony, I am ready to confirm it before you under oath, that is, to assume full juridical responsibility for every word I have spoken.

(The audience rises. Hand upraised, the witness repeats the oath. Escorted by the police, he leaves the room—to be taken back to Sundby, the place of his internment.)
Dear Comrade Meyer:

I received your letter of the twelfth today, the sixteenth. I have no doubts whatsoever about your goodwill in attempting to do everything in your power to settle the "Trotsky question." I think that right now your intervention is absolutely necessary. Arranging the matter of my journey to Mexico exclusively through state officials is impossible. It is a matter of far too important, life-and-death questions for my wife and me, and I want the opportunity to confer with people who are well disposed toward me. I am very much aware of the political differences that separate me from you and Knudsen. But what is of concern here are very fundamental things (as you yourself write) which are very "loosely" connected with high politics.

I have suggested arranging a meeting with you, Knudsen, and W. Held. I would strictly limit the conversation to safeguarding the journey, but I can only discuss with those whom I trust personally. The Mexican government's offer and the present state of affairs present an opportunity that must be taken advantage of immediately. If matters are drawn out, we may lose this opportunity. On the other hand, I don't wish to go into something of this sort with my eyes closed. Hence the necessity of a meeting with Held, you, and Knudsen. Unfortunately Knudsen speaks only English, which makes matters more difficult, especially for my wife. Hence the combination Knudsen-Held would not be favorable. The best would be Meyer-Knudsen-Held. If that is not possible, then Meyer-Held. Of course we would be very happy if you came alone—with your wife—and this visit can and would be very useful in this matter. By this matter, I mean the earliest possible departure from Norway.

I don't wish to go into the other questions here so that you will receive this letter as soon as possible. Of course, a visit from your
wife would be most desirable for us. She could also make it easier for my wife to make a number of purchases (for the trip).

So much for now.

With best greetings,
Yours,
L. Trotsky

P.S.—Did you receive the copy of Revolution Betrayed that I sent you?
Dear Comrade H. Meyer:

I have to add to my letter of yesterday. Immediately after receiving the offer from Mexico, I set down the elementary conditions for security on our journey, through Puntervold. On December 11, I communicated the same considerations to the government through Captain J. Lie. On December 13 the minister of justice visited me, unfortunately not to give me an answer, but rather to listen to the same suggestions I had made twice previously. The minister of justice promised me categorically (he repeated it three times) that I would receive an answer "tomorrow", i.e., Monday. Today is Thursday and I have still received no answer. Thus valuable time is being lost and the offer from Mexico can be totally compromised by this delay.

I considered writing to the president of the Storting to suggest that I be afforded the opportunity to present the real state of affairs before a small commission of the Storting. But that would unavoidably lead to a political confrontation. That I do not need. I want to leave Norway as quickly as possible. Hence I will wait a few days for the promised "answer." Your visit would—as I have said—make the matter much easier. I do not believe that your government wishes to force me and my wife to the kind of extreme protest measures we used in the czarist prisons—measures which seldom fail to exercise an effect on public opinion.

The purely practical questions of the visa and the journey can and must be handled objectively and reasonably. Reasonably means primarily by conferring with people whom we, the interested parties, have confidence in. It is really painful to have to "motivate" these concerns again. . . .

With best greetings,
Leon Trotsky
The report on the first Moscow trial by the lawyer Rosenmark (who is the person hiding under this name?) is one of the most wretched documents of our time. (This report was published in the issue of Cahiers des Droits de l'Homme dated November 15, 1936.) This solemn publication puts an indelible stain on the French League for the Rights of Man, whose very name, in the present circumstances, sounds like a mockery.

In Moscow, a bloody juridical comedy was prepared, rehearsed, and carried out by Stalin and his GPU over a period of years. The preparation of this trial was announced in its broad outlines by me and by many others through the press—not only quite some time before the trial itself but even before the assassination of Kirov. Likewise, the most important stages of the preparation, in particular the different ways of extorting “confessions,” were openly exposed by me and by others in the press in the course of the last eight or nine years.

Abroad are living dozens of people, beginning with the president of the French Council, Leon Blum, who have at their disposal irrefutable affidavits and material that can throw light on the criminal activity of the GPU. The two principal accused, my son and I, are abroad. None of these facts exist for the Rosenmarks. They rely solely on the documentary texts of the GPU, that is, of the organizers of the juridical murder. They behave like commentators impressed by the indictment of Vyshinsky, whom Fouche surpasses in skill but not in base­ness.466

To prove his “objectivity” Rosenmark quotes the executioner’s wagonload of crude insults to his victims and in amicably gentle tones deplores his lack of serenity. This single word, like the rest of the diabolical repertory of the GPU, lays bare the duplicity, hypocrisy, and Tartuffism that characterize the “expertise” of Rosenmark, whatever the motives that inspire him. At the same
time that he discovers the absence of serenity in the clique of a Caesar Borgia, Fouche, and Company, Rosenmark discovers in these people certain advantages in comparison even with democratic justice, whose representatives he attacks.

"Let us observe at the same time," writes this glorious defender of the Rights of Man, "one laudable particularity in the Russian procedure: Trotsky, not being present, was not sentenced in contumacy as he would have been, I believe, in any other country in the world. The tribunal simply (!!!) stipulated that should he present himself on Soviet territory, he would be arrested and tried."

By these lines, Rosenmark—in passing—sentences me to death "in contumacy"; that, in his own words, would be the procedure in all countries of the world.

However, the GPU judges demanded only my arrest, a "laudable particularity." What miserable clumsiness is in this cynicism! It is altogether clear: the friendly reproaches about Vyshinsky's language serve our defender of justice only as a justification for the crime committed and so the preparation of new crimes of the same order.

"Trotsky, not being present"—our Tartuffe used this flat expression deliberately, in order to conceal disagreeable facts: Trotsky did not flee the trial; long ago he was expelled from the USSR; he has been deprived of Soviet citizenship; no one summoned him to appear before the tribunal. The indictment was published so late that Trotsky could not figure in the trial. After the verdict, which was pronounced according to the method of surprise and which resembled a shot in the back (here is another "laudable particularity"), the Moscow government did not dare demand the extradition of Trotsky and of his son Sedov. Why? Why did the government—which, if we are to believe the Pritts and Rosenmarks, was armed with so many proofs—why did the government not demand the extradition of Trotsky, either before or after the trial? Yet, according to the very words of the spokesman for the Rights of Man, on the basis of furnished proofs Trotsky would have been condemned to death in any other country. How are we to explain this cowardly "particularity" in the behavior of Stalin, Yagoda, Vyshinsky and the other falsifiers? Quite simply: all the "confessions" collapse through the inconsistency of the accusations themselves; the entire scaffolding cannot bear the slightest examination by free criticism.

The entire Moscow trial, at its different stages, was directed
only against Trotsky. This is what is clear to any person capable of political thinking. If Stalin has shouldered the responsibility for the act of Cain perpetrated against Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the others, it is not because their deaths were in themselves necessary to him. Zinoviev and Kamenev had been sufficiently annihilated and paralyzed by their confessions and by prison. The bodies of Zinoviev and Kamenev were only rungs on a ladder which would make it possible to reach Trotsky. And if Stalin has not made up his mind to demand the extradition of Trotsky, to take this latest practical step which alone justifies in his eyes the trials of Moscow, Novosibirsk, and all the other places, it is because no public tribunal in any country—contrary to the iniquitous assertion of Rosenmark—would consent to yield to Stalin’s demands. Trotsky and his son have in their possession irrefutable proofs of the falsity of the entire accusation. Because of their extent and continuity, the personal archives of Trotsky could not be used in a wretched amalgam.

When I tried to show a part of the documents in public while taking court action against slandering Norwegian fascists and “Communists,” Stalin forced the Norwegian government to declare immunity for the slanderers. Over and above the bargain that was arranged, he ordered his agents to steal my archives in Paris. The whole operation, we repeat, relied on the effect of surprise: shake the whole world by the surprise and by immeasurable falsification; annihilate Trotsky; make it difficult for him to defend himself; and charge friends Pritt and Rosenmark with whitewashing and embellishing this detestable work with “objective and purely juridical” considerations.

The Pritts and Rosenmarks are ready for anything. With their dishonest collaboration, the Kremlin is trying to gradually prepare the public opinion of the “democratic countries” for the physical destruction of people whom the bureaucracy considers to be the implacable enemies of its privileges, its usurpation, and its corruption.

In all serenity, Rosenmark does not hesitate to assert that any other government would have sentenced my son and me to death since proof had been given at the Moscow trial that I had organized terrorist attacks in liaison with the Gestapo. Anyone who knows even a little about the history of the revolution and about human psychology, in particular about the biographies of the people involved, would admit without difficulty that there are a thousand times more grounds for supposing that Rosenmark and Pritt are in the service of Stalinism than for admitting for a
single moment that Trotsky could be an ally of the Gestapo. This is something for which the League for the Rights of Man will never be able to supply proof to anyone.

I hear the name Rosenmark for the first time. They say he is a skillful bourgeois politician. I do not know in what way he was more particularly qualified to appear as a moral and juridical authority in an affair of such historic importance. It is possible that Rosenmark—unlike Pritt, who was always able to appear at the place and time he was required—is a narrow philistine who is completely ignorant of revolution and counterrevolution, of the psychology of militant revolutionaries, and of the methods of the Thermidorean bureaucracy; who has even forgotten the history of the Great French Revolution and its amalgams; who does not understand that the Russian Fouquier-Tinville\textsuperscript{167} and Fouches incontestably surpass in technique their French prototypes, and have for a long time been working in favor of the bureaucracy's totalitarian regime, which no longer has anything in common with the dictatorship of the proletariat. Possibly—and it is even likely—Rosenmark understands nothing about these questions. But why have they given him a task too heavy for his shoulders? And here is the nub of the question: Why have they rushed into print his scandalous report with such "genial impatience" in the very first place in the bulletin of the League for the Rights of Man? Such imprudent acts are not done for nothing. Inevitably we come to the conclusion that we are confronted with a still more serious blemish than the product of the wit of a narrow philistine multiplied by juridical cretinism.

The essential lie on which the Moscow amalgam rests (and consequently the "expertise" of Rosenmark and his consorts), is that the juridical scaffolding, which in any case does not stand up to examination by an honest critic, is in no way related to the historical and political situation, is devoid of all human psychology and, so to speak, chemically neutralizes it. Kirov is killed. A group of people are suspected. At first they are silent. Then they repent and confess to abominable crimes. The verdict is based on the free confessions of the accused. That is the official thesis.

Everything in this is a lie and a deception. It includes no tenable argument.

The history of the Moscow trial is examined by Rosenmark not on the basis of historical facts known to everyone, and not even on the basis of all the acts and all the official documents of the Moscow government.
Despite all obstacles, truth hews out a way. The whole trial rests on confessions that are surprising in their crudeness and teeming with psychological contradictions. In order to understand the value of these standardized "confessions" by the clients of the GPU one must begin by examining the standardized political capitulations, of which the "confessions" are the sequel and the immediate development. The history of the capitulations extends over the last thirteen years, and would, with the "human" documents, furnish matter for many dozens of volumes. Naturally, Rosenmark hasn't the slightest suspicion of this important fact, which dominates the whole Soviet atmosphere and particularly that of the judiciary.

The content of the confessions in no way corresponds with the characteristics of a "crime," whether carried out or not; rather it corresponds with the diverse needs of the government. That is why the public confessions have a purely ritualistic, standardized character. Their sole political significance is to teach everyone to think, or at least to express himself, uniformly. But precisely for this reason no one among the persons in question has taken these "repentances" seriously. These confessions are not real confessions but a contract signed with the bureaucracy. The proof of this is that even I.N. Smirnov, one of the most sincere and honorable of men, in 1929 drew up in the space of a few weeks several different texts of confessions which were in flagrant contradiction with one another. (These texts were published at the time in the Biulleten Oppozitsii.) I must add that nearly all the confessions (tens of thousands of them) belonging to the Thermidorean period had but one single object, namely, to attack me personally. In order to be received back into the bosom of the great family of the bureaucracy, or to assure himself at least the right to a morsel of bread, each Oppositionist, semi-Oppositionist, or even mere citizen, was compelled on all occasions to denounce Trotskyism and condemn Trotsky. The more startling the manner of these denunciations the more success they had. Confessions and renunciations have become for them very like the rituals of the church. Thus political confessions have paved the way for judicial confessions which are their inevitable consequence.

I repeat, these lines are being written in the claws of the Norwegian "Socialist" government. I am forced to confine myself to the most important facts.

I beg the reader to take into account that I have no opportunity to reread and correct what I have written.

We must throw into relief particularly the following points:
1. It is false that “all sixteen defendants” have admitted their crime. There were not sixteen defendants who participated in a crime of the same nature or who were even suspected of a like crime. In actual fact the sixteen men in the dock had been meticulously chosen from among many hundreds, many thousands of “candidates.” Only those who had proved their aptitude for publicly fulfilling the role which had been assigned to them were in the first instance made to appear before the tribunal. (On this subject see the Red Book.)

2. Did the GPU use medical or chemical methods of compulsion? I do not know. But such a hypothesis is not necessary. It is enough to know the facts, the persons, and the circumstances in order to understand how the defendants could have been forced to put the rope around their own necks. Among the defendants there was not a single Oppositionist or Trotskyist. They were all capitulators, persons who had confessed on many occasions, accusing themselves in their confessions of the most shameful actions and the lowest instincts; persons who had renounced all political conceptions, all reason for living, all personal dignity. (Of course, I am not speaking of real provocateurs, lost in the clutches of the GPU.) For years these ex-revolutionaries, demoralized and morally broken, had flitted back and forth between life and death. Were narcotics still necessary? The very idea (which Rosenmark takes responsibility for) that these people had been spurred on by a thirst for power is absurd. They had renounced it long since. The idea that these people, who had renounced their program, their banner, their personal dignity, who had many a time publicly covered themselves with mortification and slander, could hope to attain power by political assassinations would seem an idiotic political conception.

No, at the trial the defendants gave themselves the lie as they had done before in their innumerable confessions. The GPU took plenty of time to extort from its victims increasingly complete “confessions.” Today “A” admitted a little “fact.” If “B” does not admit the same thing it implies that all his past confessions and humiliations were “lies” (Stalin’s favorite word—Stalin, the champion of “sincerity”). “B” hastens to admit what “A” has admitted, and even a little more. And now it’s “C’s” turn again. To avoid any overly crude contradictions, they are given the opportunity, if they wish, to elaborate their theme in common. If “D” refuses to associate himself with this he risks losing all hope of saving himself. So he outdoes the others in order to prove his goodwill (reread the stammering and hysterical confessions of
Shame!

Reingold). And now all the others must align their lies with those of “E.” . . . The infernal game continues. The accused are under lock and key. The GPU is in no hurry. The GPU has Mausers. Jules Romains shows (in his Les Creatures) how it is possible without having any “idea” or “theme” to write a truly poetical work by taking as a point of departure a play on words. The GPU works thus. These gentlemen, having at their disposal neither facts nor a completed plan, construct their amalgam by a play on “confessions.” If one or another of the confessions appears inconvenient in the end, it is quite simply omitted as an unnecessary hypothesis. These “creatures” are free of all ties.

From time to time they give their victims a provisional liberty in order to allow the rebirth of vague hopes. At the first opportunity those who have been freed are arrested once more. Thus ceaselessly tossed between hope and despair these men become little by little the shadow of their former selves.

But still this is not the end. For each one of them there comes a moment when they begin to resist. No, they cannot go to such lengths in denial of themselves. At this point the GPU shoots the most obstinate.

Meanwhile the press unanimously continues to yell against the “traitors,” the “counterrevolutionaries,” the “agents of imperialism,” and so forth. The prisoners have no other press at their disposal than that of Stalin. Physical torture? I think not. The torture of slander, of uncertainty, and of terror destroys the nervous system of the accused just as surely as physical torture. And one must add the fact of the incessant allusion to the dangers of war. Are you for the fatherland (that is, for Stalin), or against the fatherland? Pravda calls even Andre Gide’s book an “anti-Soviet witness.” A foreigner of less renown would have been treated long since as an agent of Hitler. What is to be said of the Soviet Oppositionists? Gide shows how they extorted from him a telegram of praise for Stalin and how the celebrated author was reduced to impotence and . . . to capitulation. What shall we say then of the methods of the GPU? Are you for the USSR (that is, for Stalin), or against the USSR? You have repented of course long ago; you are not dangerous to us as you yourself know; we don’t wish you ill. But Trotsky continues his poisonous work abroad. He continues his sapping exploits against the USSR (that is, against the omnipotence of the bureaucracy). His influence is growing. Trotsky must be discredited once and for all. Thus your question resolves itself. If you are for the USSR you will help us. If not, all your repentance was a lie. In view of the
approaching war we shall be forced to consider you as agents of Trotsky, as enemies inside the country. You must admit that Trotsky has pushed you on to the path of terror.—But no one will believe it!—Oh! we will take care of this aspect of the question. We have our Duclos and our Thorez, our Pritts and our Rosenmarks. Has Trotsky pushed you onto the path of terror, yes or no? He who replied “Yes” is ready to allow himself to be used further.

By repeating the questions endlessly, the replies can be made increasingly concrete. Smirnov and Goltzman tried to stop themselves in midroad, between “terror in general” and the assassination of Kirov.

Others (but not all) went further. Whoever resisted was liquidated in the course of the “technical” preparation of the trial. The man against whom violence was successful was led on the scene to be presented to the eyes of Pritt in the capacity of an impartial expert.

Is it possible to talk to any honorable person about these “confessions” and neglect the fact that for years the GPU has prepared and “questioned” the defendants with the help of periodic capitulations, humiliations, self-degradation, slanders, and also by means of reprisals? Only complete fools can shut their eyes to these facts.*

The statement that the defendants admitted the facts which incriminated them independently of one another is a triple lie. There is no material proof of the confessions. The defendants abandoned themselves to self-accusations and summary denunciations. They were utterly terrified that these accusations should

*Dr. Ciliga, a Yugoslav revolutionary who, as an oppositionist, spent several years in the GPU’s prisons and places of deportation, testifies: “I saw a sailor who, on many occasions, was told, on being taken out of his cell in the evening, that he was going to be shot. He was led into the courtyard, and then brought back to his cell. ‘Since you are a worker we don’t want to shoot you like some White Guard. As a worker, you must confess sincerely...’ The sailor confessed nothing, but after these tortures he became half-mad. Then at last they left him in peace. But they still ask him for confessions on the subject of his conspiracy against Stalin.”

The story of this unfortunate sailor is but a tiny episode taken from the book of the confessions of the accused—and of their accusers and their judges. From being the instrument of the revolution, the GPU has become the instrument of the Soviet aristocracy, the personal instrument of Stalin, about whom Lenin warned in 1922: “This cook will prepare only peppery dishes.”
be made more precise. It is not by chance that each time one of
the defendants, in order to support the logic of his own
confessions, tried to make the times and places definite, the GPU
fell into contradictions that were only too crying. As far as the
concrete elements of their own confessions are concerned, the
defendants contradicted themselves and each other. Only a
fraction of these contradictions is brought to light in the Red
Book, about which Pritt and Rosenmark grit their teeth.

Must we return again to Goltsman's confessions? Among the
accused of the older generation Goltsman alone "personally saw"
me and was said to have received from me "terrorist" instruc-
tions. My son, Leon Sedov, is said to have been the intermediary
and organizer of the meeting. His meeting with Goltsman is
alleged to have taken place at the Hotel Bristol. This is the chief
point in the confession.

Alas! My son has never been to Copenhagen. The fact that he
did not go there in 1932 can be incontestably proved by means of
visas, telegrams, and statements coming from more than thirty
persons of different nationalities and different political tenden-
cies. The Hotel Bristol, where the meeting is supposed to have
taken place, has not been in existence since 1917. What then does
Goltsman's confession mean?

The declarations of Berman-Yurin, Fritz David, and Olberg are
full of similar absurdities and nonsense. Nevertheless, on the
basis of these confessions, the defenders of the Rights of Man
(and of the interests of the GPU) consider me worthy of the death
penalty. How far can human baseness go?

But however scandalous the confessions of Goltsman and
others may be, their contradictions and their crude inventions
seem to be merely decorations designed to adorn the walls of this
strange monument of lies and errors.

The whole indictment and all the confessions center around the
assassination of Kirov. The organization of this murder, however,
was a chain in the struggle against the Opposition. The plot
against Kirov was organized by the GPU for the purpose of
striking a blow at the Leningrad organization of Zinovievists.
Stalin, Yagoda, Kirov himself, were in close touch with the
conspiracy. This fact is proved beyond any shadow of a doubt by
the trial of Medved, the former chief of the Leningrad GPU. The
plot against Kirov was to have had a fictitious character; it was
essentially directed against the Opposition.

Stalin did not wish to kill Kirov; Kirov himself did not wish to
be killed; but Nikolaev, although surrounded on all sides by
agents provocateurs, himself took his role too seriously. He escaped from their control and fired before the GPU had succeeded in finishing its amalgam (see my pamphlet, The Stalinist Bureaucracy and the Assassination of Kirov.) What is written there about the preparation of the Moscow trials (both the first and those which have followed) is the result of logical deduction. I have unveiled the plans of the GPU month by month, year by year, stage by stage, especially since the beginning of 1929. The indelible traces of the methodical preparation of articles in the Soviet press, by the interviews of Stalin and Molotov, by various “antiterrorist” declarations of Litvinov at Geneva (a propos of the assassination of King Alexander and Barthou), and by a whole series of other documents, declarations, and suggestions which at the time seemed incomprehensible but which, at the present moment, clearly reveal their criminal meaning.

In summing up, one may say not that the trials of the terrorists have been arranged because Kirov was murdered, but that the assassination of Kirov took place “by accident” during the feverish preparation of the trials against the terrorists.

Sycophants a la Pritt and Rosenmark consider it out of the question that Stalin’s chaste GPU could organize trials which were merely criminal dramatizations in which the roles had been fixed in advance. On the other hand they find it quite natural that the Opposition—which is a Communist tendency with a long tradition, experienced cadres, an elaborated program, and abundant political literature—should suddenly make an about-face, quite unexpectedly, toward individual terrorism, which it has always condemned as adventurism without results. This tendency, which comprises many thousands of sympathizers, accomplishes this incredible about-face in complete silence, without any previous discussion, without any declaration, without any criticism, without any internal struggle, without any terrorist propaganda, without any literature.

But even this is not enough. This tendency, which has shown itself capable of the greatest sacrifices in struggle for its program, enters into relations with the Gestapo! And moved to this by the “thirst for power”! As if power in the USSR could be obtained with the aid of the Gestapo! And how can one attribute this “thirst for power” to tens of thousands of rank-and-file Oppositionists, workers, members of Young Communist organizations, who experience unheard-of repressions and privations? Only a narrow and over-fed bourgeois who knows nothing of revolution-
ary struggle, and who, at the same time, is always ready to lick 
the boots of any government in power, could believe so vile a lie.

Let us, however, concede the impossible. Let us concede 
precisely that the Trotskyists, in contradiction to their doctrine, 
their program, their present writings, and their private correspon­
dence (which is at the disposal of any honest commission of 
inquiry), have become terrorists—without internal struggles or 
splits, without the inevitable defections and denunciations. Let us 
admit that terrorism was necessary for them to restore capital­
ism. Why was this new program accepted in silence by everyone, 
without reprobation, without criticism, without opposition? Let us 
concede further—a few absurdities more or less are of no 
importance—that in order to ensure the restoration of capitalism 
and the victory of fascism (yes, yes, even fascism), the Trotsky­
ists signed a pact with the Gestapo, and that they have been 
pursuing their terrorist activity at least from 1931 to the middle of 
1936. Where? How? But this matters little. It all took place in the 
fourth dimension. They were continually trying to assassinate all 
the “leaders,” to disorganize the economy, to prepare victory for 
Hitler and the Mikado.

Can we take all these base absurdities for legal tender? But 
what do we see in the end? In the middle of 1936, the leaders of 
this strange tendency, accused of having taken part in these 
crimes, suddenly repent, all at the same time, and admit to the 
crimes they had committed (that is, had not committed). Each 
one rushes to cover himself with as much mud as he can, and 
each tries to drown the voice of the others in singing the praises 
of Stalin, whom yesterday he wanted to kill. How can we expla­ 
in this miracle of Saint Yagoda? Counterrevolutionaries, terrorists, 
mad fascists, transformed into hysterical flagellants. Let the 
Pritts and Rosenmarks explain this mystery.

Finally let us suppose that the idea of terrorism was in fact 
accepted at some time by this group of capitolators and by others, 
and that in their confessions before the tribunal an echo of the 
truth was heard (alleged plots of the type: “To hell with Stalin!”) 
But why bring the Trotskyists and Trotsky himself onto the 
scene? These people do not conceal their aim: to bring to an end 
the absolutism of the Stalinist clique, not by individual terrorist 
adventures, but by the methods of the revolutionary class 
struggle. In these circumstances, would it not be natural for an 
“objective” jurist to ask himself: did not the government promise 
these dishonest capitolators that it would soften their fate if they 
would consent somehow to implicate Trotsky, enemy number one 
of the Stalinist clique?
What more natural than the hypothesis that the confessions may contain a morsel of the truth? But no, you see, our jurists consider it impossible that the accused hoped to be reprieved. They asked for death themselves, then. They "freely" renounced counsel for the defense. What sinister hypocrisy! What shame!

These wretched men, humiliated and broken, asked death for themselves so that they might better fulfill their odious role, and thus attempt to save their lives. It was prearranged in the contract. At any price, the government required the illusion of wretched and foundering men.

The correspondent of the Daily Herald, the organ of the very party to which the dishonest Pritt belongs, wrote after the verdict: "The report is widely current that a decree, published only five days before, which gave them the right to appeal, had been specially designed to spare their lives."

I do not know to what decree it is referring. It may be that they did nothing more than spread rumors of such a decree. In any case Stalin did everything to deceive the defendants.

The minister of justice has just told me that tomorrow we are to embark for Mexico. The journey takes twenty days. I have been asking, for a week now, that it be made possible for me to see my friends, take security measures for the duration of the trip, and specifically, be accompanied by some comrades.

The minister of justice visited me on Sunday, the thirteenth; he promised to give me an answer; he promised, in any case, that comrade H. and his wife would accompany us. I asked for a preliminary interview with H. Meyer and Knudsen. I was promised an answer for Monday. Instead of that answer I received today the government’s order: we are to be sent away tomorrow by special boat on which we are to have two berths.

I said to the minister of justice: Certainly you can take your revenge on us physically, but morally you will pay dearly for it, just as the German Social Democracy paid dearly for the assassination of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. In three, five years, if the workers allow you to continue the same policy, all your ministers will find themselves in emigration. . . . After that I went out without shaking hands. Natalia Ivanovna is packing our bags. For the nth time?

I do not know if my letter will reach you. In any case, I am consigning this bottle to the sea.

Warm greetings to all friends!

L. Trotsky
A FORMAL DECLARATION

December 18, 1936

Dear Friend:

The fact that you have finally found the telegram to Herriot and the message from [Herriot] to the Berlin consul is magnificent. We very much rejoice over that. It is a great triumph. I will await with impatience the bulletin of the Committee [for an Inquiry into the Moscow Trial] with a facsimile of this telegram. . . .

It appears that they want to make us leave tomorrow. I will refrain from commenting on the conditions of this departure. In any case, I make the following declaration to you, as my lawyer: If Natalia and I come to a bad turn, en route or otherwise, it is Leon Sedov, my son, who must dispose of all my “property,” that is, the payments from the different publishers.

I thank you heartily for your active friendship. We both embrace you warmly.

Our most cordial greetings to all our friends.

Please send all our materials and letters to Mexico immediately.

Fraternal greetings.
December 18, 1936

Dear Lyova:

It seems that tomorrow we are going to be sent to Mexico. This then is our last letter from Europe. If something happens to us en route or elsewhere you and Sergei are my heirs. *This letter should have testamentary value.* . . . As you know, I have in mind future royalties on my books—apart from these I possess nothing. If you ever meet Sergei . . . tell him that we have never forgotten him and never will forget him for a single moment. . . .
NOTES

1. “Open Letter for the Fourth International.” *New Militant*, August 3, 1935. *New Militant* was the newspaper of the Workers Party of the U.S. The first draft of this text was written by Trotsky in the spring of 1935, while he was still in France, but it was not published until the summer, after it had been discussed and approved by the various organizations signing it and after Trotsky had moved to Norway. The Fourth International (FI) was the final name of the international political movement led by Trotsky during his third exile from 1929 to 1940. It was called the International Left Opposition—Bolshevik-Leninists (ILO) from 1930 to 1933. After Hitler came to power, it discontinued its original policy of working for the reform of the Communist International, proclaimed the need for a new International, changed its name to the International Communist League (ICL), and set to work gathering forces for revolutionary parties throughout the world. Trotsky proposed that the Fourth International be founded at an ICL conference in July 1936, but the conference instead established the Movement for the Fourth International (MFI). The FI’s founding conference was held in France in September 1938.

2. Adolph Hitler (1889-1945) was appointed chancellor of Germany in January 1933 and, at the head of the Nazi Party, led Germany into World War II. The Second International began in 1889 as a loose association of Social Democratic and labor parties, uniting both revolutionary and reformist elements. Its progressive role ended in 1914, when its major sections violated the most elementary socialist principles and supported their own imperialist governments in World War I. It fell apart during the war, but was revived as a completely reformist organization in 1919. The Third (or Communist) International (Comintern) was organized under Lenin’s leadership in 1919 as the revolutionary successor to the Second International. Stalin dissolved the Comintern in 1943 as a gesture of goodwill to his imperialist allies.

3. The Declaration of Four was signed by the International Communist League, the Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Independent Socialist Party of Holland, and the Socialist Workers Party of Germany. Its text is in *Writings* 33-34.

4. In February 1934, the workers of Vienna rose in a heroic insurrection against repressive measures of the right-wing regime of Engelbert Dollfuss but were defeated, in part because of the vacillation of their Social Democratic leaders. The Austrian Social Democracy had previous-
ly refused to lead a serious struggle against the Dollfuss regime, “tolerating” him as a lesser evil to the Nazis. These policies enabled both Dollfuss and the Nazis to consolidate their strength and smash the powerful Austrian labor movement.

5. In October 1934, the right-wing Lerroux government in Spain smashed a general strike which had expanded into an uprising in Asturias. Lerroux was able to recapture the town of Oviedo from the workers and crush the Asturian commune in October and November. In the process, 3,000 workers were killed, 7,000 wounded, and 40,000 imprisoned.

6. Emile Vandervelde (1866-1938) was a Belgian Labor Party leader and president of the Second International, 1929-36. He was in the cabinet during World War I and signed the Versailles treaty for Belgium.

7. Hendrik de Man (1885-1953) was a Belgian Labor Party leader and author in 1933 of a “labor plan” to end the depression and promote production, a major point of which provided for the government to buy out the capitalists. (See Writings 33-34 for Trotsky’s comments.) Karl Marx (1818-1883) was, along with Engels, the founder of scientific socialism and the leader of the First International, 1864-76.

8. Paul-Henri Spaak (1899-1972) was briefly a left-winger in the Belgian Labor Party and editor of Action socialiste in 1934. In 1935, however, he became a minister in the Belgian cabinet and later was secretary-general of NATO.

9. The French Radical Party, or Radical Socialists, was the principal capitalist party of France between the two world wars, and was comparable to the Democratic Party in the U.S.

10. The British Labour Party, founded in 1906 and affiliated to the Second International, held power in 1924 and 1929-31, but was defeated in the 1935 election and did not return to power until 1945.

11. Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945) was Democratic president of the U.S. from 1933 until his death. His plan, the New Deal, was a program of reforms designed to alleviate the worst conditions of the Depression and buy off the militancy of the American workers.

12. Maxim Litvinov (1876-1951) was Soviet people’s commissar of foreign affairs, 1930-39. Stalin used him to personify “collective security” when he sought alliances with democratic imperialists, and shelved him during the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact and the cold war. The U.S. government recognized the Soviet Union in 1933.

13. In 1924 the Workers (Communist) Party in the U.S. formed a Farmer-Labor Party with a populist program. This attempt to create a mass farmer-labor party with little backing from the masses threw the Workers Party into turmoil and was abandoned for a decision to run a Communist ticket in the elections.

14. The 1934 strikes of Toledo Auto-Lite workers, Minneapolis teamsters, and San Francisco longshoremen reversed a situation in which American workers had been losing strike after strike. A detailed account of the significance of these three strikes is found in chapter four of Art Preis’s Labor’s Giant Step (Pathfinder Press, 1972).
15. The Saar region of Germany, under French control after World War I, voted overwhelmingly in a 1935 referendum in favor of return to Germany.

16. The “third period,” according to the schema proclaimed by the Stalinists in 1928, was the final period of capitalism, the period of its immediately impending demise and replacement by soviets. Flowing from this, the Comintern’s tactics during the years 1928-34 were marked by ultraleftism, sectarianism, the building of small “red” unions instead of work in the mass labor unions, and refusal to build united fronts with other working class organizations. The Stalinists abandoned this policy in 1934, and the following year adopted the People’s Front policy.

17. Joseph Stalin (1879-1953) became a Social Democrat in 1898, joined the Bolshevik faction in 1904, and was a member of its Central Committee from 1912. After the February revolution and before Lenin returned and reoriented the Bolsheviks toward winning power, he favored a conciliatory attitude toward the Provisional Government. He was commissar of nationalities in the first Soviet government and became general secretary of the CP in 1922. Lenin called in 1923 for his removal from that post because he was using it to bureaucratize the party and state apparatuses. After Lenin’s death in 1924, Stalin gradually eliminated his major opponents, starting with Trotsky, until he became virtual dictator of the party and the Soviet Union in the 1930s. The chief concepts associated with his name are “socialism in one country,” “social fascism,” and “peaceful coexistence.”

18. Amalgam was the term Trotsky frequently used to designate the Kremlin’s practice of lumping together different or opposing political tendencies and accusing them of common crimes or sins.

19. The League of Nations, which Lenin called a “thieves’ kitchen,” was created by the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919, ostensibly as a form of world government and cooperation that would prevent future wars. Its complete bankruptcy became clear when it was unable to have any effect on the Japanese invasion of China, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, and other links in the chain that led to World War II. The Soviet military alliance with French imperialism refers to the May 1935 Soviet-French nonaggression pact, signed by Stalin and French Foreign Minister Laval in Moscow.

20. Pierre Laval (1883-1945), a Socialist in his youth, was a Republican minister of foreign affairs, 1934-35, and negotiated the Franco-Soviet pact. He was premier, 1935-36 and again in 1942, when he pursued a policy of collaboration with Germany. He was executed for treason after the war. A final communiqué after the signing of the Stalin-Laval pact stated: “Duty first of all obligates them not to weaken in any way their means of national defense. In this respect Mr. Stalin understands and fully approves of the policy of national defense made by France in order to keep its armed strength at the level of security.”

21. On August 4, 1914, the German Social Democracy voted for the war budget of the imperialist government in violation of its prewar pledges to oppose militarism in war and peace. On the same day the
French and Belgian Socialist parties issued manifestos declaring support for their governments in war. The date is used by Marxists to designate the collapse of the Second International as a revolutionary force.

22. **Vladimir Ilyich Lenin** (1870-1924) restored Marxism as the theory and practice of revolution in the imperialist epoch after it had been debased by the opportunists, revisionists, and fatalists of the Second International. He initiated the Bolshevik tendency, which was the first to build the kind of party needed to lead a working class revolution. He led the first victorious workers' revolution in 1917, and served as head of the first Soviet government. He founded the Communist International and helped elaborate its principles, strategy, and tactics. He prepared a fight against the bureaucratization of the Russian CP and the Soviet state, but died before he could carry it out.

23. The conference in Zimmernwald, Switzerland, in September 1915, was designed to reassemble the antiwar and internationalist currents that had survived the debacle of the Second International. Although most of the participants were centrists, it proved to be a step in the direction of a new International. The Zimmernwald manifesto against the war, written by Trotsky, is in *Leon Trotsky Speaks* (Pathfinder, 1972).

24. **The October Revolution** in Russia brought the soviets, led by the Bolsheviks, to power.

25. This reference to the **Two-and-a-Half International** should not be confused with the International Association of Socialist Parties (or Two-and-a-Half International), which was formed in February 1921 by centrist parties and groups that had left the Second International under pressure from the revolutionary masses. That group, which reunited with the Second International in May 1923, is the one originally referred to by that designation. In this document, Two-and-a-Half International refers to the Stalinist proposals in 1934 and 1935 for organic unity with the Social Democrats, including a merger of the Second and Third Internationals.

26. **The Amsterdam-Pleyel Committee** was typical of organizations “against war” and “against fascism” fostered by the Stalinists in collaboration with well-known pacifists and liberals as a substitute for united front working class activity. The principal congresses of these groups were held in Amsterdam in August 1932 and at the Pleyel hall in Paris in June 1933.

27. Additional signers of the *Open Letter* that summer were the Cooperative Society of the Friends of the New Age (France); the Cuban Bolsheviks; the Czechoslovakian Communists; and the Spartacus group in Belgium.

28. The ICL held an **international conference** in Paris, July 29-31, 1936. The three resolutions that Trotsky wrote for that conference are included in this volume. Other theses, resolutions, and appeals of the conference are in *Documents of the Fourth International: The Formative Years (1933-40)* (Pathfinder Press, 1973). The *Open Letter* was signed by P.J. Schmidt and H. Sneevliet for the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party of Holland (RSAP); A.J. Muste and James P. Cannon for the Workers Party of the U.S. (WPUS); Crux (Trotsky), Dubois (Ruth Fischer),
and Martin (Alfonso Leonetti) for the International Secretariat of the ICL; the Bolshevik-Leninist Group (GBL) of France; and J. MacDonald and M. Spector for the Workers Party of Canada. Peter J. Schmidt (1896-1952) was the leader of the Independent Socialist Party of Holland, which merged early in 1935 with the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) led by Henricus Sneevliet (1883-1942) to form the RSAP, the Dutch section of the ICL. Schmidt resigned in 1936 and joined the Social Democracy. After the war he became a United Nations official. Sneevliet left the MFI in 1938. In 1942 he was arrested and executed by the Nazis. A.J. Muste (1885-1967), a pacifist and former minister, was head of the American Workers Party, which merged with the Communist League of America in 1934 to form the WPUS, of which Muste was secretary. In 1936, Muste resigned and returned to pacifism and the church. In the 1960s he played a leading role in building the movement against the Vietnam War. James P. Cannon (1890-1974), a founder of the American CP, led in the formation of the Left Opposition after his expulsion from the CP in 1928. He remained a leader of the American Trotskyist movement and the FI until his death. Dubois (Ruth Fischer) (1895-1961) was a central leader of the German CP in the 1920s. She was expelled in 1927 as a supporter of the Russian United Opposition and helped found the German Leninbund, which collaborated with the Left Opposition until 1930. She withdrew from the Leninbund and in the mid-thirties joined the Trotskyists, serving on the International Secretariat of the ICL in 1935. She had withdrawn from the Trotskyist movement by 1938. Martin (Alfonso Leonetti) (1895- ) left the Italian CP in 1930 to found the New Italian Opposition, which became the Italian section of the ILO. He was an active member of the International Secretariat of the ILO and ICL through 1936. He returned to the Italian CP after World War II. The International Secretariat (IS) was the administrative leadership of the ILO and ICL. The French Trotskyists took the name Bolshevik-Leninist Group (GBL) in the SFIO (French Socialist Party) between August 1934 and their expulsion from the Socialist Party a year later. Jack MacDonald (1888-1941) and Maurice Spector (1898-1968) were founders of the Canadian CP, and leaders until their expulsion in the late 1920s. They then founded the Canadian Trotskyist movement, of which MacDonald was a leader until his death. Spector left the Trotskyist movement in 1939.

29. “Luxemburg and the Fourth International.” New International, August 1935. New International was the magazine of the American Trotskyist movement until April 1940, when it was replaced by Fourth International, whose name was later changed to International Socialist Review. Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919), an outstanding leader of the Marxist movement and a prominent opponent of revisionism and opportunism before World War I, was jailed for antiwar activity at the outbreak of the war in Germany, but was freed by the November 1918 uprising. Together with Karl Liebknecht she organized the German
Communist Party. In January 1919 she was assassinated by soldiers of the Social Democratic government.

30. The SAP (Socialist Workers Party of Germany) was formed in October 1931, after the Social Democrats expelled several left-wingers headed by Max Seydewitz. In the spring of 1932, a split occurred in the German Communist Right Opposition (KPO, the Brandlerites), and a group led by Jakob Walcher entered the SAP. When Seydewitz and other founders withdrew, the ex-Brandlerites assumed the leadership of the SAP, which then claimed 14,000 members; its numbers were greatly reduced after Hitler came to power. In August 1933 the SAP joined with the ILO in signing the Declaration of Four, proclaiming the necessity to work for a new International. In emigration the SAP moved rapidly to the right, eventually becoming an opponent of the MFI. By 1937 the SAP had endorsed a People's Front for Germany. Spartacus, not to be confused with the sectarian Belgian group led by Vereecken, was a small centrist group in the left wing of the French SFIO that favored the SAP. The Belgian Action socialiste, not to be confused with the French SFIO periodical of the same name, was the publication of the Belgian Labor Party's left wing.

31. The revolution of 1905 in Russia grew out of discontent over the Russo-Japanese War and czarist despotism. It culminated in a general strike in October and was crushed by the czar in December. See Trotsky's 1905 (Random House, 1972). In her pamphlet The Mass Strike, the Political Party, and the Trade Unions, Luxemburg sought to draw the lessons of the Russian events for the German workers and apply them to the class struggle in Germany. See Rosa Luxemburg Speaks (Pathfinder Press, 1970).

32. As the German defeat in World War I became clear, a German naval mutiny turned into a revolutionary movement. On November 8, 1918, the Bavarian Socialist Republic was proclaimed in Munich. In Berlin, workers and soldiers organized soviets, and a delegation of Social Democrats demanded that the chancellor surrender the government to the workers. The German empire fell the next day. Hindenburg and Kaiser Wilhelm II fled to Holland, and a provisional government was established in Berlin consisting of three Social Democrats and three members of the Independent Social Democratic Party. It was this government that murdered leading revolutionists and prevented the revolution from going beyond the establishment of a liberal bourgeois democracy.

33. A.I. Parvus (1869-1924) was a prominent Russian Marxist propagandist and theoretician active in Germany before World War I. Trotsky broke with him in 1914 when he became an outstanding supporter of the prowar wing of the German Social Democracy.

34. Rosa Luxemburg's pamphlet The Russian Revolution is in Rosa Luxemburg Speaks.

35. Paul Froelich (1884-1953) led a minority of the German Right Opposition (KPO) into the SAP in 1932, where he soon became one of the central leaders. After World War II he returned to West Germany and joined the Social Democracy. He wrote a biography, Rosa Luxemburg
(Monthly Review Press, 1972), and edited some of Luxemburg's works. Miles was Walter Loewenheim, the leader of a small centrist tendency in Germany that was called the New Beginning group from 1931 on and had some influence inside SAP emigre circles after Hitler came to power. Boris Goldenberg, who wrote for the French press under the name of Bertrand Gilbert, was a German refugee in Paris and a representative of the SAP during its negotiations with the ICL in 1933-34. He was one of the founders of the Revolutionary Left group in the SFIO in September 1935.

36. Jim Schwab (1887- ), also called Jakob Walcher, was a founder of the German CP. He was expelled from the Comintern in 1929 as a supporter of the Communist Right Opposition (KPO). He left the KPO in 1932 and until 1939 was a leader of the SAP Emigre Committee in Paris. After World War II he returned to Stalinism, accepting a minor government post in East Germany.

37. Karl Liebknecht (1871-1919) was a left-wing German Social Democrat and antimilitarist. He was the first to vote against war credits in the Reichstag in 1914. Imprisoned for antiwar activity from 1916 to 1918, he was a leader of the Berlin uprising of 1919. He was assassinated with Luxemburg by soldiers of the government in January 1919.

38. “The SAP and the Open Letter.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume from the German by Maria Roth.

39. Jaques de Kadt was the secretary of the Dutch OSP, editor of its paper De Fakkel (The Torch), and a leader of its right wing, hostile to the ICL and to Trotsky. He and his wing were expelled in September 1934, strengthening the OSP forces who wanted to work with the ICL.

40. The centrist IAG (International Labor Community) was the predecessor of the London Bureau (see note 108).

41. “For a Special Information Service.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Unsigned. Translated for this volume from the German by Maria Roth.

42. The Wo. Trotsky refers to is probably Erwin Wolf (1902-1937), a Czech Trotskyist who served as Trotsky's secretary while he was in Norway. In 1937 he was kidnapped and killed by the GPU in Spain. Erde is Karl Friedberg, a German Trotskyist who emigrated to the Saar region after Hitler came to power. In August 1933 he visited Trotsky in France. Otto Wels (1873-1939) was a leading functionary of the German Social Democratic Party. As military commander of Berlin, Wels crushed the uprising of 1919. Later he led his party's delegation in the Reichstag. He was an opponent of united fronts with the CP. Siegfried Aufhaeuser, an author of the united front platform of the Austrian Social Democrats in exile, was expelled by the Social Democratic emigre leadership in Prague in January 1935.

43. The turn of the French Stalinists from Stalin's policy (supporting France's arming for war) to that of the SFIO (pacifism,
disarmament) was an attempt to clear the way of obstacles to a bloc or merger between the two parties. SFIO (French Section of the Labor [Second] International) was the official name of the French Socialist Party before World War II. In 1920 a majority of the SFIO left to form the French CP; the reformist minority retained the name. Leon Blum (1872-1950) was the head of the SFIO in the thirties and premier of the first People's Front government in 1936.

44. “‘World Party of Social Revolution.’” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Unsigned. Translated for this volume from the German by Maria Roth. The name eventually adopted by the FI was “World Party of Socialist Revolution.”

45. Rundschau was a German Stalinist paper published in emigration in Basle, which succeeded International Press Correspondence (Inprekorr) as the German press of the Comintern when Inprekorr was forced to cease publication after Hitler came to power. Parabellum was Arkady Maslow (1891-1941), a central leader of the German CP in the twenties. He had been expelled by the Stalinists in 1927 as a supporter of Zinoviev and helped found the German Leninbund. In 1934 he joined the ICL with Ruth Fischer and remained a member until 1937.

46. General Council. This was a proposal to establish a new body for the ICL, equivalent in its functions to that of an international executive committee and politically superior to the IS. A body with this name was elected at the international conference in July 1936, but because of repression and defections it never met or functioned. The Provisional Contact Committee proposed at the end of the Open Letter later became known as the Amsterdam secretariat. It was in charge of issuing the ICL’s bulletin in 1935-36.

47. “The Italo-Ethiopian Conflict.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Signed “Crux.” Translated for this volume from the German by Maria Roth. An excerpt from a letter to the IS. Although Italy did not invade Ethiopia until October 1935, its campaign against Ethiopia was intense by July.

48. Haile Selassie (1891-1975), the Negus (emperor) of Ethiopia, was driven from the country by the Italian conquest in 1936, and was restored to the throne in 1941, reigning until removed by a military coup shortly before his death. Benito Mussolini (1883-1945), the founder of Italian fascism, had been a member of the antiwar wing of the SP in 1914. He organized the fascist movement in 1919, became dictator in 1922, and set the pattern of repression on which the German Nazis modeled their regime. He was overthrown in 1943 and executed by partisans two years later.

49. Francesco Crispi (1819-1901), at first a republican, became an outspoken monarchist and was Italian premier, 1887-91 and 1893-96. He sought an Italian protectorate over Ethiopia and was deposed after the Italian defeat at Aduwa in 1896.
50. "For Defense of Soviet Revolutionaries." By permission of the Harvard College Library. Unsigned. Translated for this volume from the German by Maria Roth.

51. **Gregory Zinoviev** (1883-1936), the first head of the Comintern (1919-26), helped Stalin initiate the crusade against Trotskyism in 1923, but blocked with the Left Opposition from 1926 until he was expelled from the party in 1927. He capitulated, was readmitted, but was expelled again in 1932. He repented again, but in January 1935 he and eighteen others were convicted of plotting to kill Soviet leaders and of moral responsibility for the murder of Kirov. Sentenced to ten years, he became a victim of the first big Moscow show trial in August 1936 and was executed. **Abel Yenukidze** (1877-1937) became secretary of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets in 1918. In March 1935 he was arrested and accused of immoral behavior. He was later executed as a spy. Trotsky's article about him, "Behind the Kremlin Walls" (January 8, 1938), is in *Portraits, Political and Personal* (Pathfinder Press, 1977).

52. One condition set by the WPUS National Committee for agreeing to sign the *Open Letter* was the addition of some sentences dealing with the U.S. The WPUS leadership at this time was locked in a sharp dispute over perspectives raised by a sectarian tendency led by Hugo Oehler, which was opposed in principle to any entry into Social Democratic parties.

53. **Jan Bur** and **A. Johre** were leaders of the German Trotskyists in emigration. **Fischer** might be Ruth Fischer or Oskar Fischer (Otto Schuessler), another leader of the German emigre Trotskyists and Trotsky's secretary in Turkey and Mexico. O. Fischer and Johre broke with the FI during or after World War II. **Nicolle Braun** was the pseudonym of Erwin Wolf (see note 42).

54. **Marteau** was a Stalinist who had been an editor of *L'Action socialiste*, published by the left wing of the Belgian Labor Party (POB). In March 1935 the Belgian Bolshevik-Leninists, at a national conference, voted to enter the POB. A minority, led by Vereecken, which had opposed the entry, left the organization.


56. In 1933-35, the ICL sought to link itself with leftward-moving forces in various centrist organizations. Fusion of the American section with A.J. Muste's AWP in 1934 and of the Dutch section with the OSP in 1935 led to the formation of the WPUS and the RSAP.

57. **The POB** (Belgian Labor Party) was the Belgian section of the Second International. After World War II it took the name of Belgian Socialist Party. **Georges Vereecken** (1896- ) was the leader of a group that split away from the ICL's Belgian section early in 1935, when the section voted to enter the POB. After rejoining in 1936, Vereecken split again in 1938 in protest against the founding of the FI. He also adhered briefly to the FI movement in Belgium twice in the post-war period, and wrote a book, published in England as *The GPU in the*
Writings of Leon Trotsky (1935-36), purporting to show that Stalinist provocateurs were responsible for most of his differences with Trotsky and the FI in the 1930s. (Although his name in this book is spelled “Vereeken,” the editors have here retained the spelling most commonly used by the movement in the thirties and by Trotsky in his articles.)

58. The Polish Socialist Party (PPS) was a nationalist organization founded by Pilsudski and others in 1892. In 1906 a left wing split away; in 1918 the left PPS united with the Social Democrats of Poland and Lithuania to form the Communist Party. The PPS was nominally in opposition to Pilsudski after his coup in 1926, but did not conduct an active fight against the regime. The Polish Bolshevik-Leninists entered the PPS in November 1935.

59. The Jewish Bund (General Jewish Workers Union of Lithuania, Poland, and Russia) was part of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party until 1903, when it opposed Lenin’s concept of a multinational, democratically centralized party. When the party rejected the Bund’s demand for a federated party structure, in which the Bund would be in charge of relations with Jewish workers, it split and became an independent organization. In 1917 it sided with the Mensheviks against the Bolshevik revolution. In the thirties the Bund in Poland could be called a centrist group.

60. Jozef Pilsudski (1867-1935), a Polish nationalist, organized his own army to fight against Russia during World War I, and was a leader of counterrevolutionary interventionist forces during the Russian civil war. He moved his troops into Warsaw in May 1926 and became virtual dictator of Poland until his death.

61. “To Young Communists and Socialists Who Wish to Think.” Young Spartacus. November-December 1935. This article was written in German on the eve of the congress of the Socialist Youth of Copenhagen. Young Spartacus was the monthly paper of the Young Spartacus League, the youth group of the WPUS.

62. The Versailles treaty was imposed by the victors in World War I. It was based on heavy reparations payments by the defeated countries.

63. The Bataille Socialiste group had been the left wing in the SFIO for many years. It was itself divided into a right wing led by Jean Zyromsky (1890-1975), and a left wing, led by Marceau Pivert (1895-1958). Zyromsky advocated “organic unity” with the CP in the middle thirties, and joined the CP after World War II. Pivert organized Revolutionary Left in 1935, without breaking with the SFIO, and served as an aide of Leon Blum when Blum became People’s Front premier in 1936. After his group was ordered dissolved in 1937, he left the SFIO and founded the PSOP (Workers and Peasants Socialist Party) in 1938. After World War II he returned to the SFIO.

64. Trotsky analyzed the SAP resolution in “Centrist Alchemy or Marxism?” dated April 24, 1935, in Writings 34-35.

65. War and the Fourth International was published as a pamphlet
by Pioneer Publishers in July 1934. Its full text is in *Writings 33-34.*

66. “A Report in Arbeiderbladet.” *Arbeiderbladet* (Oslo), July 26, 1935. Translated from the Norwegian for the first edition of *Writings 35-36* by David Thorstad. Editor O. Kolbjørnsen was the author of this report; also present at the interview and asking questions were Martin Tranmae, Norwegian Labor Party leader, and Minister of Justice Trygve Lie. Trotsky was to refer to this interview in a Norwegian court in December 1936 to confirm his version of the conditions under which the government had granted him a visa (see “In Closed Court”). *Arbeiderbladet* was the paper of the Norwegian Labor Party.

67. **Konrad Knudsen** was the editor of a Norwegian socialist paper and Trotsky’s host while he was in Norway.

68. **The Political Bureau** was the ruling body of the Soviet CP, although ostensibly it was subordinate to the Central Committee.

69. **Edouard Daladier** (1884-1970), a Radical Socialist, was French premier from 1933 until 1934, when he resigned after an attempted fascist coup d’etat. He was minister of war under Leon Blum. Later he became premier again and signed the Munich Pact with Hitler in September 1938.

70. **Old Bolsheviks** were those who joined the party prior to 1917, that is, members of the party’s “Old Guard.”

71. **Leon Kamenev** (1833-1936), with Zinoviev, supported Stalin’s campaign against Trotsky in 1923 but formed a bloc with Trotsky in 1926 until he was expelled from the party in 1927. He capitulated, was readmitted, but was expelled again in 1932. He repented again but was made a defendant in January 1935, accused of responsibility for Kirov’s murder. Imprisoned, he was again a defendant in the first big Moscow show trial, and was executed.

72. **Ivan Maisky** (1884-1975) was a prominent right-wing Menshevik, hostile to the October Revolution. He became Soviet ambassador to Britain in the late twenties, after being a minister in the Siberian White anti-Soviet government of **Alexander V. Kolchak** (1874-1920), a commander of one of the Eastern counterrevolutionary fronts during the Russian civil war.


74. **Joseph Jacquemotte** became the leader of the Belgian CP after the Oppositionists were purged in 1928. **Walter Dauge** was a leader of the POB left wing who became a member of the Belgian Trotskyist movement and one of its leaders during the thirties. He was elected to the International Executive Committee at the founding conference of the FI and left the movement during World War II.

75. **Paul Vaillant-Couturier** (1892-1937) was a member of the French CP’s Central Committee.

76. **Hohenzollern** was the name of the ruling family of Prussia and Germany until 1918.

77. **Pierre Renaudel** (1871-1935) was a leader of the SFIO right wing
and of the “Neo-Socialists,” expelled at the end of 1933. Marcel Cachin (1869-1958), a right-wing Socialist and supporter of World War I, moved into the CP with the SFIO majority in 1920, and became a leader of the CP in 1921.

78. Jacques Doriot (1898-1945), a French CP leader and mayor of Saint-Denis, a left-wing industrial suburb of Paris, became an advocate of a united front against fascism early in 1934, before Moscow did. When the CP would not discuss his proposals, he made them publicly. Expelled from the CP, he was associated for a while with the London Bureau, then swung to the right and formed a fascist party in 1936. Albert Treint (1889-1972) was a central leader of the French CP in the mid-twenties. As a supporter of Zinoviev he defended the Russian United Opposition and was expelled in 1927. He collaborated with several oppositional groups, including the French Communist League, to which he belonged for a short time before he denied the proletarian class character of the Soviet state and joined a syndicalist group.

79. Philipp Scheidemann (1865-1939) was a leader of the right wing of the German Social Democracy. He entered the government in 1918 and with Ebert presided over the crushing of the November 1918 revolution. He led the Social Democracy in the Reichstag until 1933. The argument Trotsky paraphrases here was advanced by Scheidemann and the others he mentions with relation to their own bourgeois governments during World War I.

80. Stalin’s infamous declaration at the end of his negotiations with Laval in May 1935 stated that he “understands and fully approves of the policy of national defense made by France in order to keep its armed strength at the level of security.”

81. The Paris Commune was the first example of a workers’ government. It was in power March 18–May 28, 1871, just seventy-two days, before it was overthrown by the Versailles army at the price of 30,000 dead.

82. Bonapartism was a central concept in Trotsky’s writings during the 1930s. He used the term to describe a dictatorship, or a regime with certain features of a dictatorship, during periods when class rule is not secure. It is based on the military, police, and state bureaucracy, rather than on parliamentary parties or a mass movement. Trotsky saw two types—bourgeois and Soviet. His most extensive writings on bourgeois Bonapartism are in The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany (Pathfinder, 1970). His views on Soviet Bonapartism reached their final form in his essay “The Workers’ State, Thermidor and Bonapartism,” reprinted in Writings 34·35.

83. The People’s Front (or Popular Front) was the name given in 1935 to the coalition of the French workers’ parties (Communist and Socialist) with the bourgeois Radical Party, on a program of liberal capitalism. The Radical and Socialist parties had formed such a coalition in the twenties, which the Communist International had condemned as class collaboration. What was new in 1935, in addition to the name, was the CP’s endorsement of and active participation in the coalition. People’s
Frontism became official Comintern policy at its Seventh Congress in August 1935, but it was advanced by the French CP beginning in late 1934. It remained the policy of all Stalinist parties until 1939, when the Stalin-Hitler pact was signed. It was revived under different names (antimonopoly coalition, etc.) after World War II.

84. L’Humanite was the newspaper of the French CP.

85. On February 6, 1934, French fascists and royalists attempted to overthrow the government through a demonstration at the Chamber of Deputies, where fourteen people were killed and hundreds wounded. Daladier’s government fell the next day.

86. De Wendel, Schneider, Rothschild, and Mercier are symbolic of the big businessmen and industrialists who control the French economy and government.

87. Edouard Herriot (1872-1957) was the leader of the French Radical Party who was most prominently identified with the policy of seeking alliances with the Socialist Party in the 1920s. He was president of the Chamber of Deputies, 1936-40. A leader of the Radical center, he was at first cool to the People’s Front, unlike Daladier, who was a leader of the Radical left. Trotsky’s 1935 pamphlet, Edouard Herriot, Politician of the Golden Mean, is in Portraits, Political and Personal.

88. Sacred union is the French expression for wartime class collaboration.

89. Klement Gottwald (1896-1953) was a member of the Czechoslovakian CP from its founding in 1921, and a member of its Central Committee from 1925. He became a member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern at its Sixth World Congress in 1928. He was president of the Czech republic from 1948 until his death.

90. Jacques Duclos (1896-1975), a member of the CP from 1920, became a member of its Central Committee in 1926 and remained in its top leadership until his death.

91. Maurice Thorez (1900-1964) sympathized briefly with the ideas of the Left Opposition in the mid-twenties, but went on to become secretary general of the CP. After World War II he was a minister in the Gaullist government.

92. “Oehlerism and the French Experience.” International Information Bulletin, Workers Party, no. 2, September 7, 1935. Oehlerism (after Hugo Oehler, a member of the Workers Party National Committee) was an expression of factional sectarianism inside the American Trotskyist movement. The Oehlerites held that entry into a Social Democratic party violated revolutionary principles, and that they could not be bound by the discipline of any party that condoned such entris. They were expelled in October 1935 for issuing a public periodical without party permission.

93. Arne Swabeck (1890- ) was a founder and leader of the American CP and the CLA. In the CLA’s early years he served as national secretary and was its delegate to the first international conference of the ILO, held in Paris in 1933. He became a Maoist in the 1960s and left the Socialist Workers Party in 1967. The June plenum of
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the WPUS was a week-long meeting of the National Committee where the issues raised by Oehlerism were fought out.

94. The Mulhouse congress of the SFIO took place June 9-12, 1935, shortly after the conclusion of the Stalin-Laval pact. The Bolshevik-Leninists had three delegates whose vigorous activity forced the other tendencies to debate their views, but they were politically isolated at the congress, which was largely devoted to hailing the People's Front.

95. Fred Zeller (1912- ) was the leader of the Young Socialists of the Seine, where he was influenced by the Bolshevik-Leninists. Expelled in July 1935, he participated in the formation of Revolutionary Left. In November he visited Trotsky in Norway, from where he sent a postcard that became the focus of a new Stalinist frame-up (see "On the Postcard Amalgam"). His pamphlet on the lessons of the SFIO expulsions, The Road for Revolutionary Socialists, with an introduction by Trotsky, was published by Pioneer Publishers in New York (1935). He became international youth secretary of the ICL and a leader of the French party and its youth affiliate until 1937, when he was expelled for illicit dealings with the Stalinists. He later became a Freemason and an artist.

96. The International Bureau of Revolutionary Youth Organizations was founded in February 1934 at a conference, begun in Holland and completed in Belgium, "to work toward the creation of a new international youth organization." Its main organizations were the youth affiliates of the ICL and of various centrist groups. It set up a Youth Bureau in Stockholm, which soon became paralyzed because of differences over perspective, particularly as the SAP tendency and its allies in the Youth Bureau hardened in their opposition to the need for a new International. Despite protests from a number of Youth Bureau affiliates, the ICL representative (Walter Held) was expelled from the Bureau in August 1935. The organization folded up shortly thereafter.

97. Mot-Dag (Toward Day) was a Norwegian centrist youth group that had been expelled from the Norwegian Labor Party (NAP) in 1925, but rejoined it in 1936. When the NAP came to power in 1935, Mot-Dag supported its government and also endorsed Stalin's statement supporting French rearmament.

98. Erwin Bauer, a former member of the IS, broke from the ICL in opposition to the French section's entry into the SFIO. In October 1934 he joined the SAP.


100. When the French Bolshevik-Leninists voted to enter the SFIO in August 1934, two groups split over the issue. One was the group around Pierre Naville (1904- ), a cofounder of La Verite and the Communist League. Naville's group entered the SFIO shortly after the majority. Although they were not formally reunified until September 1935, Naville was one of the GBL spokesmen at the Mulhouse congress (June 1935). Naville was a member of the IS until World War II, when he dropped out to join a series of centrist groups. The other group that split at the
prospect of entry was the Lhuiller group. By far the most intransigent opponent of the entry, Lhuiller entered the SFIO a year after his former comrades; but he remained in the SFIO after they were expelled.

101. Leon Lesoil (1892-1942), a founder of the Belgian CP and a member of its Central Committee, helped organize the Belgian section of the Left Opposition and remained one of its leaders for the rest of his life. Arrested by the Gestapo in June 1941, he died in a concentration camp.

102. The International Communist League of Belgium was the name of the ICL's Belgian section before its entry into the POB.

103. The Mensheviks were Russian Socialists who believed that the working class must unite with the liberal bourgeoisie to overthrow czarism and establish a democratic republic. The Mensheviks were formed after a split in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in 1903, and remained in the Second International. Yuri Larin (1882-1932) was a prominent Menshevik who led a movement toward the Bolshevik Party in 1917. During the twenties he worked as an economist.

104. Max Shachtman (1903-1972) was a leader of the American CP and a founder of the CLA. In 1940 he split from the SWP because of differences over the defense of the Soviet Union. In 1958 he joined the Socialist Party.

105. The WPUS's Control Commission sought to track down the truth about a series of charges that Cannon and Shachtman were conspiring behind the party's back with leaders of the SP to liquidate the WPUS into the SP.

106. Thomas Stamm was a young Oehlerite in the WPUS leadership. He joined with Oehler in founding the Revolutionary Workers League after they were expelled from the WPUS.

107. Jack Weber and Albert Glotzer (1908- ) were members of the WPUS National Committee aligned with Martin Abern in an anti-Cannon faction in 1935. Although they rejected Oehler's politics, they were willing to make blocs with him and with the group headed by A.J. Muste in order to put the Cannon group in a minority on the NC. Weber broke with Abern and Muste in 1936 when the WPUS voted to join the SP; Glotzer opposed the entry but went along with it. Glotzer left the SWP with Shachtman in 1940. Weber left it at the end of World War II.

108. "Preface to P.J. Schmidt's Article on Holland." Bulletin, ICL, September 1, 1935. Translated for this volume from the French by David Keil. The article was entitled "On the Relations of the RSAP of Holland with the ICL and the Amsterdam Bureau." The Amsterdam Bureau was also known as the London Bureau, or London-Amsterdam Bureau (International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Parties), established in 1935. It was a loose association of centrist parties not affiliated to either the Second or the Third Internationals but opposed to the formation of a Fourth International. Among its members were the German SAP, the British Independent Labour Party, and later the Spanish POUM.

109. The OSP was the Independent Socialist Party of Holland, which in 1935 merged with the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) to form the
RSAP, the Dutch section of the ICL. **The Jordaan events** were massive demonstrations of workers in July 1934, in the working class district of Jordaan in Amsterdam, in response to the announcement that the Dutch government was lowering the already low dole payments. Order was restored by the army after two nights of fighting. At least one OSP member was killed and others were arrested. De Kadt, the party secretary and editor of its paper *De Fakkel* (The Torch), denounced the workers' actions and tried to get the party to capitulate before the repression. He resigned, rejoined, and was expelled at the party conference of September 1934.

110. **Adolphe** was Rudolf Klement (1910-1938), Trotsky's secretary in Turkey and France and a member of the IS. He was kidnapped and murdered by the GPU in Paris shortly before the FI's founding conference.


112. **Revolution** was the newspaper of the Young Socialists of the Seine, begun under the influence of the Bolshevik-Leninist youth. After the expulsion of the Seine leadership, it became the paper of the Trotskyist youth.

113. “Letter to the German Commission.” From a bulletin published by the German Commission of the ICL, November 1935. Signed “Crux.” Point 3 of this letter appeared in English in *New International*, September 1946, under the title “The Church Struggle Against Fascism.” The translation of that section has been corrected, and the rest of the letter translated for this volume from the German by Russell Block. In the third year of their rule, the German Nazis, having wiped out all other non-Nazi political, economic, and cultural organizations, began to crack down hard on the Catholic and Protestant churches. The IKD (Internationalist Communists of Germany), German section of the ICL, supported the church resistance against the German government as part of its defense of democratic rights. The IKD's Emigre Committee, consisting of the section's exiled leadership, met strong opposition to its point of view from members of other European sections, including ultraleftists who accused the IKD of betraying the proletarian class standpoint. At Trotsky's suggestion, the ICL set up a German Commission to investigate the German situation and the IKD's policy, and his letter here was written after reading the minutes of the German Commission's discussions and its documents. In it Trotsky sought to eliminate the heat in the controversy, but definitely supported the IKD's position. Some confusion might arise from the fact that analogies with French politics are used without explicit explanations. The editors have tried to clarify this by using square brackets [ ] to clarify the meaning where it appears confusing.

114. **Wilhelm Pieck** (1876-1960) was an official of the German CP from its founding and went into exile after Hitler's victory. He spent World
War II in Moscow and then returned to East Germany, where he headed the Socialist Unity Party.

115. **Paul von Hindenburg** (1847-1934) was president of Germany from 1925 until his death. Although he ran as an opponent of the Nazis when he defeated Hitler at the polls in 1932, he appointed Hitler chancellor in 1933.

116. **David Lloyd George** (1863-1945) was Liberal prime minister of Britain, 1916-22, and coauthor of the Versailles treaty.

117. The IKD described its support of the church struggle as "unconditional," and refused to compromise on that word. Leon Sedov, Trotsky's son and a member of the German Commission, agreed with the IKD position, his only objection being to its insistence on "unconditional" support.

118. "The Comintern's Liquidation Congress." *Biulleten Oppozitsii*, no. 46, December 1935. Signed "L.T." Translated for the first edition of *Writings* 35-36 from the Russian by John Fairlie. *Biulleten Oppozitsii* (Bulletin of the Opposition) was a Russian-language publication edited by Trotsky, which printed the most important public documents of the Opposition and practically all of Trotsky's important pamphlets and articles during his last exile. It was first published in Paris, 1929-31, and then was shifted to Berlin, where the Nazis banned it when they came to power in 1933. Thereafter it was published in Paris until 1934, Zurich until 1935, Paris until 1939, and New York until 1941, when it ceased publication. A complete set in four volumes, with all of Trotsky's articles identified (including those that were unsigned or signed with pen names), has been published by Monad Press, New York, 1973.

119. **Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel** (1770-1831), the most eminent German philosopher of the first half of the nineteenth century, developed the system of dialectics that Marx later adapted to historical materialism.

120. **Jean Jaures** (1859-1914) was a founder of the Socialist Party of France and a pacifist. He was assassinated at the start of World War I.

121. **Jules Guesde** (1845-1922) founded the French Workers Party and introduced Marxism into France. In 1905 his group and the Socialist Party of France, led by Jaures, unified to become the SFIO. A supporter of World War I, he became minister of state, 1914-16. He remained with the minority of the SFIO after the majority split to form the CP.

122. **The Entente**, or alliance, between France, Russia, Britain, and Serbia went to war against Austria-Hungary and Germany in August 1914. The new Soviet government withdrew from the Entente after the October Revolution.

123. **Aristide Briand** (1862-1932) was expelled from the Socialist Party in 1906 for accepting a cabinet post in the Clemenceau government. He organized the bourgeois Republican Socialist Party in 1911 and was head of the wartime coalition cabinet, 1915-17.

124. **Georgi Dimitrov** (1882-1949), a Bulgarian Communist who had moved to Germany, attracted world attention in 1933 when the Nazis imprisoned and tried him and others on charges of having set the
Reichstag on fire. He defended himself courageously at the trial and was acquitted. He became a Soviet citizen, served as executive secretary of the Comintern from 1934 to 1943, and was the chief proponent of the People's Front policy adopted at the Comintern's Seventh Congress in 1935. He was premier of Bulgaria, 1946-49.

125. The Jacobins were the most radical political faction in the Great French Revolution and dominated French politics from the overthrow of the Gironde in 1791 until they were defeated by a reactionary wing of the revolution. As used here, the term “Jacobin” means the most incorruptible revolutionary.

126. Following a gigantic demonstration by the People's Front in Paris on July 14, the Laval government passed a series of deflationary “decrees,” slashing salaries of all civil service employees and putting extra surcharges on gas, electricity, coal, and bread. These laws were extended on August 8. The result was bloody clashes in early August between the police and seamen and workers in France's big naval armories and seaports in Toulon, Brest, Cherbourg, St. Nazaire, and Le Havre. Government troops killed five and wounded hundreds of strikers, some of whom armed themselves and returned the fire. These struggles foreshadowed the mass sitdown strikes less than a year later.

127. “To the Editors of Action Socialiste Revolutionnaire.” Bulletin, ICL, September 1, 1935. Signed “Crux.” Translated for this volume from the French by Dan Rosenheim. Action Socialiste Revolutionnaire was the revolutionary successor to Action socialiste. Its name was changed when Marteau, a Stalinist agent in the POB, began putting out his own periodical entitled Action socialiste, distributed by members of the CP.


129. Sergei Kirov (1886-1934) was a member of the Central Committee of the CPSU from 1923 and was party secretary in Leningrad from 1926. His assassination signaled the start of the purges that culminated in the Moscow trials and the extermination of the entire remaining leadership of the Russian revolution. The assassin, Leonid Nikolaev, was tried behind closed doors and shot in December 1934. The assassination evidently resulted from bungling on the part of the Soviet secret police during an effort to manufacture a plot that could be used to smear Trotsky as a terrorist. Many of the details are still unknown to the public, despite the fact that Nikita Khrushchev exposed the official version as a frame-up in his famous speech to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in 1956.

130. Jean Rous (1908- ) was a leader of one of the three factions in the GBL. In 1936 he was the IS delegate in Spain. At the FI's founding conference in 1938, he was elected to the International Executive Committee. In 1939 he led a minority of the French party into the PSOP (Workers and Peasants Socialist Party). He left the FI after World War II began and joined the SFIO.
131. Amadeo Bordiga (1889-1970), a founder of the Italian CP, was expelled on charges of “Trotskyism” in 1929. The ILO tried to work with the Bordigists but failed because of the latter’s sectarianism: they opposed the tactic of the united front, for example, on principle.

132. “An Appeal.” Biulleten Oppozitsii, no. 45, September 1935, where it was called “From the editors of the Biulleten.” Translated from the Russian for the first edition of Writings 35-36 by Fred Buchman.

133. The first expulsions of Trotskyists took place on July 30, 1935, at the Lille congress of the Socialist Youth. The thirteen expelled were the leadership of the Socialist Youth of the Seine, most of whom were Bolshevik-Leninists.


135. Pravda is the official paper of the CPSU. Frederick Engels (1820-1895) was the lifelong collaborator of Marx, cofounder of scientific socialism, and leader of the First and Second Internationals.

136. Marx and Engels wrote the Communist Manifesto in 1847. In 1848 struggles for bourgeois democratic rights, national independence, and constitutional reforms took place throughout Europe.

137. Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) became head of the Prussian government in 1862, and was the first chancellor of the German empire. His career was a long campaign to unify Germany under Prussia and the Hohenzollerns.

138. Karl Kautsky (1854-1938) was regarded as the outstanding Marxist theoretician after Engels until World War I, when he abandoned internationalism and opposed the October Revolution. Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864) was a major figure in the German working class movement, and founder of the German Workers’ Union. His followers joined the early Marxists in founding the German Social Democracy. His theory of the single undifferentiated reactionary mass lumped together all classes outside the working class, failing to make distinctions among them. It is discussed in Marx’s “Critique of the Gotha Program.”

139. In 1891 Kautsky drafted the Erfurt program, which was the model program for all the European Social Democratic parties, including the Russian.

140. Wilhelm Liebknecht (1826-1900) was a founder of the German Social Democracy in 1869 and a member of the Reichstag, 1867-70 and 1874-1900. He was imprisoned for two years for opposing the Franco-Prussian war.

141. The Emancipation of Labor Group was the first Russian Social Democratic group, founded in 1883.

142. Georgi Plekhanov (1856-1918), a founder of the Emancipation of Labor Group, became a leader of the Menshevik faction in 1903. When World War I began, he supported the czarist government, and later opposed the Bolshevik revolution. The Narodniki (populists) were an organized movement of Russian intellectuals who conducted activities
among the peasantry from 1876 to 1879, when they split into two groups. One group was led by Plekhanov and split again, the Plekhanov group becoming Marxists while the right wing evolved into the Social Revolutionary Party.

143. **Vera Zasulich** (1849-1919) was a prominent member of the Narodniks and a cofounder of the Emancipation of Labor Group. In 1903 she became a leader of the Mensheviks.

144. **The Gotha Program**, drafted as the program of the German Social Democracy in 1875, was subjected to heavy criticism by Marx in his pamphlet *Critique of the Gotha Program*, with a foreword by Engels.

145. **David Zaslavsky** (1880-1965) was a journalist on the Central Committee of the Bund who came out against the Bolsheviks during the October Revolution. He joined the Bolshevik Party in 1924 and became a well-known political writer on international questions.

146. **David Zaslavsky** (1870-1938?) was the editor of the Marx-Engels Institute's edition of Engels's letters. A historian and philosopher, he joined the Bolsheviks in 1917. Although he later withdrew from politics, his scholarly and scrupulous attitude toward party history made him offensive to Stalin, who had him implicated in the 1931 trial of a so-called Menshevik Center, accused of plotting to restore capitalism in the USSR. He was dismissed as director of the Marx-Engels Institute and exiled.

147. Lenin's *testament*, written in December 1922 and January 1923, gave his final evaluation of the other Soviet leaders. Since it called for the removal of Stalin from his post of general secretary, it was suppressed in the Soviet Union until after Stalin's death. It is included now in volume 36 of Lenin's *Collected Works*. Trotsky's 1932 essay on the suppressed testament is in the collection *Lenin's Fight Against Stalinism* (Pathfinder Press, 1975).

148. "Letter to the Emigre Committee of the IKD." *Informations Dienst*, no. 10, February 1936. Translated for this volume from the German by Maria Roth. *Informations Dienst* (Information Service) was the internal bulletin of the IKD in exile.

149. **Unser Wort** (Our Word) was the IKD's paper, published abroad and smuggled into Germany.


151. **A. Tarov** (1898-1942) was a worker of Armenian origin in the Caucasus who joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917 and took part in the civil war. In 1927 he was expelled from the party as an Oppositionist and deported to Siberia. He escaped first to Iran and then to Europe. During World War II he fought as part of an Armenian Communist resistance group and was executed by the Nazis. His letter is in English in *New Militant*, October 19, 1935.

152. British and Russian trade union leaders formed the **Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Committee** in May 1925 in order to
achieve trade union unity and combat the imperialist war danger. The British section of the committee included members of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the British labor federation, who used it as a device to shield themselves against criticism from the left. It was particularly useful to them in the tense period before and during the general strike called by the TUC in May, in solidarity with the British miners’ strike. The Russians clung to the Anglo-Russian Committee even when the General Council betrayed the general strike, and it collapsed only when the British walked out of it in September 1927. **Sir Walter Citrine** (1887- ) was the general secretary of the British TUC, 1926-46. He was knighted for his services to British capitalism in 1935 and made a baronet in 1946. **Mikhail Tomsky** (1886-1936) was a right-wing Bolshevik who opposed the October 1917 insurrection. As the head of the Soviet trade unions and a member of the Politburo, he worked closely with Stalin in the mid-twenties, especially on the Anglo-Russian Committee, until he joined the right-wing fight against Stalin led by Bukharin. He committed suicide during the first big Moscow trial.

153. **The Chinese revolution** of 1925-27 was crushed because the Chinese Communists, under orders from Moscow, entered the bourgeois nationalist Kuomintang (People’s Party), which was led by Chiang Kai-shek, and subordinated the revolution to the interests of their coalition with the Kuomintang.

154. **Vyacheslav Molotov** (1890- ), an early supporter of Stalin and a member of the Central Committee from 1920, was president of the Council of People’s Commissars, 1930-41, and minister of foreign affairs after Litvinov (beginning in 1939). He was eliminated from the leadership by Khrushchev in 1957 when he opposed “de-Stalinization.” **Chiang Kai-shek** (1887-1975), the right-wing military leader of the Kuomintang during the Chinese revolution of 1925-27, was hailed by the Stalinists as a great revolutionary until April 1927, when he conducted a bloody massacre of the Shanghai Communists and trade unionists. He ruled over China until overthrown in 1949.

155. The first **five year plan** for economic development in the Soviet Union, begun in 1928, projected a modest acceleration of industrial growth and an irresolute policy toward the peasantry. Suddenly the Political Bureau reversed its position and called for fulfilling the five year plan in four years. The resultant speedup and forced collectivization of the peasantry led to a period of economic chaos and great hardship for the population.

156. **GPU** was one of the abbreviated names for the Soviet political police; other names were Cheka, NKVD, MVD, KGB, but GPU is often used in their place.

157. **Thermidor** 1794 was the month in the new French calendar when the revolutionary Jacobins were overthrown by a reactionary wing of the revolution that did not go so far, however, as to restore the feudal regime. Trotsky used the term as a historical analogy to designate the seizure of power by the conservative Stalinist bureaucracy within the framework of nationalized property relations.
On June 30, 1934, Hitler launched the “blood purge” that wiped out potential oppositional elements in the Nazi party and other bourgeois groups in Germany.

In another translation, this passage may be found in the Selected Correspondence of Marx and Engels (Moscow, 1953).

Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794) was the Jacobin leader of the French government from 1793 until he was overthrown by the counterrevolution of the Ninth of Thermidor and guillotined.

Stanislav Kosior (1889-1937), a secretary of the Ukrainian CP Central Committee in the twenties, became a member of the Politburo in 1930, following the Sixteenth Congress. In 1938 he was removed from all his posts and was soon lost in the purges.

This is a reference to two other Stalinist amalgams. A Latvian consul was alleged to have had a role in the 1934 Kirov assassination in return for “a letter for Trotsky.” In 1927, the GPU planted as an agent provocateur in the Left Opposition a former officer of Wrangel’s White Guards. Stalin then denounced the Left Opposition’s “counterrevolutionary activity” and “connections with imperialism.”

Andrei Zhdanov (1896-1948), an ally of Stalin from 1923, replaced the assassinated Kirov as secretary of the Leningrad party organization in 1935, and was a member of the Politburo from 1939. He died under mysterious circumstances.

Lazar Kaganovich (1893- ) was commissar of heavy industry, 1938-39, a member of the Central Committee from 1924, and a member of the Politburo from 1930. In 1934 he became head of the CP Control Commission responsible for purges. He was removed from all his posts as an “antiparty element” when Khrushchev took over the Soviet leadership in the 1950s.


Paul Lafargue (1842-1911), an organizer of the early French Marxist movement, and Laura Lafargue (1842-1911), Marx’s daughter, committed suicide to avoid the indignities of old age.

Chen Tu-hsiu (1879-1942) was a founder of the Chinese CP and Left Opposition. For his revolutionary activity he was imprisoned by the Kuomintang police from 1932 until 1937. Broken in health, he withdrew from politics in 1941.

M.N. Roy (1887-1953) was a leading Indian Communist who felt that cooperation with bourgeois nationalist elements was indispensable for the colonial independence movement; he also sympathized with the views of the Russian Right Opposition. In later years he left the socialist movement.

Leon Jouhaux (1870-1954) was general secretary of the CGT (General Confederation of Labor), the chief union federation in France, 1909-40 and 1945-47. He was a supporter of both world wars and an opponent of the Russian revolution.

1. Apparently Trotsky had promised to write another article on the Seventh Congress of the Comintern for the "international press" ("The Comintern's Liquidation Congress" was printed only in the Russian *Bulleton Oppozitsii*) and had not gotten around to it until September 7.

172. Ercoli was the pseudonym of Palmiro Togliatti (1893-1964), who was elected to the Central Committee of the new Italian CP in 1922 and to the Executive Committee of the Comintern in 1924. After his arrest and release in Italy in 1925, he went abroad and in 1926 was promoted to the Secretariat of the ECC. He headed Comintern operations in Spain during the civil war and returned to Italy in 1944 to head the CP until his death.

173. Otto Bauer (1882-1938) was the chief theoretician of Austro-Marxism and a leader of the Austrian Social Democracy. Feodor Dan (1871-1949) was a founder of the Russian Social Democracy and a Menshevik leader of the Petrograd Soviet in 1917. He was a pacifist during World War I and an active opponent of the Bolshevik revolution. He was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1922. In 1935, Bauer, Dan, and Zyromsky issued joint theses, entitled "Socialism and the War Danger," calling for support to the national bourgeoisie to defend the Soviet Union and defeat Hitler. The theses were the Second International's equivalent to the Comintern's People's Front policy and its quid pro quo for organic unity.

174. The ILP (Independent Labour Party) of England was organized in 1893 and helped to found the Labour Party, left it in 1932, and was associated with the London Bureau until 1939, when its leaders returned to the Labour Party. In 1975 the remnants of the ILP changed its name to Independent Labour Publications, a publishing group inside the Labour Party.


177. The Anti-Imperialist League, a project of the Comintern, held its first world congress in Brussels in February 1927 and its second and last world congress in Frankfurt in July 1929.

178. Trotsky's 1933 articles and letters about and to the ILP are in *Writings 33-34*.

179. Chartism (1838-50) was a movement of revolutionary agitation around the "people's charter," a six-point petition drawn up in 1837 by the London Workingmen's Association. It proposed, among other things, universal suffrage and abolition of property requirements. Despite the threat of a general strike, the House of Commons rejected the charter in 1839. The Belgian strike of 1893 was called by the POB on the demand
for manhood suffrage at twenty-five. It resulted in major changes in the electoral law.

180. Paul Faure (1878-1960) was elected general secretary of the SFIO minority that opposed affiliation to the Comintern in 1920, and he headed its apparatus until World War II. In 1944 he was expelled for having collaborated with the Nazi occupation government during the war. Jean-Baptiste Lebas (1878-1944), a Socialist deputy, 1932-40, became a minister in the People’s Front government. He died in deportation. Blanquism, after Louis-August Blanqui (1805-1881), is the theory of armed insurrection by small groups of selected and trained conspirators, as opposed to the Marxist concept of mass action.

181. Weimar was the small town where the bourgeois democratic government of the German Republic was organized in 1919. The bankruptcy of Weimar democracy paved the way for Hitler’s accession to power in 1933.

182. The Manifesto of October 17, 1905, signed by the czar, proclaimed a constitution broadening the electoral laws and guaranteeing general liberties, which were revoked after the revolution was crushed.

183. Dimitri Manuilsky (1883-1952), like Trotsky, had been a member of the independent Marxist group that fused with the Bolshevik Party in 1917. He supported the Stalin faction in the 1920s and served as secretary of the Comintern from 1931 to 1943. Solomon Lozovsky (1878-1952) was in charge of the Red International of Labor Unions and the ultraleft tactics it imposed on Stalinist trade union work throughout the world during the “third period.”

184. In 1923 a revolutionary situation in Germany developed out of a severe economic crisis and the French invasion of the Ruhr. A majority of the German working class turned toward support of the CP, but the CP leadership vacillated, missed an exceptionally favorable opportunity to conduct a struggle for power, and permitted the German capitalists to recover their balance before the year ended. The Kremlin’s responsibility for this wasted opportunity was one of the factors that led to the formation of the Russian Left Opposition at the end of 1923. Heinrich Brandler (1881-1967) was a founder of the German CP and its principal leader when it failed to take advantage of the revolutionary crisis of 1923. He was made a scapegoat by the Kremlin and removed from the party leadership in 1924. He aligned himself with Bukharin’s Right Opposition in the USSR and was expelled in 1929. He maintained an independent organization until World War II.

185. George Lansbury (1859-1940) was a Labour member of the British Parliament and a founder of the Labour Party’s newspaper The Daily Herald. In 1935 he opposed on pacifist grounds the League of Nations sanctions against Italy for its invasion and occupation of Ethiopia.

186. After the Italian attack on Ethiopia in October 1935, the Labour Party and the CP called for a campaign of pressure on the Tory government to force the Italians to stop their aggression through a policy of “sanctions” (coercive measures, such as blockade or boycott) by
members of the League of Nations. The ILP itself was divided over the question of sanctions. Part of the ILP including the Trotskyists called for the workers to take organized direct action to prevent supplies and assistance from getting to Italy and to refuse to make or handle war goods for Italy ("workers' sanctions"). Fenner Brockway initially supported this position, but he later capitulated to the pacifist policy of ILP leaders Maxton and McGovern, who argued against both workers' sanctions and League of Nations sanctions, saying that Ethiopia was just as bad as Italy.

187. Ellen Wilkinson (1891-1947) was a Labour Party MP in the thirties. She had been a Communist in the early twenties, but later became an anti-Communist and held posts in the wartime coalition government.

188. James Maxton (1885-1946) was the principal leader of the ILP in the thirties. His pacifism led him to hail Chamberlain’s role at Munich in 1938. Fenner Brockway (1890- ), an opponent of the FI and secretary of the London Bureau, was also an ILP leader.

189. E. Robertson was Earle Birney, a member of the Workers Party of Canada who spent some time in England working in the ILP with the British Trotskyists. In November 1935 he visited Trotsky in Norway and discussed the proposal for an early turn to the Labour Party. Interviews from that visit are published in this volume. He left the FI in 1940 and later became poet laureate of Canada.


192. Stalin's famous formula during the "third period" held that Social Democracy and fascism were not antipodes (opposites) but twins.

193. Trotsky was in error here about the origins of Que Faire? (What Is To Be Done?). It actually began in 1934 as a small centrist group in the French CP which distributed a bulletin with that title advocating a united front with the SFIO. Later it was joined by ex-Trotskyists like Pierre Rimbert and Kurt Landau. Its chief leaders, Andre Ferrat and Georges Kagan, were expelled from the CP in 1936. Que Faire? became a magazine, published until 1939. Most of its members joined the SFIO and the Bataille socialiste tendency in 1938, where they supported organic unity.

194. L'Internationale was the journal of the Union Communiste, a sect created in 1933 after a split from the French CP in 1931. La Proletaire d'Avant-Garde was a bulletin published by a small group that left the French section after it decided to enter the SFIO in 1934.

195. B.J. Field was expelled from the CLA after violating party discipline in 1934. He organized the League for a Revolutionary Workers
Party, which soon disappeared. Albert Weisbord (1900- ), who was expelled from the American CP in 1929, organized a small group, the Communist League of Struggle, which proclaimed its adherence to the ILO in the early thirties although its politics vacillated between those of the Right and Left Oppositions. He later broke with Marxism and became an AFL organizer.

196. The former leader of the OSP's youth group, Jan Molenaar, was a member of the RSAP's Party Bureau and the leader of its unified youth organization, the RSJV (Revolutionary Socialist Youth League). In October 1935 he led a split from the RSJV because he was opposed to associating it with the Open Letter for the Fourth International. The split later spread to the RSAP. Molenaar died in a Nazi concentration camp during the war.

197. Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932) was the leading theoretician of revisionism in the German Social Democracy. He held that Marxism was no longer valid and had to be "revised"; socialism would come about not through class struggle and revolution but through the gradual reform of capitalism achieved by parliamentary means. He therefore advocated class collaboration.

198. "Romain Rolland Executes an Assignment." New International, December 1935. Romain Rolland (1866-1944), a novelist and dramatist, was a leading spirit of the "left" after his pacifist denunciation of World War I. In his later years he lent his name to Stalinist literary congresses and manifestos.

199. Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948) was the leader of the Indian National Congress, a nationalist movement that became the Congress Party of India. He organized massive opposition to British rule, but insisted on peaceful, nonviolent, passive resistance methods.

200. Henry Yagoda (1891-1938) was the head of the Soviet secret police until he was himself made a defendant and shot.

201. Kurt Rosenfeld (1877-1943) was a well-known civil liberties lawyer and a left-wing leader of the German Social Democracy who was expelled in 1931 and helped found the SAP, of which he was a leader for a short time.

202. White Guards, or Whites, was the name given the Russian counterrevolutionary forces during the civil war.

203. Brest-Litovsk was a town on the Russo-Polish border where a treaty ending hostilities between Russia and Germany was signed in March 1918. The terms were exceedingly unfavorable to the new Soviet government, and there were sharp differences among its leaders about whether to accept them until Lenin's proposal to do so was adopted.

204. Stanley Baldwin (1867-1947) was Conservative prime minister of Britain in the twenties and 1935-37.

205. Marcel Martinet (1887-1944), a writer, poet, and Socialist, left political life in 1923 because of ill health. He defended Trotsky when the French government was hounding him out of the country. In 1936 he joined the campaign against the Moscow trial.
206. “Lessons of October.” New Militant, November 30, 1935. This article was written for the French paper Revolution, on the occasion of the anniversary of the October Revolution. Zeller paid Trotsky a visit in Norway in November 1935.

207. The Social Revolutionary Party (SRs) was founded in Russia in 1900, emerging in 1901-02 as the political expression of all the earlier populist currents; it had the largest share of influence among the peasantry prior to the revolution in 1917.

208. The Russian Constitutional Democrats, called Cadets, were the liberal party favoring a constitutional monarchy in Russia or even ultimately a republic. It was a party of progressive landlords, middle bourgeois, and bourgeois intellectuals.

209. Maxim Gorky (1868-1936), the Russian writer of popular short stories, novels, and plays, was hostile to the October Revolution in 1917 but gave support to the Stalin government.

210. “How Did Stalin Defeat the Opposition?” Biulleten Oppozitsii, no. 46, December 1935. Translated from the Russian for the first edition of Writings 35-36 by Fred Buchman. This reply to a letter from Fred Zeller was intended to refute the argument, put forth by centrists, that the Trotskyist line was wrong, because otherwise Trotsky and not Stalin would have emerged victorious in the Soviet Union. This article was not printed in French for a whole year, until November 5, 1936, when it was printed in Lutte ouvriere.

211. Vladimir Potemkin (1878-1946), a former bourgeois professor who joined the Bolsheviks in 1919, became head of the diplomatic corps and assistant people’s commissar of foreign affairs. Alexander Troyanovsky (1882-1955) was a prominent right-wing Menshevik, hostile to the October Revolution, who denounced the Bolsheviks in the Constituent Assembly in 1918 as German agents. He later became Soviet ambassador to the U.S., 1934-39. Jacob Surits (1881-1952) was Stalin’s ambassador first to Berlin and then to Paris, and was one of the few diplomats to survive the purges. Lev Khinchuk (1868-?) was a Menshevik from 1903 until 1920. He then became ambassador first to England (1926) and then to Germany (1930).

212. Samuel Gompers (1850-1924) was president of the American Federation of Labor from 1886 until his death. William Green (1873-1952) succeeded him as its president. Theodor Leipart (1867-1947) was a German union leader who was minister of labor, 1919-20, and replaced Karl Legien as head of the major labor federation, 1930-32.

213. The Marxist theory of permanent revolution elaborated by Trotsky states, among other things, that in order to accomplish and consolidate even bourgeois democratic tasks such as land reform in an underdeveloped country, the revolution must go beyond the limits of a democratic revolution into a socialist one, which sets up a workers’ and peasants’ government. Such a revolution will therefore not take place in “stages” (first a stage of capitalist development, to be followed at some time in the future by a socialist revolution), but will be continuous or
“permanent,” passing swiftly to a post-capitalist stage. For a full exposition of the theory, see The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects, by Leon Trotsky (Pathfinder Press, 1972).

214. Trotsky’s 1932 article “On the Suppressed Testament of Lenin” and Lenin’s March 5, 1923, letter to Stalin, threatening to break off relations with him, are in Lenin’s Fight Against Stalinism.

215. Nadezhda K. Krupskaya (1869-1939) was an Old Bolshevik and the companion of Lenin. She played a central role in the underground and the emigre organization of the Russian Social Democracy. She adhered to the United Opposition for a brief time in 1926.

216. “A Venerable Smerdyakov.” Biulleten Oppozitsii, no. 47, January 1936. Signed “Alfa.” Translated from the Russian for the first edition of Writings 35-36 by John Fairlie. Smerdyakov is the fourth, illegitimate brother in Dostoyevsky’s The Brothers Karamazov, the one who actually murders the father. He is a repellant character, always whining, fawning, and servile. Literally, the name means “Stinker.” “Venerable” refers purely to Antonov-Ovseenko’s age.

217. Yakov Sverdlov (1885-1919) was president of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, secretary of the Bolshevik Central Committee, and president of the Russian Soviet Republic. Felix Dzerzhinsky (1877-1926) was a founder of the Social Democratic Party of Poland and Lithuania. In 1906 he was elected to the Bolshevik Central Committee. He became the first commissar for internal affairs and first chairman of the Cheka (later called the GPU). Andrei Bubnov (1883-1940), an Old Bolshevik, was on the Military Revolutionary Committee that organized the October insurrection. In 1923 he lined up with Stalin. He was a victim of the purges. Moisei Uritsky (1873-1918), was also on the Military Revolutionary Committee and later became head of the Cheka in Petrograd.

218. Vladimir Antonov-Ovseenko (1884-1938) was the secretary of the Petrograd Soviet’s Military Revolutionary Committee and played a major role in the October 1917 insurrection. An early member of the Left Opposition, he capitulated in 1927. He was Soviet consul general in Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War. He was made a scapegoat for the defeat of Stalinist policy in Spain and disappeared.

219. Young Pioneers was the organization of those who were too young to join the Communist Youth.

220. “Two Statements on the Cannon-Shachtman Letter.” From the archives of James P. Cannon. These letters to the leaders of the WPUS concerned a letter from Cannon and Shachtman to the IS, dated August 15, 1935, offering their analysis of the factional situation in the WPUS. Although Cannon and Shachtman had not submitted it for publication, the IS published it in an internal bulletin. Following the indignant response of Weber and Glotzer, the WPUS National Committee reprinted the Cannon-Shachtman letter alongside replies by Weber and Glotzer in International Information Bulletin, no. 3, February 12, 1936. “An Obvious
"Error" was published in *Bulletin Interieur*, ICL, no. 4, January 1936, which also contained an IS statement regretting the misunderstanding.

221. “Factions and the Fourth International.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume from the Russian by Marilyn Vogt. This article was not published anywhere. Trotsky seems to have written it with two purposes in mind: to study some of the internal problems of the FI and its sections; and to clarify some of the issues raised by the expulsion of the French Bolshevik-Leninists from the SFIO.

222. By *liquidationism* Trotsky means the reluctance of some Bolsheviks to resume the underground struggle during the years of reaction (1907-14) and their desire to make it possible to work in the open by diluting, or “liquidating,” the revolutionary program so it would be acceptable to the authorities. Alexei Rykov (1881-1938), an Old Bolshevik, succeeded Lenin as president of the Council of People’s Commissars, 1924-30. A leader of the Right Opposition, he was convicted in the third Moscow trial and executed. I.F. Dubrovinsky (1877-1913) was a member of the Central Committee after 1903 and was one of the organizers of the Moscow uprising in 1905.

223. Nikolai Bukharin (1889-1939), a leader of the Right Opposition, succeeded Zinoviev as head of the Comintern, 1926-29. He capitulated in 1929 after being expelled, but was a victim of the third Moscow trial. Yuri Pyatakov (1890-1937) played a leading role in the October Revolution and civil war and held many key posts in the government. A Left Oppositionist, he capitulated shortly after he was expelled in 1927 and was given important posts in industry, but was convicted in the second Moscow trial and executed.

224. The *February Revolution* in Russia in 1917 overthrew the czar and established the bourgeois Provisional Government, which held power until the October Revolution brought the soviets, led by the Bolsheviks, to power.

225. Emelyan Yaroslavsky (1878-1943) was a top Stalinist specialist in the campaign against Trotskyism and was part of the team that brought charges against him and demanded his expulsion from the party in 1927.

226. The *Democratic Centralism* and *Workers’ Opposition* groups in the Russian CP began in the early 1920s and held semisyndicalist and ultraleftright views. Their leaders were expelled and exiled at the same time as the Trotskyists. The Workers’ Opposition had held that the unions should have sole charge of production.

227. The New Economic Policy (NEP) was adopted as a temporary measure in 1921 to replace the policy of Military Communism, which had prevailed during the civil war. The NEP allowed a limited growth of free trade inside the Soviet Union and foreign concessions alongside the nationalized and state-controlled sections of the economy. It stimulated the growth of a class of wealthy peasants and of a commercial bourgeoisie (NEPmen), and produced a long series of political and economic concessions to private farming and trade.
228. **Wal-Wal** was a village in southeast Ethiopia, the scene of an armed clash on December 5, 1934, in an incident the Italians used as a pretext for escalating their advance to war.

229. **Louis-Olivier Frossard** (1889-1946) was one of the leaders of the SFIO supporting its affiliation to the Comintern in 1920, and then general secretary of the new CP. He resigned from the CP in 1923 and later rejoined the SFIO, coming close to the right-wing Neo-Socialists in 1933. He resigned in 1935 to become minister of labor. He was later a minister in various People’s Front cabinets and in the first Petain regime.

230. “An Answer to Comrades in Anvers.” From a mimeographed letter or bulletin of the IS, issued on November 17, 1935. Translated for this volume from the French by Naomi Allen. Trotsky’s answer was to a group in Anvers who had sent the IS a resolution concerning relations of the various groups in Belgium. The Vereecken group was based in Brussels; the group in Charleroi, headed by Leon Lesoil, was the center of the official section, which had entered the POB.


232. This is a reference to Ruth Fischer, who, although an opponent of the entry, was on the IS.

233. This is a reference to the motion offered by Pivert at the Lille congress.

234. The **Norwegian Labor Party** (NAP), was the major working class party in Norway. It broke with the Second International and affiliated with the Comintern in 1919, then left the latter in 1923. In the mid-thirties it was associated with the London Bureau, but later it returned to the Second International. In 1935 it became the ruling party in Norway and granted asylum to Trotsky, later interning and silencing him after the first Moscow trial.

235. **A. Hennaut** was the head of the Belgian League of Communist Internationalists, which had split from the Left Opposition in 1930. In 1933 the Belgian section opened unsuccessful negotiations for fusion with Hennaut’s group.

236. “Once Again the ILP.” *New International*, February 1936. The text of this interview with E. Robertson in the Trotsky Archives at Harvard bears the notation “For Controversy” (the ILP’s internal discussion bulletin). This talk took place a few weeks after the British general elections, which the Tories won decisively. At this time, the British section of the ICL was a faction inside the ILP (the Marxist Group), seeking to win it to the Fourth International or to recruit workers in it. The Marxist Group was divided over electoral policy in the general elections. Its majority voted to call on the ILP to run as many candidates as it could and to boycott Labour Party candidates, except for those who opposed League of Nations sanctions against Italy. Its minority wanted to continue critically supporting all Labour Party candidates except
where the ILP was running candidates. Robertson’s discussion with Trotsky sought to clear up the matter of principle involved in the debate.

237. John McGovern (1887-1968) was an ILP leader in the thirties, leaving it in 1947. He went to Spain as a supporter of the POUM during the civil war. In later years he became an anti-Communist. Campbell Stephen (1884-1947) was an ILP member and MP in 1935.

238. Herbert Morrison (1888-1965) was a right-wing Labour MP. During World War II he was in the coalition cabinet, where he banned the British Stalinist press and imprisoned Trotskyists. John R. Clynes (1869-1949) was a right-wing Labour MP for thirty-five years and a member of the first two British Labour cabinets.

239. The Labour Party conference of 1935, held in Brighton, approved a resolution supporting League of Nations sanctions against Italy after long and heated debate.

240. Arthur Ponsonby (1871-1946) was leader of the Labour Party in the House of Lords, 1931-35. Sir Stafford Cripps (1889-1952) was a Labour MP and a leader of the Socialist League. He opposed the prosanctions policy of the Labour Party at its 1935 conference. He later became a member of the wartime coalition government.

241. Norman Angell (1874-1967), a pacifist writer and Labourite, was co-president of the World Committee against War and Fascism and in 1933 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

242. The Tories, or Conservatives, the party of the bourgeoisie, emerged in England in the eighteenth century from the old royalist party of the civil war, the Cavaliers.

243. Leopold C. Amery (1873-1955), a Tory politician, was an MP for thirty-five years and was colonial secretary, 1924-25, and secretary of state for India, 1940-50.

244. Harry Pollitt (1890-1960) and William Gallacher (1881-1965) were leaders of the British CP. Gallacher was also an MP, 1935-50.

245. The Socialist League was formed in the Labour Party in October 1932 by former ILPers who disagreed with its disaffiliation from the Labour Party. Its secretary from 1934 to 1936 was J.T. Murphy, a former Stalinist. It also included Reg Groves and other former Trotskyists. It opposed sanctions against Italy as a capitalist measure. In 1937 it agreed to disband at the request of Labour Party leaders.

246. Friedrich Ebert (1871-1925) was a leader of the right wing of the German Social Democracy. As chancellor, he presided with Scheidemann over the crushing of the November 1918 revolution, murdering Liebknecht, Luxemburg, and others. He was president of the Weimar Republic, 1919-25.

247. The ILP Guild of Youth was both a political and a cultural youth organization. The Labour Party League of Youth was formed in 1926 in response to the initial organizational successes of the ILP Guild of Youth. In constant conflict with the Labour Party over its rights and prerogatives, it was finally able to establish a paper in 1935 and have representatives elected to the Labour Party’s National Executive. But in 1936 it was again roughly subordinated to the Labour Party leadership.
248. The Spanish Workers and Peasants Bloc, also known as the Catalan Federation, was a centrist group led by Joaquin Maurin, which merged with the ICL’s Spanish section in 1935 to form the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM).

249. The Maximalists were a centrist tendency in the Italian SP which continued activity in exile after Mussolini came to power. They signed a common appeal with the SP and CP calling on the League of Nations to extend sanctions against Italy for its aggression in Ethiopia.

250. The Austrian Red Front was a split-off from the Austrian Social Democracy before the latter was outlawed in 1934. They disbanded and joined the left Social Democratic Revolutionary Socialist Party before the end of 1935.

251. The Polish Independent Labor Party was a small group headed by Joseph Kruk, who later became a Zionist.

252. The Swedish Socialist Party was established by Karl Kilbom and other former Swedish CP leaders as a Right Oppositionist group when they refused to go along with the ultraleft turn of the Comintern in 1929. It was originally known as the Swedish Independent Communist Party. In 1937 it split when Kilbom and his faction left and joined the Social Democratic Party.

253. Julian Gorkin, a leader of the Spanish CP, belonged to the Left Opposition for a time before he joined Maurin’s Workers and Peasants Bloc. He later became a leader of the POUM.

254. Revolutionary Left was organized by Marceau Pivert within the SFIO at the end of September 1935. It took over many of the slogans that the GBL had popularized inside the SFIO, remaining, however, equivocal on the question of the People’s Front and silent on the question of the need for a new International. While condemning the expulsions of Bolshevik-Leninists from the SFIO, it pronounced against anything that would stand in the way of reintegrating the expelled members back into the SFIO, thus opposing independent political activity. The role Revolutionary Left played was that of an obstacle to the formation of an independent revolutionary party. By setting itself up as an ostensibly revolutionary wing in the SFIO, it gave a ready excuse to vacillating elements to remain in the SFIO, and provided left cover for the bureaucracy by bolstering its claim that revolutionary elements had a place in the SFIO.

255. Jay Lovestone (1898- ), a leader of the American CP in the twenties, was expelled in 1929 shortly after the downfall of his international ally, Bukharin. The Lovestoneites dissolved their organization at the beginning of World War II. Lovestone later became cold-war adviser in foreign affairs for AFL-CIO President George Meany.

256. “Advice on Canadian Farmers.” Vanguard, February 1, 1936, where the article was described as a condensation of some of Trotsky’s remarks. Vanguard was the newspaper of the Workers Party of Canada. This was another discussion with Robertson.
257. The Social Credit Party flourished in Canada's western provinces during the Great Depression, especially in Alberta, where it swept to power in 1935. It appealed to small farmers and small and middle manufacturers with attacks on the growing centralization of power in business, the state, and the trade unions. It preached monetary reform and argued that the source of economic crisis lay not in capitalism but in the control of credit by an irresponsible financial oligarchy.

258. “Remarks in Passing.” Informations Dienst, no. 10, February 1936. Translated for this volume from the German by Russell Block. The “W” to whom this letter was addressed may have been Wolf Weiss, a German emigre in Czechoslovakia who later wrote a book about the Moscow trial.

259. This is a reference to Trotsky’s article “The Workers’ State, Thermidor and Bonapartism,” in Writings 34-35.

260. “On the Postcard Amalgam.” From the archives of James P. Cannon. By permission of the Library of Social History in New York. Translated for this volume from the French by Naomi Allen. Fred Zeller, visiting Trotsky in Norway in early November, had sent a postcard to a Stalinist friend in Paris, saying “Down with Stalin.” On December 12, Arbeideren, the Norwegian CP paper, featured a sensational story outlining the “death plot” against Stalin centering around the Trotsky household in Norway and demanding to know what the Norwegian Socialist Youth thought of the use of Norway as a base for terrorist activity by people expelled from the French Socialist Youth. Arbeideren was answered by several articles in the NAP press, defending Trotsky and exposing the Stalinist attempt to get the Norwegian government to arrest Trotsky. (The Paris and New York Stalinist papers carried the same charges and were answered by articles in Revolution and the New Militant.)

261. Boris Souvarine (1893– ) was a founder of the French CP and one of the first serious biographers of Stalin. He was expelled from the French party as a Trotskyist in 1924. In the 1930s he turned against Bolshevism. Alfred Rosmer (1877-1964) was a friend of the Trotskys from World War I and a member of the Left Opposition until 1930, when he resigned because of political and organizational differences. He and Trotsky became personally reconciled in 1936.

262. Raymond Molinier (1904– ) was a cofounder of the French Trotskyist movement with whom Trotsky collaborated until 1935, when his group was expelled for violating discipline by publishing its own newspaper, La Commune, the “mass paper.” Attempts at reunification were made several times in the following years but proved unsuccessful until the middle of World War II.

263. Robert Louzon (1882-1976) had been an editor of l’Humanite before he resigned from the CP in 1924 to found Revolution prolétarienne, a syndicalist group.
264. “How Did Stalin Defeat the Opposition?” was never published in Revolution. It was published in French only a year later, November 5, 1936, in Lutte ouvriere.

265. “Request for a Month’s Leave of Absence.” From The Prophet Outcast, by Isaac Deutscher (1963). This was a letter to Leon Sedov (1906-1938), Trotsky’s elder son, who joined the Left Opposition and accompanied his parents in their last exile. He was Trotsky’s closest collaborator, coeditor of the Bulletin Oppozitsii, and a member of the IS until his death at the hands of the GPU. Trotsky’s obituary for him is in Writings 37-38. It is not known whether Trotsky’s request for a leave of absence was formally granted. In any case, he continued to complain in subsequent letters to Sedov about the “silly intrigues” of the “French cliques.”


267. The expulsions of the Trotskyists from the POB took place in June 1936.


269. The first number of the special press service, entitled Service d’Information et de Presse sur l’URSS (Informational Press Service on the USSR), published by the IS, was dated June 12, 1936.

270. The Stakhanovist movement was a special system of speedup in Soviet production named after a coal miner, Alexei Stakhanov, who reportedly exceeded his quota sixteen-fold by sheer effort. The system was introduced in the Soviet Union in 1935 and led to great wage disparities and widespread discontent among the masses. For his reward Stakhanov was made a full member of the CP and a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Sedov’s article, “The Stakhanovist Movement,” appeared in English in New International, February 1936, under his pen name “N. Markin.”


272. Hugo Urbahns (1890-1946), a leader of the German CP, was expelled in 1928 and helped to found the Leninbund, which was associated with the ILO until 1930. He authored his own theory about the “state capitalist” nature of the USSR.

273. “Foreign Communists in Danger.” By permission of the Harvard
College Library. Translated for this volume from the German by Maria Roth. Copies were sent to ICL leaders in several countries.

274. **Anton Ciliga** was a leader of the Yugoslav CP imprisoned by Stalin who was allowed to leave the USSR in 1935. He revealed much about conditions in Soviet prisons before breaking with Marxism.


276. **Demyan Bedny** (1883-1945), unofficial poet laureate in the Soviet Union for many years, wrote propaganda poetry.

277. **Black Hundreds** was the popular name for the gangs of reactionaries and “patriotic” hoodlums that existed up through the Russian civil war. They were organized with the czarist government’s clandestine backing, and specialized in carrying out anti-Semitic pogroms and terrorizing radicals.

278. **Alexander Kerensky** (1882-1970) was one of the leaders of a wing of the Russian Social Revolutionary Party. He was minister of justice in the Provisional Government in March 1917. In May he took the post of minister of war and the navy, which he continued to hold when he became premier. Later he appointed himself commander in chief as well. He fled Petrograd when the Bolsheviks took power.

279. **Anthony Eden** (1897-1977), British Conservative and future prime minister, was foreign secretary, 1935-38.

280. **Ernst Torgler** (1893-1963), the leader of the CP delegation in the German Reichstag, was a defendant in the Reichstag fire trial in 1933. He was acquitted. In 1935 he was expelled from the German CP. During the war he was in a Nazi concentration camp. In 1945 he joined the West German Social Democratic Party. **Maria Reese** was a CP deputy in the German Reichstag who broke with Stalinism and joined the Trotskyist movement when she could not secure a discussion in the CP after Hitler came to power. Soon after, however, she broke with Marxism altogether and went over to the Nazis. Trotsky’s preface to her pamphlet *I Accuse Stalinism* is in *Writings 33-34*.

281. **Joseph Goebbels** (1897-1945) was Nazi minister for propaganda and national enlightenment from 1933 and a member of Hitler’s cabinet council from 1938. He committed suicide upon Germany’s defeat.

282. **G.K. Ordzhonikidze** (1886-1937), an organizer of the Stalin faction, was later put in charge of heavy industry. Although he remained a faithful Stalinist, the circumstances of his death are still not publicly known.

283. In Russian, the polite form of address is the second person plural, *vy*. The second person singular, *ty*, expresses intimacy, but also can be used rudely to express overfamiliarity or disrespect. Adults or older people may use it toward younger people, and under the old regime the nobility used it toward peasants, servants, or any other “underlings,” who were still expected to respond in the polite mode. The distinction in English has largely disappeared; the closest parallel occurs when a “superior”
addresses someone by the first name, and the "subordinate" replies with the polite title "Mr." or "Mrs." and the last name.

284. **Kliment Voroshilov** (1881-1969) was an early supporter of Stalin, a member of the Politburo from 1926, and commissar of defense, 1925-40.

285. **Anastas Mikoyan** (1895- ), an early Stalinist, was elected to the CP Central Committee in 1923 and to the Politburo as a candidate in 1935. He was one of the few Old Bolsheviks to survive the purges and made his career representing the Soviet government in foreign trade negotiations.

286. "On the Soviet Section of the Fourth International." *New Militant*, February 15, 1936, where it had the title "20,000 Oppositionists Expelled from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Recent 'Cleansing.'" Signed "L.T."

287. **Grigory Petrovsky** (1878-1958), an Old Bolshevik, was chairman of the Ukrainian Central Executive Committee from 1919 to 1938 and a deputy chairman of the CEC of the USSR. In 1939 he disappeared from politics and became a museum director.

288. **Louis Fischer** (1896-1970) was a European correspondent for the *Nation*, serving chiefly in the Soviet Union, and was the author of several books on European politics. Trotsky viewed him as an apologist for the Stalinists.

289. **Filip Medved** (d. 1937) was the head of the Leningrad GPU when Kirov was assassinated. He and the other secret police involved were given light prison sentences for failure to provide adequate protection to Kirov, but in 1937 they were all shot.

290. "Bourgeois Democracy and the Fight Against Fascism." *Informations Dienst*, no. 10, February 1936, where it had the title "Letter about Holland." Translated for this volume from the German by Russell Block. In early December 1935, shortly before Trotsky wrote this letter, the French Chamber of Deputies passed a law disbanding all paramilitary organizations. It obviously could just as well be used against the workers' self-defense organizations as against the fascists, but the Stalinist and Socialist deputies voted for it. The idea was at once picked up in Holland, where the right-wing coalition headed by Premier Hendrik Colijn proposed a bill outlawing all special defense corps. Henricus Sneevliet, secretary of the RSAP, asked Trotsky for advice, and received this letter urging the Dutch Trotskyists to oppose the bill and supplying them with arguments and even amendments to use against it. At this time Sneevliet was a member of the lower chamber of the bicameral Dutch parliament. He and the three CP members of parliament voted against the bill in May 1936. It passed anyway, and finally became law that September, when it passed in the upper chamber as well. The letter was not printed in Holland, except for short general excerpts after the bill was passed. **Hendrik Colijn** (1869-1944) was Dutch premier, 1925-26 and 1933-39. His party was the Anti-Revolutionaries (the revolution in question being the
French), a bourgeois Protestant party with some base in the working class and petty bourgeoisie. Trotsky's reference to Colijn as "Father" is tongue-in-cheek: very successful bourgeois politicians attain this title in the Dutch bourgeois press.

291. **Anton Andriaan Mussert** (1894-1946) was the leader of the Dutch fascist organization, the National Socialist Movement, which was founded in 1931. Although Hitler named him the leader of the Dutch people in December 1942, real power in Holland during the Nazi occupation was in the hands of the German SS. After the war Mussert was executed for treason.

292. **The NAS** (National Labor Organization) was a small left-wing trade union federation whose principal leader was Sneevliet.

293. "Stalin's Revolutionary Prisoners." *New Militant*, February 1, 1936, where it was called "Tell the Workers the Truth About Stalin's Hounding of Revolutionists in the Soviet Union!"

294. Trotsky's letter to the League of Nations tribunal on terrorism, dated October 22, 1936, is in this volume.

295. "Questions of a British Group." From the archives of James P. Cannon. By permission of the Library of Social History in New York. This was a letter to Hugo Dewar, a former member of the British CP expelled in August 1932 as a supporter of Trotsky. He was a leader of the majority of the Communist League (the "Groves-Dewar" group) which, opposing entry into the ILP, remained outside when the minority entered and in 1935 joined the Labour Party, working inside its Socialist League. In 1936 he refused to attend the First International Conference for the Fourth International and rejected the conference proposal for unification of his group with the Marxist Group in the ILP and another group in the Labour Party and its youth group. The three groups were not unified until 1938.

296. "For Entry in the U.S." The letter to Cannon and Shachtman is from *Class Struggle*, August 1936 (the magazine of Weisbord's Communist League of Struggle). The letters to Muste and Weber are from an internal bulletin of the ICL, February 13, 1936, translated for this volume from the French by Naomi Allen. In December 1935, a split began in the American SP, leading to the withdrawal of most of the party's right wing, which organized itself in 1936 as the Social Democratic Federation. Early in January, Cannon and Shachtman proposed that the members of the WPUS join the SP, and a national convention was called for the end of February to decide the question. Trotsky's letters of January 24 expressed both his support of the entry proposal and his desire to prevent a split on the part of WPUS leaders like Muste and Weber who opposed the entry on tactical grounds.

Writings of Leon Trotsky (1935-36)

A letter to Olav Scheflo, an editor of *Soerlandet*, one of the papers of the NAP.

298. **William Randolph Hearst** (1863-1951) was the publisher of a string of right-wing newspapers noted for their sensationalism. On January 19, 1936, Hearst’s papers stole the article by A. Tarov that had appeared in the September 28 and October 19, 1935, *New Militant*. On the very same day, the Stalinist *Sunday Worker* printed a story calling Trotsky an agent of Hearst and promising to reveal the price Hearst had paid for the article.

299. “A Crisis in the Workers Party.” From the archives of James P. Cannon. By permission of the Library of Social History in New York. Unsigned. The WPUS had been embroiled in disputes over possible entry into the SP almost since its formation in December 1934. It reached the point of crisis after the Cannon-Shachtman proposal in January 1936—not because there was much question that Cannon and Shachtman had a majority of the membership with them, but because there seemed to be a real danger that the minority tendencies would simply refuse to join the SP, thus precipitating a split. Trotsky’s article was a contribution to the preconvention discussion but it has never been published up to now.

300. **La Commune**, the “mass paper,” was published by a dissident group in the GBL led by Raymond Molinier, not as the journal of a tendency but as “a journal of agitation where all those who struggle will find their place.” For violating discipline by publishing their own paper, Molinier and his followers were expelled from the GBL.


302. **Maurice Spector** and **Lyman Paine** (“White”), WPUS members who opposed entry into the SP, went to Norway to try to convince Trotsky of their point of view.


305. **The Marxist Group in the ILP** was the main organization of British Trotskyists early in 1936. It was formed from a split in the British section of the ICL, after the majority refused to enter the ILP.

306. **Clement Attlee** (1883-1967) was the leader of the British Labour Party from 1935 and was in Winston Churchill’s cabinet, 1940-45. In 1945 the Labour Party won the elections and Attlee became prime minister, a post that he held until 1951.
307. "How to Work in the SP." From the archives of James P. Cannon. By permission of the Library of Social History in New York. The WPUS national convention (February 29-March 1, 1936), had authorized entry into the SP, and the threat of a split over the issue was overcome jointly. Members at once began joining SP branches in various cities without any public announcement until June, when the WPUS was formally dissolved.

308. Martin Abern (1898-1949) was a founding member of the American CP and later of the Trotskyist movement. He was a member of its National Committee from the beginning of the CLA until he split from the SWP in 1940 with Shachtman.

309. Roberts was Harold R. Isaacs (1910- ), author of *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (1938), to which Trotsky contributed a preface. Subsequent editions, which Isaacs revised after he rejected Marxism, omitted this preface. Under the name H.F. Roberts, Isaacs was Paris correspondent for the *New Militant* in 1935.


311. The Chinese Eastern Railroad was the portion of the original route of the Trans-Siberian Railroad that went through Manchuria to Vladivostok. In 1935 Stalin sold it to the Japanese puppet government of Manchukuo in an effort to ward off a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union. The railroad came under Soviet control again during World War II. The forces headed by Mao Tse-tung took over the Chinese mainland in 1949, but Stalin did not cede the route to the new Chinese government until 1952.

312. “Socialism in one country” was Stalin’s theory, introduced in the Communist movement for the first time in 1924, that a socialist society could be achieved inside the borders of a single country. Later, when it was incorporated into the program and tactics of the Comintern, it became the ideological cover for the abandonment of revolutionary internationalism and was used to justify the conversion of the Communist parties throughout the world into docile pawns of the Kremlin’s foreign policy. A comprehensive critique by Trotsky is in his 1928 book *The Third International After Lenin* (Pathfinder Press, 1972).

313. In March 1936, the Nazi government began the remilitarization of the Rhineland, in defiance of the Versailles treaty. France contemplated military intervention but no action was taken.

314. Albert Sarraut (1872-1962) was Radical premier of France, 1933 and January-June 1936.

315. “‘The Point of No Return.’” *New Militant*, April 11, 1936, where it
had the title “A Jingle of Lies to Please the ‘Master.’” Signed “Alfa.”

316. Mark Aldanov (1886-1957) left Russia in 1916 to live in Paris and write novels; after the Russian revolution he wrote for Miliukov’s liberal bourgeois paper.

317. Wilhelm von Mirbach (1871-1918) became German ambassador to Moscow in April 1918 and was assassinated that July by Social Revolutionaries who hoped the assassination would provoke war between Germany and the USSR.

318. Anton Denikin (1872-1947) was one of the military leaders of the counterrevolution in southern Russia during the civil war.


320. Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971) became first secretary of the Moscow party organization in 1935 and a member of the Politburo in 1939. After Stalin’s death in 1953 he became first secretary of the Central Committee and initiated the “de-Stalinization” campaign. He was deposed in 1964.

321. Andrei Zhdanov (1896-1948), an ally of Stalin from 1923, replaced the assassinated Kirov as secretary of the Leningrad party committee in 1935. He was a member of the Politburo, 1939-48. He died under mysterious circumstances.


324. “Suggestions for the Belgian Section.” Bulletin Interieur, GBL, no. 15, May 10, 1936. Translated for this volume from the French by Jeff White. This letter to Walter Dauge was written at a time when the POB leadership was maneuvering to manufacture a pretext for expelling the Trotskyists of Action Socialiste Revolutionnaire from the party. The letter achieved considerable notoriety in Belgium six months later when police raided Dauge’s home, the government published excerpts, and the POB press professed indignation at Trotsky’s “amoralism” (see Trotsky’s 1938 essay Their Morals and Ours [Pathfinder Press, 1973], where he mistakenly dated the incident in 1935). At the end of May 1936, the POB leaders found their pretext when they wrote an electoral program praising the van Zeeland government and calling for support to rearmament. They demanded that Dauge, running for office on the POB slate in the Borinage mining district, sign the program. When he refused, they wiped him off the slate and the expulsions were under way.

325. Libaers was a leader of a pacifist oppositional group in the POB. Godefroid was the head of the Belgian Young Socialist Guards (JGS), the POB youth group.

326. Lagorgette was the SFIO representative at the Lille congress of
French Socialist Youth who spearheaded the attack on the Bolshevik-Leninists.

327. “Open Letter to a British Comrade.” This reply to an article in the British New Leader was circulated in mimeographed form in 1936, in a translation from Unser Wort, May 1936.

328. The Austrian Social Democracy, which promoted a special blend of reformism and centrism called Austro-Marxism, was relatively the strongest section of the Second International before the powerful Austrian working class movement was crushed in 1934.

329. Locarno (Switzerland) was the site of a conference in 1925 of the main European imperialist powers: France, Germany, Britain, Belgium, and Italy. It resulted in a nonaggression pact known as the Locarno treaty.

330. Karl Kilbom (1885- ) was a founder of the Swedish CP who split from the CP at the start of its ultraleft turn in 1929, and organized the Independent Communist Party, later known as the Swedish Socialist Party (see note 252). It was affiliated with the London Bureau before it established ties with the Social Democracy. Lord Robert Cecil (1864-1958) was a Tory MP and president of the League of Nations Union, 1923-45. He conducted a “peace ballot” in 1935 that polled Britons on the popularity of war and rearmament. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1937.

331. Manuel Azana y Diaz (1880-1940), leader of the bourgeois Republican Left, was prime minister of the Spanish republican government in June 1931 and again in 1936. He was president of the republic from May 1936 until his resignation in Paris in 1939.

332. “A Good Omen for Joint Work in Britain.” From the archives of James P. Cannon. By permission of the Library of Social History in New York. Jack was probably Jack Winnocour, a young American who worked with Groves’s group in 1936. At this time a number of British Trotskyists had left the ILP and joined the Labour Party, where they were known as the Bolshevik-Leninist Group.

333. Witte was Demetrios Giotopoulos, the representative of the Greek section on the IS in Paris. He went to Britain in the autumn of 1933 to discuss the proposal that the British Trotskyists enter the ILP. Shortly after his return to France he came into conflict with Trotsky and withdrew from the ICL with his group, the Archio-Marxists, which affiliated to the London Bureau in 1934.


335. Christian Rakovsky (1873-1941), an early leader of the Left Opposition, was deported to Siberia in 1928. In 1934 he capitulated. In 1938 he was one of the major defendants in the third Moscow trial, where he was sentenced to twenty years. His letter to Valentinov, dated August 6, 1928, is in New International, November 1934, under the title “Power and the Russian Workers.”
336. **Sidney** (1859-1947) and **Beatrice** (1858-1943) **Webb** were British Fabian Socialists and admirers of the Stalinist bureaucracy.


338. **Jan E. Rudzutak** (1887-1938), an early partisan of Stalin, was chairman of the CPSU’s Central Control Commission from 1932 until he became a victim of the third Moscow trial. **V.B. Chubar** (1891-1941), previously chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars in the Ukraine, was made a Central Committee member in the late twenties and disappeared in 1938.


340. The ILP’s national conference was held in Keighley during Easter 1936. Fenner Brockway and James Maxton combined to prohibit organized factions in the party, in order to prevent the Marxist Group from circulating Trotskyist material.

341. **Oliver Cromwell** (1599-1658), organized a parliamentary army to overthrow King Charles I and assumed the title Lord Protector of the Commonwealth.

342. “How to Win the Socialist Youth.” *Het Kompas*, January 23, 1952. Translated for this volume from the Dutch by Russell Block. *Het Kompas* was the internal bulletin of the Dutch section of the FI. This was a letter to Bep Spanjer, a leader of the wing of the Dutch youth that remained loyal to the RSAP after the pro-SAP split (see note 196). She participated in the founding of the Leninist Youth Guard (LJG) in October 1935 and became its international secretary. The LJG followed Sneevliet in his break with the FI movement in 1938.

343. “Political Persecution in the USSR.” *Documents and Analyses: I, On the Soviet State Power: 1934-38—Selected Contributions in Exile,* by Leon Trotsky, where it was marked “Reproduced from *Controversy.*”

344. **F.N. Dingelstedt** was a leader of the Left Opposition in Leningrad. He was arrested in 1927 and exiled to Siberia.

345. **Alexandra Sokolovskaya Bronstein**, Trotsky’s first wife and the mother of his two daughters, was a member of the Left Opposition. In 1935 she too was arrested and exiled to Siberia.

346. **Adolf Joffe** (1883-1927) became one of the ablest Soviet diplomats after the October Revolution. A Left Oppositionist, he was denied adequate medical treatment and committed suicide. At his bedside he left a famous letter to Trotsky, partly reprinted in *Leon Trotsky, the Man and His Work* (Merit Publishers, 1969). **Maria Joffe**, his widow, left the USSR in 1975, after spending twenty-seven years in camps and in exile.

347. **Victor Serge** (1890-1947) was an anarchist in his youth. After the Bolshevik revolution he moved to the Soviet Union and worked for the
Comintern. Arrested as an Oppositionist and then freed in 1928, he was rearrested in 1933. Thanks to a campaign by intellectuals in France, he was released and allowed to leave the USSR in 1936. He soon developed differences with the MFI and left it. He wrote several important historical works, including *The Year One of the Russian Revolution* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972) and *From Lenin to Stalin* (Pathfinder Press, 1973).


349. Jakob Blumkin (1899-1929) had been a Left Social Revolutionary terrorist who became a Communist and a GPU official. He was the first Russian supporter of the Left Opposition to visit Trotsky in exile in Turkey. Bringing back a message from Trotsky to the Opposition, he was betrayed to the GPU and shot in December 1929, the first Oppositionist to be directly executed by the Stalinists.


351. "The New Revolutionary Upsurge and the Tasks of the Fourth International." *Theses, Resolutions, and Appeals of the First International Conference for the Fourth International*, published for the IS by the Workers Party of Canada. The copy of the manuscript at the Trotsky Archives at Harvard was dated July 3, but the postscript was obviously written after the fascist uprising in Spain that began July 17. This resolution was adopted by the conference held July 29-31, 1936, in "Geneva" (actually, Paris). Unsigned.

352. Colonel Casimir de la Rocque (1886-1946) was the founder of the Croix de feu and the Volontaires nationaux, right-wing military formations, and in 1934-35 was the chief fascist candidate for dictator. After the fascist leagues were dissolved, he founded the fascist French Social Party in 1937.

353. The General Confederation of Labor (CGT) was the major union federation in France, dominated by a reformist leadership. In 1921 it split, resulting in the formation of a smaller and more radical rival, the Unitary General Confederation of Labor (CGTU). In 1935 the two federations merged.

354. Julien Racamond (1885-1966) was secretary of the CGTU, 1923-35, and then of the unified CGT, 1935-53. He represented the CGTU at the Limoges unification congress in 1935.

355. In April 1917, Lenin arrived in Russia from Switzerland and attempted to orient the Bolshevik Party toward taking power. This precipitated a crisis in the party, which had been following a conciliatory policy toward the Provisional Government. Lenin's call for a dictatorship of the proletariat was at first opposed by virtually the entire Bolshevik leadership. *The July Days* of 1917 in Petrograd were a period of
spontaneous upsurge and bloody repression. The Bolsheviks were declared responsible, their leaders arrested, and their papers shut down. **General Lavr G. Kornilov** (1870-1918) was a Siberian cossack who became Kerensky’s commander-in-chief in July 1917 and later led a counterrevolutionary putsch against him. Arrested, he escaped to lead the counterrevolution until April 1918, when he was killed.

356. **Jose Gil Robles y Quinones** (1898- ) was the leader of the rightist Spanish Catholic Party. He served as minister of war in the Lerroux government, which suppressed the October 1934 insurrection.

357. Before World War I, **revolutionary syndicalists** (militants who relied on the trade unions instead of a political party to overthrow capitalism) organized opposition to class collaborationist tendencies in the trade unions. Trotsky wrote about the relation between communism and syndicalism in the collection *Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions* (Pathfinder Press, 1976).


359. “How the Workers in Austria Should Fight Hitler.” *Intercontinental Press*, March 6, 1972. Unsigned. The translation from the German is by *Intercontinental Press*, from *Unser Wort*, July and September 1936, where it had the title “Should the Austrian Workers Defend the ‘Independence’ of Austria? (A Dialogue).” This was the major political problem facing the Austrian workers between 1934, when their democratic rights were brutally suppressed by the Austrian ruling class, and 1938, when Hitler’s troops marched in and took over the country.

360. **Revolutionary Socialists** was the name taken by the Austrian Social Democrats after they were outlawed by the Dollfuss regime in 1934.

361. **Jean Longuet** (1876-1938), Marx’s grandson, was the leader of the pacifist minority in the SFIO in 1915. He remained in the SFIO after the majority affiliated to the Comintern. **Arthur Henderson** (1863-1935) was instrumental in securing Labour Party support of the British war policy in World War I. He was also president of the Second International, 1925-29. **The Habsburgs** were the ruling family of Austria-Hungary from the thirteenth century until the revolution of 1918.

362. **Heinrich Brüning** (1885-1970) was the leader of the Catholic Center Party. Appointed German chancellor by Hindenburg in March 1930, he ruled by decree from July 1930 to his dismissal in May 1932.

363. **Kurt von Schuschnigg** (1897- ) became chancellor of Austria after Dollfuss was assassinated in July 1934. He suppressed the left while trying to win Hitler’s agreement to Austrian “independence.” Early in 1938, under German pressure, he appointed three Nazis to prominent posts in the cabinet. His attempt to forestall annexation by Germany by means of a plebiscite was cut short by the entry of German troops in March 1938.

364. **The Little Entente** included Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and
Yugoslavia, in a defensive and economic alliance, 1920-21. The alliance began to break apart in 1936 and was finished when Czechoslovakia was dismembered by the Munich Pact in 1938. Its main purpose had been to preserve the status quo established by the treaty of Versailles against the efforts of Germany to revise it.

365. “For Calm and Objective Work.” From the personal archives of Albert Glotzer. Translated for this volume from the German by Russell Block. From Chicago, Glotzer had sent Trotsky his evaluation of how work in the SP had fared in the first months after the entry.

366. Nathan Gould, an American opponent of entry into the SP, was national secretary of the Young Spartacus League before its entry into the Young People’s Socialist League in 1936, and was national secretary of the YPSL when it was expelled in 1937. In 1940 he left the Socialist Workers Party with Shachtman. Daniel Hoan (1881-1961) was mayor of Milwaukee, 1916-40, and an SP right-winger.


368. “For a Common Goal in Britain.” From the archives of James P. Cannon. By permission of the Library of Social History in New York. This was a letter to Hugo Dewar, representing the Marxist League, one of the three groups invited to the July 1936 international conference. The Marxist Group in the ILP and the Bolshevik-Leninist Group in the Labour League of Youth each sent one delegate and one observer, but the Marxist League did not. The three groups were finally reunited in 1938.

369. “The Dutch Section and the International.” Internal Bulletin, SWP, no. 5, August 1938. Signed “Crux.” This letter to the Central Committee of the RSAP was written two weeks before the ICL conference, at a time when the RSAP leaders were still undecided about attending the conference.

370. John Paton was secretary of the ILP, 1927-33, and a functionary of the London Bureau. He and P.J. Schmidt visited Trotsky in France at the end of August 1933 and discussed the building of a new International.

371. A was Ken Johnson, a young Canadian journalist, known politically as Ken Alexander. He went to Norway in November 1935 with Robertson and later wrote in Youth Militant, newspaper of the Bolshevik-Leninist Group in the Labour League of Youth, and was secretary of the Militant Group.

372. Stien de Zeeuw was Christina de Ruyter-de Zeeuw, a young lawyer and a cofounder of the OSP’s youth group. She was a prominent member of the OSP and the RSAP until she resigned in August 1936 after the Moscow trial.

373. The POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification) was formed in September 1935 by a fusion of the Workers and Peasants Bloc of Joaquin
Maurin Julia (1897-1973) with the former Left Oppositionists led by Andres Nin (1892-1937), the leader of the Spanish section of the ILO and ICL until 1935. For a short time Nin was minister of justice in the Catalan government, but then he was arrested by the Stalinists and assassinated. Maurin was elected to parliament in February 1936. When the civil war broke out he was arrested by Franco’s troops, but escaped execution because the fascists couldn’t identify him. Upon his release in 1947 he went into exile.

374. For Arkady Maslow (called Parabellum) and Dubois (Ruth Fischer) see notes 45 and 28, respectively.

375. The pamphlet by Nicolle Braun (Erwin Wolf) was called L’Organe de masse (The Mass Paper), with a preface by Trotsky. Braun, who was Trotsky’s secretary, used Trotsky’s archives and collaboration to describe and analyze the crisis that wracked the French Trotskyist organization beginning in mid-1935. The pamphlet is in English in The Crisis of the French Section (1935-36) (Pathfinder Press, 1977).

376. “Interview on British Problems.” Internal Bulletin, Marxist Group, 1936. The interview was with Sam Collins, a member of the Marxist Group in the ILP. He left the Trotskyist movement in 1945.

377. Arthur Cooper was a member of the ILP who joined the Marxist Group. In 1936 he was opposed to the entry into the Labour Party and proposed that the Trotskyists remain in the ILP, but he was expelled later that year. He remained with C.L.R. James outside the Labour Party in the group they continued to call the “Marxist Group.” Albert Matlow was an ILP member who helped found the Marxist Group in the ILP. In the summer of 1936 he argued that all British Trotskyists should join the Labour Party. Once in the Labour Party, however, he became a left Social Democrat.

378. After Maxton threatened to resign from the ILP over its Easter 1936 conference’s decision in favor of workers’ sanctions against Italy, Brockway got a majority of the conference to accept a proposal to put the question to the membership in a so-called plebiscite. The questionnaire obscured the essential difference between the policy of workers’ sanctions and the Stalinist-reformist policy of “League of Nations sanctions”; a narrow majority supported the pacifists.

379. The Lenin Club was a proposal for maintaining a group of British Trotskyists outside the Labour Party to make public statements on behalf of the FI, publish openly Trotskyist material, and at the same time provide an alternative for those who rejected entry into the Labour Party on principle. It never got off the ground.

380. C.L.R. James (1901- ) is the West Indian author of The Black Jacobins and World Revolution. James became active in the British Trotskyist movement in 1935, and was the leader of those members of the Marxist Group who were most opposed to leaving the ILP in favor of the Labour Party in 1936. He remained in the ILP after most of the Marxist Group had left to become the Bolshevik-Leninist Group in the Labour
Party. He and his supporters adopted the name "Marxist Group" for their own use and were finally expelled from the ILP in November 1936, after associating themselves with an "independent" monthly paper, *Fight for the Fourth International*.

381. The group around Reg Groves and Hugo Dewar had opposed the entry into the ILP and remained outside, continuing to put out the paper started by the Communist League, *Red Flag*. In 1935 they rejoined the Labour Party, where they were in the Socialist League. In 1935-36 they were contemplating reuniting with the other British Trotskyist organizations, but decided against sending a representative to the First International Conference for the Fourth International and rejected a merger. In May 1937 the Socialist League dissolved at the request of the Labour Party bureaucracy, and part of its membership, like Groves, gave up organized activity. Others joined C.L.R. James's group, the latter-day Marxist Group.

382. **The Peace Councils** were CP front organizations without any mass support.

383. "Let Us Know the Facts." *Socialist Appeal* (Chicago), September 1936. This statement was dictated to a "journalist friend" the day after Tass, the Soviet press agency, announced the impending trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and fourteen other Bolsheviks. Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov were the main defendants, in absentia, in this trial. At the time, Trotsky was in Oppdægelseshof, an island, for a vacation, and had no access to newspapers. His statement was published August 17, 1936, in *Folkets Dagblad*, the Swedish Socialist Party paper.

384. Sergei Sedov (1908-1937?), Trotsky's younger son, was the only one of his children who had no interest in politics. He remained in Russia when Trotsky was deported, as a lecturer in technical subjects until 1934. In 1935 he was arrested after refusing to sign a statement denouncing his father. Unofficial reports say that he was shot in 1937.

385. "Open Letter to the Oslo Chief of Police." *Lutte ouvriere*, September 5, 1936. Translated for this volume from the French by David Keil. This letter was written from Oppdægelseshof, where the announcement of the Moscow trial reached Trotsky. It was here that the Oslo chief of police, Reider Swen, came to interview Trotsky on August 13 in connection with a fascist burglary of his Honefoss home. The fascists had announced that their raid had uncovered "evidence" of Trotsky's illegal activity in Norway. Police chief Swen left Trotsky and told the press that he had found the fascist charges against Trotsky to be groundless. According to Trotsky (see "In 'Socialist' Norway," in *Writings 36-37*), most of the Norwegian press published this letter.

386. Trotsky had been promised a transcript of the interview with Swen.

387. One of the pieces of evidence the fascists produced was Trotsky's article, "The French Revolution Has Begun," published in the American *Nation*, July 4, 1936.
388. “Worse Than Dreyfus and Reichstag Cases.” *New York Times*, August 20, 1936. The Dreyfus case was a frame-up against a Jewish officer in the French army accused of espionage and convicted during an anti-Semitic campaign in 1894. His conviction was overturned after Emile Zola conducted a campaign in his defense. The Reichstag case was a frame-up case against German Stalinists accused by the Nazis of setting the Reichstag on fire. They were acquitted.

389. “Who Is V. Olberg?” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Valentin Olberg (1907-1936) joined the German Left Opposition in 1930 but was expelled as a suspected agent of the GPU. He was sentenced to death in the Moscow trial. Trotsky later found a file of his 1930 correspondence with Olberg (see *Writings 30*).

390. Franz Pfemfert (1879-1954) was editor of the German expressionist journal *Die Aktion*, 1911-32. Alexandra Ramm, his wife, translated Trotsky’s works into German.


392. Friedrich Adler (1879-1960) was secretary of the Austrian Social Democratic Party from 1911 to 1916, when he assassinated the Austrian prime minister and was thrown into prison. Freed by the 1918 revolution, he was a founder of the Two-and-a-Half International, which he led back into the Second International in 1923, becoming secretary of the amalgamated body. Trotsky’s 1911 article is in his pamphlet *Against Individual Terrorism* (Pathfinder Press, 1974).

393. Karl von Stürekhh (1859-1916) was Austrian prime minister, 1911-16.

394. “A Revolutionary, Not a Terrorist.” *Vanguard* (Canada), October 1936. The interview was made for the liberal Oslo paper *Dagbladet* and published in it August 21, 1936.

395. Elsewhere the consul is identified as Bisseniecks.

396. Konon B. Berman-Yurin (1901-1936) was accused of meeting Trotsky in Copenhagen in 1932 to get instructions from him for assassination plots. Berman-Yurin had been a Russian newspaper correspondent in Germany. He was sentenced to death in the first Moscow trial.

397. Ivan N. Smirnov (1881-1936) was expelled from the CP in 1927 as a Left Oppositionist, but capitulated in 1929 and was reinstated in the party. He was rearrested in 1933 and executed after the first Moscow trial.

398. “A Miniature Edition of the Moscow Indictment.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume from the German by Maria Roth. A letter to the editors of *Arbeiderbladet*, the chief NAP paper.

399. “A Revealing Episode.” *Folkets Dagblad* (Stockholm), August 26,
1936. Translated for this volume from the German by Candida Barbarena. Apparently Trotsky wrote this letter to the editors of the Danish newspaper Social-Demokraten (Copenhagen), which didn’t print it, and forwarded a copy of it to the Swedish Folkets Dagblad.

400. Oluf Boeggild was the representative of the Danish student organization who organized Trotsky’s lecture trip to Copenhagen in 1932. More about this episode is in The Case of Leon Trotsky, the transcript of testimony introduced into the Dewey Commission’s hearings in April 1937.


402. Karl Radek (1885-1939) was expelled in 1927 from the Russian CP for membership in the Left Opposition. He capitulated and was reinstated but was a defendant and victim of the second Moscow trial (1937).

403. Fritz David (1897-1936) was accused, with Berman-Yurin, of meeting Trotsky in Copenhagen in 1932 to get instructions for terrorist activities. He had been a member of the German CP and trade union editor of its newspaper, Rote Fahne. He was sentenced to death in the first Moscow trial.

404. “Tomsky’s Suicide.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume from the German by Maria Roth.

405. “Some Facts for the Prague Committee.” Service d’Information et de Presse pour la Quatrieme Internationale (SIP), no. 14, December 1, 1936, where it was taken from Fuer Recht und Wahrheit, the journal of the Committee for Right and Justice in Prague, which had addressed several questions to Trotsky about the Moscow trial. Translated for this volume from the French by Mary Gordon.

406. Mossei Lurie was Alexander Emel, a scientist and a former member of the German CP who wrote anti-Trotskyist articles in the Comintern press in 1932. He and Nathan Lurie, a surgeon, were agents provocateurs in the first Moscow trial.

407. Trotsky’s letters to Olberg are in Writings 30. A detailed discussion of Olberg’s testimony at the trial and its relation to these letters is in the Dewey Commission’s report dated September 1937 and published under the title Not Guilty (reprinted by Monad Press, 1972).

408. Ephim A. Dreitser (1894-1936), a Red Army officer during the Russian civil war, was expelled from the party in 1927 as an Oppositionist. He capitulated in 1928 but was sentenced to death in the first Moscow trial.

409. G.E. Yevdokimov (1884-1936), a secretary of the Central Committee, was removed from the secretariat in 1926 because he was a supporter of Zinoviev, and was expelled from the Central Committee in 1927. He and Ivan Bakaev (1887-1936) were sent to prison in connection with the Kirov assassination, then became defendants in the first
Moscow trial and were executed. V.A. Ter-Vaganian, an Armenian, was a veteran of the civil war. He had been in exile since 1933. Sergei Mrachkovsky (1883-1936) was a famous civil war commander who organized the insurrection in the Urals in 1917. Expelled from the party as an Oppositionist, he capitulated in 1929 but was exiled in 1933 and sentenced to death in the first Moscow trial.

410. Isaak Reingold was chairman of the cotton syndicate and a former supporter of Kamenev and the United Opposition. Richard Pikel, a writer, playwright, and civil war veteran, had once been the head of Zinoviev’s secretariat. E.S. Goltsman (1882-1936), was accused of meeting Leon Sedov in Copenhagen in 1932 to receive Trotsky’s “instructions” to assassinate Stalin and Voroshilov. Not only had their alleged meeting place, the Hotel Bristol, been torn down in 1917, but Sedov had been taking examinations in Berlin at the time, and the Soviet government was unable to document Goltsman’s entry into Denmark.


412. “Interview in News Chronicle.” News Chronicle (London), August 27, 1936. The text of the interview at the Harvard College Library provided the correct date (August 24), to replace the date given in the first edition of Writings 35-36 (August 26).

413. Grigory Sokolnikov (1888-1939) for a short time supported the Zinovievists on the issue of the party regime. He did not commit suicide but was shot after the second Moscow trial.

414. “An Answer to Mr. Scharffenberg.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume from the German by Maria Roth. Johan Scharffenberg, an NAP official, wrote in Arbeiderbladet: “Trotsky says he can prove the accusations made against him at the Moscow trial were false. If so, it is his moral duty immediately to go to a Moscow court.” Trotsky’s reply was briefly summarized, but not quoted, in the New York Times, August 25, 1936.

415. “The Death Sentences.” Folkets Dagblad, August 25, 1936. This statement to the Norsk Telegrambyraa (Norwegian news agency) was partly picked up in the New York Times, August 25, 1936. The full text was translated for this volume from the Swedish by Russell Block.

416. The Menshevik-Industrial Party “wreckers’” trials, where the defendants confessed to sabotage of the economy, were held in 1930 and 1931. At the time, Trotsky accepted these confessions as valid (see Writings 30-31), a view he held until shortly before the first Moscow trial in 1936, when he inserted the following note in Biulleten Oppozitsii, no. 51, July-August 1936: “From the editors: The editors of the Biulleten must admit that in the period of the Menshevik trial they greatly underestimat-
ed the shamelessness of Stalinist justice and therefore took too seriously the confessions of the former Mensheviks.”

417. “Regular Trial Demanded.” By permission of the Harvard College Library. Translated for this volume from the German by Russell Block. This statement to the Oslo newspaper Dagbladet was printed in the Swedish Folkets Dagblad, August 26, 1936, and was picked up in part by the New York Times, August 26, 1936.

418. “A Letter to Trygve Lie.” Nation, October 10, 1936. The published letter was accompanied by the following note, signed by Erwin Wolf and Jean van Heijenoort, Trotsky’s secretaries: “At the urgent request of the minister of justice [Lie], this letter was not published, as originally intended. All copies were forcibly removed from Trotsky’s secretaries. By chance, one copy had already been sent abroad, giving us the opportunity—after considerable delay—of bringing this document before the public.” Trygve Lie (1896-1968), former legal adviser to the NAP, was Norwegian minister of justice, 1935-39, and was responsible for arresting Trotsky and holding him incommunicado so that he couldn’t defend himself against the Moscow trial slanders. He was minister of foreign affairs, 1941-46, and became secretary-general of the United Nations after World War II, 1946-53.

419. “Trials Without End.” SIP, no. 14, December 1, 1936. Translated for this volume from the French by Mary Gordon. On the day after Trotsky wrote this he was placed under house arrest and his secretaries were ordered to leave the country.

420. Lydia Fotieva (1881-1975) was Lenin’s secretary from 1918 until his death in 1924.

421. “Letter to Mr. Puntervold.” From the Archives of the Working Class Movement, Stockholm, Sweden. Translated for this volume from the Norwegian by Russell Block. Part of this letter, predicting another frame-up trial, was also issued as a press release on the same day. All of Trotsky’s mail while he was under house arrest was censored and some of it was held up without his knowledge. On September 2 he was transferred to Sundby, where he was held virtually incommunicado, except for his Norwegian attorney, Michael Puntervold. He was also forbidden to write in Russian. On October 12, he wrote to Sedov in French: “Forgive me for not being able to send you the promised article on the trial for the next number of the Biulleten. This is not, of course, through any lack of desire on my part . . . but I feel confident that you yourselves will say all that is necessary about this foul amalgam.” The letter was published without a date in Biulleten Oppozitsii, no. 52-53, October 1936, the same issue that contained Sedov’s lengthy article on the Moscow trial.

422. “Echoes of a Belgian Witch-hunt.” SIP, no. 11, October 2, 1936, where it was taken from Aftenposten, September 24, 1936. Translated for
this volume from the French by Mary Gordon. In September 1936 Belgian police raided the home of Walter Dauge in connection with a crackdown on rumored dispatches of arms to the Spanish Loyalists. Trotsky’s letter of March 27, 1936 (“Suggestions for the Belgian Section”), was seized and widely publicized as evidence of his subversive activity. The Norwegian government was also glad to have it publicized at a time when it held Trotsky under internment. He made this comment to the press through his Norwegian attorney.

423. Spaak’s visit to Trotsky was actually in 1933.

424. “Letters to an Attorney.” The following six pieces are from Avocat de Trotsky (Trotsky’s Lawyer), by Gerard Rosenthal (Paris: Robert Laffont–Opera Mundi, 1975), and are presented together for the convenience of the reader. Translated for this volume from the French by Naomi Allen. Gerard Rosenthal (1903– ) was a member of the GBL and Trotsky’s French attorney. In the latter capacity he was allowed to go to Norway in October for discussions with his client. Rosenthal left the Trotskyist movement during the war and in 1945 joined the SFIO.

425. Hoping to use the publicity of a Norwegian courtroom to counter the slander campaign of his accusers, Trotsky initiated a libel suit on October 6 against a Stalinist journal, Arbeideren, and a fascist journal, Vrit Volk, which were both echoing the Moscow accusations. On October 29, the Norwegian government passed a special law preventing him from pursuing any litigation in Norwegian courts.

426. The International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), dominated by the Social Democracy, had its headquarters in Amsterdam. Trying to stimulate a broader public discussion of the Moscow accusations, Trotsky wrote to the IFTU, asking it to take a stand. The Norwegian authorities refused to let the letter be mailed, so Rosenthal had to write (his letter is in SIP, no. 15–16, December 20, 1936). Trotsky’s next attempt to reach the IFTU was in the name of his Norwegian attorney on October 22, 1936.

427. Finding himself faced with almost total isolation, Trotsky deliberately back-dated this power of attorney and made its terms general in order to establish the fact that Rosenthal had been his attorney and had his authorization to carry on if Trotsky were incapacitated. “Leon Sedov” was Trotsky’s legal name as well as that of his son.

428. These are Rosenthal’s notes from an interview he had with Trotsky while visiting him to discuss the lawsuit.

429. Jan G. Adler was Trotsky’s Czech attorney. SIP, no. 15/16, dated December 20, 1936, contains the text of Adler’s depositions against the editors of Mezískor (the successor to International Press Correspondence in Czechoslovakia), Rude Pravo, and Rote Fahne (CP papers). The trial was set for December 21, but the Norwegian government issued a statement on November 11 forbidding Trotsky to make use of a foreign tribunal to defend himself.

430. “Comments on Defense Efforts.” From the archives of James P.

431. Andrei Vyshinsky (1883-1954) was a Menshevik from 1903 until 1920. He received international notoriety as the prosecuting attorney in the Moscow trials and then was foreign minister, 1949-53.

432. Sonne was Hugo Sonnenschein, a leader of one of the Czech Trotskyist groups. Keller was Jan Frankel, a Czech Oppositionist from 1927, who became a member of Trotsky's secretariat and guard in 1929. He left Trotsky's household in January 1933 to work in the IS in Paris. In February 1934 the French police arrested him and deported him to Czechoslovakia. In 1935 he went to Norway as Trotsky's secretary, but in the autumn of 1935 the Norwegian police deported him, again to Czechoslovakia. In 1937 he rejoined Trotsky, this time in Mexico. He was the only witness besides Trotsky at the April 1937 hearings on the Moscow trials conducted by the Dewey Commission (see The Case of Leon Trotsky, Merit Publishers, 1969).

433. Van is Jean van Heijenoort (1912- ), who served as Trotsky's secretary in all four countries of his last exile. He left the FI after World War II and became a professor of philosophy. Muste's document was his August 26, 1936, resignation from the MFI and its American section. Muste, like P.J. Schmidt, who resigned from the Dutch section around the same time, felt that the Moscow trial had dealt a death blow to Marxism.

434. S. Schwartz was a pen name for Leon Sedov. The two documents are probably two chapters from Sedov's Red Book on the Moscow Trial. For a time, Sedov was considering publishing the pamphlet under a pseudonym, which explains why Trotsky refers to it in this manner.


436. Natalia Sedova's telegram to Herriot requesting a visa for her son, and Herriot's reply granting the visa are in SIP, no. 17, February 22, 1937. The purpose of locating the telegram was to demonstrate that it was impossible for Leon Sedov to have been in Copenhagen in 1932, as was charged in the Moscow trial.

437. Posthumus was the head of the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam, whose Paris branch was negotiating for the purchase of Trotsky's archives.

438. “Letter to the IFTU.” SIP, no. 13, November 4, 1936. Signed “Michael Puntervold.” Translated for this volume from the French by Naomi Allen. After his first letter to the IFTU was intercepted by the Central Passport Bureau, Trotsky made his second effort in the name of his attorney. He claimed authorship of this letter in “In ‘Socialist’ Norway” (see Writings 36-37).
439. "Letter to the League of Nations." SIP, no. 15/16, December 20, 1936. Signed "Michael Puntervold." The Secretariat of the League of Nations transmitted the following reply to the letter: "No. 3A/15105/15085. The Secretariat of the League of Nations is pleased to acknowledge receipt of Mr. Michael Puntervold's communication of 22 October 1936, referring to the elaboration of a statute for an international penal court." On March 31, 1938, Trotsky addressed a second letter on the same subject to the League of Nations, verifying his authorship of the first one (see Writings 37-38).

440. "Letters to an Attorney." From Avocat de Trotsky. Translated for this volume from the French by Naomi Allen. These were two letters to Gerard Rosenthal.

441. Walter Schevenels, general secretary of the IFTU, had replied to Rosenthal's letter on October 23 by expressing surprise that the IFTU was being asked to examine the "Trotsky case," and saying that he considered it to be a "purely political" matter that "had nothing to do with" the IFTU. He counseled Rosenthal to seek any of a "considerable number" of organizations that would be more appropriate for such a matter.

442. Dated October 29, 1936, this "letter," actually the rough draft of a lengthy article, became part of Trotsky's last Norwegian article, "Shame!" Raymond Rosenmark was a lawyer used by the French Stalinists as an apologist for the Moscow trials. He was connected with the League for the Rights of Man.

443. The Red Book on the Moscow Trial is a translation of the French title of Leon Sedov's book, which first appeared in Russian in Biulleten Oppozitsii, no. 52-53, October 1936, where it had the title "The Moscow Trial Is a Trial of October."

444. "Remarks About the Arbeiderbladet Interview." From the Archives of the Working Class Movement in Stockholm. Translated for this volume from the German by Russell Block. This letter to Haakon Meyer was confiscated by the Passport Bureau. Haakon Meyer was a Norwegian writer who worked with Trotsky to try to prevent the Norwegian government from expelling him and to find another place of exile.

445. Martin Tranmael (1879-1967) was the leader of the Norwegian Labor Party. O. Kolbjornsen was the editor of its major newspaper, Arbeiderbladet.

446. "On the GPU's Theft of Archives." From the Archives of the Working Class Movement in Stockholm. Translated for this volume from the German by Russell Block. A letter to Haakon Meyer. Trotsky's archives were stolen from the Paris office of the International Institute of Social History the day after they were deposited there.

448. Denis M. Pritt (1888-1972) was a British lawyer and Labour MP, 1935-50. An uncritical admirer of Stalin, he stated that the Moscow trial was “an example for the world.”

449. Victor Basch was the head of the League for the Rights of Man, a French civil liberties organization that whitewashed the Moscow trials.

450. The call by a galaxy of French intellectuals for an objective and impartial inquiry of the Moscow trial appeared in *SIP*, no. 12, October 21, 1936. Additional signatories were listed in *SIP*, no. 15/16, December 20, 1936.

451. Andre Gide (1869-1951) was a French novelist, critic, and essayist who became a fellow-traveler of the Stalinists in the mid-1930s but broke with them at the end of 1936. The reference is probably to his book *Retour de l’URSS* (Return from the USSR), written after the Moscow trial and critical of the Stalinist regime.

452. Jules Romains (1885-1972) was a French novelist, poet, and dramatist. Trotsky’s remark that he is “above the conflict” is a reference to the absence of his signature on the call for an inquiry. His name was among those in the second issue of *SIP*.

453. Maurice Delepine was a highly respected attorney in the SFIO.

454. After the Norwegian government forbade Trotsky to use his rights under Norwegian law, Trotsky sought a hearing before Swiss and Czech tribunals. On November 11, 1936, the Royal Department of Justice and Police presented Trotsky with a new decision: he was forbidden to participate in any trial before any tribunal in any country while he was in Norway. The rest of the notification was even more ominous. It demanded that he immediately seek authorization to live in another country. And it threatened to move him in the near future to a residence that would cost the state less to maintain.

455. “Letter to the League for the Rights of Man.” *Cahiers des droits de l’homme*, April 15, 1937. Translated for this volume from the French by Russell Block. The League had created a commission on the subject of the Moscow trial with the stated purpose of studying the documents, getting the fullest possible picture of the proceedings, and writing a report. The commission refused not only to hear Trotsky’s testimony but to hear Leon Sedov’s as well. Its report, by R. Rosenmark, was an attempt to justify the Moscow trial. This letter of Trotsky’s to Victor Basch was written before the Rosenmark report was published.

456. “Letters to an Attorney.” From *Avocat de Trotsky*. Translated for this volume from the French by Naomi Allen. These are excerpts of letters to Gerard Rosenthal.

457. Rosenmark’s report justifying the trial was published by the
League for the Rights of Man. A counterreport presented by Magdeleine Paz, critical of the trial, was rejected.

458. Urgent efforts by Trotsky's friends to secure asylum for him in another country finally resulted in his being granted a visa by the Mexican government. But Norwegian officials refused to discuss arrangements for the trip to Mexico.

459. "In Closed Court." From Les Crimes de Staline (1937). Translated from the French for the first edition of Writings 35-36 by Ruth Schein. On December 11, Trotsky appeared at the trial of the fascist burglars of his Honefoss residence. Minister of Justice Lie cleared the courtroom of spectators and reporters. The president of the court permitted Trotsky to speak for four hours, uninterrupted, and Trotsky was so uncertain that he would ever have a chance to state his case in public that he took advantage of the opportunity to do so even in a closed courtroom.

460. Since the Italo-Ethiopian war did not break out until October 1935, Trotsky could not have said this in July 1935. This is either an error in Trotsky's recollection or an error in the translation from German to French, from which this translation was made.

461. In 1931, the Nazis demanded a referendum to dissolve the Prussian Landtag (parliament), which would mean ousting the Social Democratic government of the state that had a majority of Germany's population. The German Stalinists initially sided with the Social Democrats against the fascists, but on orders from Moscow they abruptly reversed their position and supported the referendum campaign. The combined efforts of the Stalinists and the Nazis drew less than half of the twenty-five million votes needed to ratify the plebiscite. This incident is often referred to as the Red Referendum.

462. Major Vidkun Quisling (1887-1945) was the head of the National Union Party, the Norwegian pro-Nazi party. He was shot after the war.

463. "For the Earliest Possible Departure from Norway." From the Archives of the Working Class Movement in Stockholm. Translated for this volume from the German by Russell Block. A letter to Haakon Meyer.


465. "Shame!" Quatrieme Internationale, March-April 1937. Translated from the French for the first edition of Writings 35-36 by A.L. Preston. Some material used in "In Closed Court" is repeated here, because Trotsky was uncertain that either of these articles would ever get into print. This article is an expansion of one Trotsky drafted on October 29, 1936, under the title "Some Remarks on the Expertise of Mr. Pritt and Such People," which Trotsky sent to Leon Sedov and Gerard Rosenthal. Both copies were seized by the Norwegian Passport Bureau.
466. **Joseph Fouche** (1763-1820) was a member of the French National Convention, 1792-95, and was famous for his ruthless efficiency, his system of spies, and his political intrigue. He was exiled in 1816.

467. **Antoine Fouquier-Tinville** (1746-1795), a French revolutionary politician, was public accuser before the revolutionary tribunal, 1793-94. He was guillotined.

468. “A Formal Declaration.” From *Avocat de Trotsky*. Translated for this volume from the French by Naomi Allen. This excerpt of a letter to Gerard Rosenthal was written the day before Trotsky and Natalia Sedova were put aboard the tanker Ruth and shipped off to Mexico, avoiding the usual shipping routes. The government kept the departure secret for security reasons.

469. “Last Letter from Europe.” From *The Prophet Outcast*, by Isaac Deutscher. This was an excerpt from a letter to Leon Sedov.
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OTHER WRITINGS OF 1935-36

In addition to the material in the present volume, the following writings of Trotsky while he was in Norway have been published:


**Leon Trotsky on France.** 1977. Includes “Committees of Action, Not the People’s Front” (November 26, 1935) and “Before the Second Stage” (July 9, 1936), in addition to the full text of the 1936 book *Whither France?* which includes “France at the Turning Point” (March 28, 1936), “The Decisive Stage” (June 5, 1936), and “The French Revolution Has Begun” (June 9, 1936).


**The Revolution Betrayed.** 1937. Subtitled “What Is the Soviet Union and Where Is It Going?” this major analysis of Stalinism was completed just before the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial in August 1936.

**Leon Trotsky on Literature and Art.** 1971. Includes “Maxim Gorky” (July 9, 1936).